



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Monday 19 June 2000

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 19 juin 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 19 June 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 19 juin 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LANDSLIDE

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Today I rise before the Legislature to bring to the attention of the Minister of Natural Resources that due to heavy rainfall we have houses that have the potential of falling into the Castor River.

On June 1, I personally handed a copy of a letter from the South Nation Conservation Authority to the minister describing the Embrun situation in detail. Even though I have followed up on several occasions, the minister has not yet responded.

There is an elderly couple, Mr and Mrs Armand Bruyere, whose property is sliding, a portion of the municipality's property is going, and a section of the riverbank has disappeared into the river. The Bruyeres have even been asked to vacate their premises until adequate slope stability can be achieved.

The South Nation Conversation Authority is saying that due to the Mike Harris cuts, capital funding for exceptional situations such as this landslide is not available.

From June 1 to today, not a word has been received from the minister. I wonder if the Minister of Natural Resources understands the stress that this 78-year-old couple is going through at the present time. I hope the minister will soon give a favourable decision to the South Nation Conservation Authority request.

SCARBOROUGH EAST 2000 FESTIVAL

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Mr Speaker, as you know, my riding of Scarborough East is the most beautiful riding in the province. What with the Rouge Valley, which was recently doubled in size thanks to our government, a waterfront that has seen major improvements during the past four years, the historic Guild Inn, the many excellent schools, a world-class university campus, and a hospital that recently received an additional \$10 million to expand services, it's no wonder that Scarborough East is the envy of most if not all, of the members of this Legislature.

Last week the clouds and rain gave way and Scarborough East celebrated the millennium with the Scar-

borough East 2000 Festival. This exciting family event included a giant parade, fireworks, and entertainment for children and adults alike. Musical tributes to Shania Twain, Britney Spears, the Back Streets Boys and the Spice Girls filled the air, along with a midway and a crafters market. The dancing and fun went long into the night.

The Scarborough East 2000 Festival was designed to foster community pride and spirit, to celebrate our achievements as a community, and our diverse cultural heritages. I would like to thank the members of the Festival 2000 Organizing Committee, particularly Mr Dave Adamson, Mr Doug Puddester and Mr Anthony Da Silva, as well as hundreds of other volunteers who helped make this wonderful event a memorable and enriching experience. I would also like to recognize the many businesses that contributed both time and money to turn a great idea into a successful reality.

It was a job well done and the thousands of people who participated in this event were able to add one more reason to believe that the riding of Scarborough East is the best place in Ontario to live, work and raise a family.

CHILD PSYCHIATRISTS

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I rise today to address the shortage of professionally trained child psychiatrists in our hospitals in Ottawa. This is an issue of great concern to my community and one that I know is being felt throughout the province.

As many of you know, approximately 15% to 25% of children and youth in our society have at least one mental disorder. As well, many of you will know that proper early diagnosis and treatment will greatly enhance the child's condition and help them to move on to a healthy, happy and productive life. But when these disorders are left untreated or ignored, as they are in about 80% of the cases of childhood clinical depression, then we have a problem, and the problems can linger for a lifetime, with many unnecessary recurrences.

I regret to inform the House that there is a shortage of trained psychiatrists for children in the Ottawa area as well. The confusion created by the ongoing hospital restructuring means that our kids who are suffering are being forced to wait a painfully long time just to get an assessment.

I am worried about this shortage, not just because of the pain it causes right now but because our city is becoming the fastest-growing city in the country and these numbers are going to become worse as the

population explodes. As well, the House should be aware that the Ministry of Health is currently negotiating to cut the number of beds for children and adolescent mental health in the Ottawa area. Morale is already very low among the psychiatrists who are left in the system. Many have left to set up private practice.

I want to take this opportunity to call upon the Minister of Health and the ministry to work with the people in Ottawa to find a solution to this situation for the sake of the health of our children.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Mr Speaker, I think you know that tomorrow night we were going to debate Bill 74. But I think you also know that there's going to be, I suspect, a rather large demonstration of teachers outside. I suspect there will be more than 5,000. We couldn't have a useful debate tomorrow night given that we might have 5,000 or 6,000 or 7,000 or 8,000 teachers out there demonstrating at the same time as the debate was going to happen.

So what the Conservative government did today was to announce that Bill 74 will not be debated tomorrow but is going to be debated tonight so as to avoid a possible conflict, because as you know, there's only so much democracy that the Tories can tolerate. Isn't that right? Besides, they already had one day and a half of hearings and it should be enough for the teachers to have participated in those discussions. We wouldn't want more participation than we could handle, would we now?

These Tories continue to always amaze me. The debate on Bill 74 is tonight at a quarter to 7. It will not be tomorrow night, when, yes, many of you teachers would be able to participate. We're having it tonight, and I ask those of you who are interested in hearing the views of the minister, because I suspect she will speak, and of the Tories, to tune in at a quarter to 7. The opposition parties of course will be debating it. We want you to participate via television.

GUELPH AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): I recently attended the annual Guelph Awards of Excellence to honour businesses that have achieved the highest standards in the manufacturing, retail, service and public sectors.

In the category of tourism and marketing, awards were given by the Visitor and Convention Services to the Best Western Emerald Inn and the Willow Manor Bed and Breakfast. The Downtown Board of Management's promotions and The Ale Trail also won awards.

The chamber of commerce in the city honoured the environmentally sound initiatives of Owens Corning Canada Ltd and Blount Canada.

Kristy Dukelow of the Amberhill Collection was given the New Exporter award and young entrepreneur Kim Gadoury was recognized for her creative spirit and her business Seams Perfect. Best New Business was

given to Wendy Smith of Home-Based Secretarial Services. These three awards were presented for the first time by the Business Enterprise Centre.

KPMG joined the city and chamber in presenting the Guelph Quality awards to Mandel Scientific and Lodder Brothers Plumbing in the service sector category. For manufacturing, Concast Pipe and Smurfit-MBI were recognized. Duncan McPhee and Knar Jewellery won in the retail sector, and the public sector awards went to Homewood Addiction Services, the University of Guelph's lab services and the Guelph Fire Department. The Bookshelf Café, owned by Barb and Doug Minett, was voted best downtown business.

Guelph's fast-growing business community has been thriving in recent years, certainly assisted by the initiatives of this provincial government. It has done much to ensure that all of Ontario is open for business. As our economy continues to thrive, there will be even more reasons to celebrate the success stories of entrepreneurs such as those just honoured.

1340

SENIOR CITIZENS' MONTH

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): In the year that I've been the opposition critic for seniors, I've been waiting for this government to take some action on behalf of seniors. It has talked about elder abuse, it has talked about long-term-care beds, but I, like the seniors of Ontario, want to see some results.

Last winter, the government conducted a listening tour on retirement homes. I called and asked to be informed about the tour, only to be told two months later that the consultation was over. It happened by invitation only, behind closed doors, and now we understand that the public will not receive the report of this committee—a report paid for by taxpayers.

While the government has acknowledged the problem of crime against seniors, it has done little to address other very serious problems, like better access to health care, home care and safe, affordable housing.

A recent media report verifies that seniors in Ontario have benefited the least of all demographic groups from this government's tax cuts. Seniors built this province and we are reaping in large measure the fruits of their labours, yet over half of the seniors in Ontario, nearly 800,000, will not receive the budget's \$200 tax dividend.

June is Seniors' Month, and I implore the government to take action. Seniors deserve affordable housing, access to health care, home care and the supports they need to age in place.

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): June is Seniors' Month and I'm pleased to recognize a group of senior artists visiting us today, many of whom reside in my riding of Thornhill.

The Golden Age Academy was created by Joseph Carraro in 1997 to meet the needs of many retired workers from different backgrounds. When they were young they worked as cement finishers, bricklayers,

carpenters, on assembly lines or in business, but they dreamed about celebrating their senior years in the pursuit of art. They have become accomplished expressionists, sculptors and artisans. The group has grown to 55 members since its inception.

So far, the Golden Age Academy, under the presidency of Marino Toppan, has organized five exhibitions which have showcased the work of this very talented group of artists. In the future, the Golden Age Academy plans to offer courses to teach painting, sculpting, wood-working and other artistic activities free of cost to other seniors. They also hope to have a permanent exhibition in the future and are working on the development of an Internet site.

In an article published by *Correire Canadese*, Golden Age Academy president Marino Toppan spoke about the importance of the retirement years and the value of seniors staying active and creative.

I would like to congratulate Joseph Carraro and Marino Toppan and all the artists from the Golden Age Academy, many of whom are with us in the gallery today. Please join me in welcoming them to the Legislature.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This morning in the media studio, many people in Ontario found out about the blatant form of health care apartheid being practised in Ontario regarding cancer patients.

Today, we're privileged to have in the House the three participants of this news conference this morning, who are also the founding members of OSECC, which is Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care.

Gerry Lougheed Jr., former vice-chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Janice Skinner, a cancer patient from the Sudbury region, and René Boucher, the husband of a cancer patient, all explained their concerns about the present form of health care apartheid.

I know that the majority of people in Ontario agree with the executive members of OSECC. In a newly commissioned provincial poll, it was found that 92% of respondents support the cause for equal travel funding; that is, 92% of the people believe it is important that everyone in Ontario be treated equally. As Gerry Lougheed Jr has stated repeatedly, tumours are not interested in lists. A cancer patient who travels for cancer treatment is a cancer patient who travels for cancer treatment and we must all be treated equally. That's what OSECC wants and that's what the Liberals want.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'd like to address the issue of municipal amalgamation. This is not, of course, a new concept in Ontario. Just recently in my riding of Durham, the municipality of Clarington, formerly the township of Newcastle, celebrated its 25th anniversary as one local government for the new town that was formed from the villages of Bowmanville, Courtice, Newcastle,

Newtonville, Orono, Hayden and Tyrone, just to name a few. Currently, our government is overseeing restructuring again in the amalgamation of four regional municipalities in the province. The people of Ontario have worked hard and they deserve, above all things, lower taxes, better service, less bureaucracy and of course more accountability.

The debate is clearly over. Tax cuts do create jobs, and our government is not alone in this view. Others, such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, clearly understand this way of thinking. I refer you to a 1998 letter from a small business organization to the mayor of Flamborough which stresses the impact municipal taxes can have. In the letter, the CFIB made note of how small businesses were treated in his municipality. This is a quote: "Almost a year ago, CFIB members in the Wentworth region rated your local government very poorly in its relationship with small business."

The mayor in question is none other than Mr Ted McMeekin. It is the same person that the Liberal opposition's Dalton McGuinty has chosen to be his candidate in the riding in the upcoming provincial election. The Liberal track record is clear. Tax cuts do create jobs. The Liberals don't get it.

REPORTS, OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I've laid upon the table the annual report of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner for the period from April 1, 1999, to March 31, 2000.

I further beg to inform the House that today I've laid upon the table the first annual report of the Integrity Commissioner with respect to the administration of the Lobbyists Registration Act for the 14-month period of January 15, 1999, to March 31, 2000.

REPORT, SPEAKER'S COMMISSION ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I further beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a report of the Speaker's Commission on Members' Compensation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GENOCIDE MEMORIAL WEEK ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA SEMAINE COMMÉMORATIVE DES GÉNOCIDES

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to proclaim Genocide Memorial Week in Ontario / Projet de loi 97, Loi proclamant la Semaine commémorative des génocides en Ontario.

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

The member for a short statement.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): This bill proposes to observe an annual Genocide Memorial Week in Ontario beginning in late March. The response to Bill 38 indicated a consensus and support of the observance of such a week, but that there was no consensus around the timing proposed in that bill. If there appears to be widespread support for the late March timing, I will proceed with this very important bill.

VISITORS

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I have a point of order. I am introducing a resolution to declare Simcoe Day in the province of Ontario. I wish to draw to the members' attention that Lieutenant Governor Colonel John Graves Simcoe is in the members' gallery.

Applause.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to midnight on Monday, June 19, 2000, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

1350

JACK STOKES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to pay tribute to a former member of this Legislature, Jack Stokes, who passed away earlier this year.

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

Mr Hampton: Jack Stokes passed away earlier this year. I know you, as Speaker, attempted to attend his funeral. On that occasion, you learned some of the interesting issues of travelling in northern Ontario. I gather your plane made it to Thunder Bay and then had to turn around because it couldn't land.

Jack Stokes is someone who, in the 17 years he was in this Legislature, could tell us all a few things about travelling in our province. He was elected in 1968 to the constituency of what was then called Thunder Bay. Many of us probably wouldn't have a picture of how large that constituency was. It was the largest constituency in the province. It took in communities that were on the outskirts of the city we now call Thunder Bay. It went north all the way to Hudson Bay and took in a number of First

Nations communities that you can only get to if you fly. In those days, those communities did not have an airport. You flew by bush plane and hoped the weather was good when you wanted to leave so that you could get out again.

A number of other communities that he represented had no highway and no landing strip. You got to them by either taking the CN line or the CP line and getting off the train and visiting the community and then hoping the train would stop for you the next day or the day after when you tried to move on to visit another community.

He, himself, was at first a railway conductor. He worked for Canadian Pacific Railway. That's how he got to know, initially, many of the people in the communities that were later on to become his riding. As a Canadian Pacific Railway conductor, he got to know communities like Marathon or Terrace Bay or Schreiber, or he got into communities like Longlac. He stopped as well in many of the smaller communities along the way.

When he was first elected here, he took great pleasure—and in those days it was the Conservative government, first under Premier Robarts and then under Premier Davis—in taking members of the government into the far reaches of his riding and giving them a geography lesson. He thought it was important that every member of the Legislature understand how large this province is and how diverse it is.

He worked especially hard for First Nations. He was one of the first members of this Legislature to, on an almost daily basis, bring issues regarding First Nations into this Legislature. Many members at first reacted by saying: "Oh, these are really federal matters. Why are you bringing them here?" But he brought it home to people that we are all citizens of this province—native and non-native—and that it simply won't do to classify some issues as, "These are in the federal jurisdiction and we have no responsibility."

He was also someone who understood the long-term issues and the long-term challenges of having a province that is for the most part forested, and forested on crown land. He regularly raised the issues of forest ecology and forest environment. He regularly raised the issue that as a province during the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s we were very good at harvesting our forests; we were abysmal in terms of the regeneration or the renewal of our forests. He often raised the issue that if we were going to harvest our forests, we had to set aside money to ensure that there was funding to renew the forests.

I was very pleased, in 1993 and 1994, to introduce legislation to create the forest renewal trust fund and the forestry futures trust fund, but the credit for those really ought to have gone to Jack Stokes, because he was the originator of those ideas.

After he had served in the Legislature for some time, the members of this House thought enough of him that he became the Speaker. He was not a member of the government party; he was a member, at the time, of the third party. The members of the Legislature recognized him as

Speaker, and he was Speaker in this Legislature from 1977 to 1981.

Anyone who was here then will tell you he was a very tough Speaker. I recommend, Speaker, that you read some of his decisions. He was noted for kicking members of his own party out of the House. In fact, he was noted for being harder on members of his own party than of either of the other two parties. Again, Speaker, I recommend that you read some of his decisions.

After serving in the Legislature for 17 years, he decided he wanted to step down. One of the reasons he wanted to step down was because his wife, Helen, who had always been challenged with some physical disabilities, was having a more and more difficult time with her health. So he retired from the Legislature in 1985 and spent a great deal of his time after that with his wife.

But he didn't withdraw from the public scene altogether, and some of the people who will miss him most will be from institutions like Lakehead University and Confederation College, because he continued to be active in the causes of those institutions until just before his passing. He also became one of the people who looked after the forestry futures fund and how the fund was being used to regenerate forests that had been decimated by forest fires, pests, disease or other natural disasters such as blowdown. He took particular pleasure in travelling into the far reaches of the province, where a forest fire may have devastated thousands of hectares of land, and being on the ground and part of the team that would prescribe how that forest would be brought back to life.

I attended Jack's funeral, and there were many people of public life who attended his funeral. Most important, virtually the whole community of Schreiber turned out for his funeral and came to the Legion Hall afterwards to pay their continuing respects.

Jack Stokes was an incredible person. He went from being a conductor on the railway, to being a very honoured member of this Legislature, to being a Speaker of this Legislature, to being a true spokesman for aboriginal people and for people across northern Ontario.

We will all miss him, and I know that most of all his family will miss him. I want to say that Ontario was very fortunate to have someone of the dedication, the stature and the longevity of Jack Stokes to serve the province and to serve this Legislature.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I would like to associate my remarks with those of the leader of the third party in paying tribute to Jack Stokes and expressing our sympathy and concern for his family as well.

I had the pleasure of serving with Jack Stokes from 1977 to 1985. As was pointed out, Jack was appointed Speaker in 1977 by the then Premier, Bill Davis. Of course, procedures have changed now in the Legislative Assembly in that we elect our Speaker, but at that time the Premier of the day was the person who actually appointed the Speaker, so it was somewhat unusual to

appoint a member from the opposition. I want to remind members of the Legislative Assembly that this wasn't all done in perhaps kindness by Bill Davis, but it was a recognition that we had a minority Parliament at that particular point in time, and perhaps there was a little bit of strategy associated with it.

I want to say, as did the leader of the third party in his remarks, that Jack was as hard on the opposition as he was on the government of the day, on whose bench I sat, and that was sometimes felt by members of the government with a great deal of glee. We really enjoyed that part of it, I must say.

Jack was a man of not too many words when you talked to him about a particular issue. He was straightforward and to the point. But you always knew, in talking to other members of the Legislative Assembly, including ministers of the crown then, that Jack was really quite a unique problem-solver for the constituency that he represented. I believe he was probably an older-style politician, as I think politics has changed significantly since then. He spent a great deal of his time caring about his particular constituents and seeking solutions to individual and community problems of the area that he represented. He was extremely good at it. Because he did have a great deal of integrity and because he was a direct person, I believe the ministers of the day gave Jack Stokes a lot of width and breadth in terms of the arguments he put forward and worked together with Jack to make things better for the people he represented.

1400

As Speaker, he carried out the role in a very forceful way. He would often bring members to order very quickly, tell them to get to the point. He wouldn't allow members to rattle on and he would ask them to please come to the point very quickly. At that particular time, I can remember raising a point of order with him and he did bring me to order fairly quickly. If people want to look in Hansard in May 1979, they can find that particular exchange. But Jack knew the rules. He relied upon the clerks, as most Speakers do, but he did exhibit independence in giving his judgments and in being fair to members of the Legislature.

I have a great deal of respect, as do my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party, for Jack's integrity, for his tremendous work on behalf of the people he represented in the north and for, I think, being one of the most excellent Speakers we've ever had in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): On behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus, I'm honoured today to join Mr Sterling and Mr Hampton in paying tribute to the memory of the late Jack Stokes and to expressing to his wife, Helen, and to his family our appreciation for the outstanding public service that Jack carried on, not just here in the Legislature but in his community life in Schreiber and northwestern Ontario.

Norm and Howard have said it very well. I'm just thinking about some of the things the government House

leader said. He was very apt and very appropriate. Jack Stokes was a conductor. Jack understood what all good railroad conductors understood: that if you're the conductor, you're in charge. When Jack ascended those steps 23 years ago to become Speaker for the 31st Legislative Assembly, he followed the sweetly tempered, sweetly voiced Russell Rowe from Cobourg—we've had members here from Northumberland who are sweetly voiced and sweetly tempered. Jack understood that his job was to be in charge. I don't want to embarrass the member for Nickel Belt, but I have to tell you, Norm Sterling was absolutely right: Jack Stokes was never more authoritative than when on a regular basis he called not just the member from North Renfrew to his place, but Mr Speaker Stokes seemed to have a particular ability to call Elie Martel to order. He did it regularly, and he did it with effect. Those exchanges tended to be good examples for the other truants in the place, and I would certainly include myself as foremost among that group of people.

But Jack was, as Mr Sterling has observed, one of the really great Speakers of this Legislature. In 1977, when Mr Stokes became the Speaker, he was the first non-government Speaker that we had had in almost 60 years. He played a significant role in changing the culture. Mr Sterling talked about his relationships with the table. It's hard to forget Mr Speaker Stokes's relationship with the renowned Clerk of the day, Mr Roderick Lewis. You had to have been here to have watched the chemistry between that chair and that chair. I think it worked out in the public interest, although it was not always easy.

I have to say to my colleagues that Mr Stokes became Speaker after he was whip, and he earned his spurs in the NDP whipping, if you can imagine, people like Morton Shulman. I say to the current whips, you've got a very soft and easy life, because this has become a place of toeing the line. I remember Jack telling me about the things he learned as whip, and he came to the speakership, as the government House leader said, in a minority environment when we were all learning the rules, trying to play the game in a very different context. You see, in a minority government everybody shares in the responsibility, I say to my friends, in the opposition as well as in the government. I remember that day, as I'm sure Mr Sterling does, in the spring of 1978 when we had all more or less decided we didn't want an election and we almost stumbled into an election that nobody wanted. The fact that we didn't get there was to some real degree to the credit of Mr Speaker Stokes.

Jack liked this place; he truly liked this place. He liked members of all sides. I remember that those were the years when Leo Bernier was king of the north. It was quite commonplace to see big Leo Bernier and little Pat Reid and Jack Stokes behind the chair having one of those northern ecumenical meetings to discuss some issue that was of particular interest to the north. Jack played, as Mr Hampton has rightly observed, an enormous part in bringing the issues of the north to this chamber. That Amethyst Room we've got downstairs is to some real degree the work of Jack Stokes. He re-

minded us on a daily basis, whether it was mining, transportation or certainly forestry, that the north had an extremely important role to play that was not always understood by those of us in southern Ontario.

I want to conclude these remarks by saying on this day of all days: Jack Stokes came here in 1967. He had a riding that was about 110,000 square miles. It went from the Lakehead to the Hudson Bay shore: Lavant Lake, Pickle Lake and scores of little places in between. Probably the biggest places were Schreiber, Terrace Bay and Manitouwadge. Back then, members were paid probably \$10,000 or \$12,000, there were no constituency offices and there were no funds for doing all the kinds of work we now take for granted at the local level. Can you imagine coming here in 1967 under those conditions to be the kind of member that Jack went on to be for 18 years in a riding of 105,000 or 110,000 square miles? If Jack Stokes did nothing else—and he did much else—he showed those of us who came behind him what true public and community service was, on the ground in a big riding. That's why, when it was all over, everybody—Liberal, Tory, Social Crediter, New Democrat, you name it—voted for Jack Stokes, and they should have, because Jack Stokes set a standard of public service that was absolutely outstanding and truly exemplary.

I want to say to Helen and to his family that we cherish his memory and we will never forget what he did for those people in northwestern Ontario and what he did for this chamber and this Legislature.

The Speaker: I thank all the members for their comments, and I will make sure copies are sent to the family.

VISITORS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to tell the members that we have a formidable and tenacious defender of medicare in our midst today. I'd like to introduce Christine Burdett, chair of Friends of Medicare in Alberta. She will be speaking at a meeting on saving medicare at Eastminster church at 7:00 tonight, and all are welcome. Welcome, Christine.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member.

1410

ORAL QUESTIONS

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. As many as 14 people may have died in Walkerton, and the medical officer of health, Dr McQuigge, believes that lives could have been saved if he had been notified earlier that E coli had been found in the community's drinking water. Samples were taken on May 15, and Dr McQuigge wasn't able to issue a boil-water order until May 21, some six days later.

We have now learned that you received multiple warnings from the medical officers of health for Ontario telling you that by their being kept in the dark with respect to water test results, public health was being put at risk. Why did you ignore their warnings made directly to you?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):

The events that happened in Walkerton are indeed a tragedy and something that I don't think anyone in this province ever wants to see again. That's why there are four investigations underway, including the public inquiry, the OPP investigation, the investigation through the Ministry of the Environment's enforcement and investigations branch as well as the coroner's inquest. These four investigations are going to get to the bottom of what happened in Walkerton so that we can ensure that something like this never happens again in our province.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, I have today in my hand a series of letters exchanged between your ministry and the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. They tell you on an ongoing basis that they are being kept out of the loop when it comes to water test results and that public health is consequently placed at risk. They told you as early as September 1999 and as recently as April 2000 that medical officers of health are not being notified when there is contaminated water.

Here is one quote from a letter dated April 4, 2000, directed to you: "As stated in my previous letter, local health units used to get a copy of every ... water sample that did not meet the provincial drinking water standards in their jurisdiction. This procedure was phased out a number of years ago, so the medical officer of health no longer is informed, via this route, of any water quality problems in his" or her "area."

Here is another warning in black and white, Minister, directed personally to you on April 4, 2000, letting you know there is a serious problem here, because our medical officers of health in Ontario are being kept out of the loop. As such they're not receiving information in a timely way, and as such they can't take the necessary steps to save lives and prevent people from being sick.

Why did you fail to protect people, and why did you ignore these warnings that came from our medical officers of health?

Hon Mr Newman: We have ordered that all relevant documents be provided to Justice O'Connor, the OPP, the coroner and the Ministry of the Environment's investigations branch. Consistent with existing government protocol, the assistant Deputy Attorney General is responsible for forwarding relevant materials to the appropriate authorities. We are fully co-operating with all these ongoing investigations into the tragedy at Walkerton, including the public inquiry. We would expect everyone to co-operate. We're also fully committed to responding to requests for information and will make public as much information as we appropriately can. But the bottom line is that we want to get to the bottom of it

so it never happens again. In conclusion, we all want answers to what happened.

Mr McGuinty: These are letters from the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. They wrote to you and to your predecessor saying we've got a big problem in Ontario when it comes to water safety because there is no requirement that they be provided with information showing positive test results. They weren't getting the information telling them that water was about to make people in a community sick, that that water might kill people in that community. You responded, or your predecessors responded, on a regular basis by telling them simply, "We've got what we need in place, so just shove off."

Here's a copy of a letter sent by Tony Clement, your predecessor, to Mr Harnett, chair of the Healthy Environments Ontario branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. This is what he says:

"Dear Mr Hartnett:

"Thank you for your letter of September 8, 1999, requesting an amendment to the Ontario Water Resources Act [and] assurances from this ministry regarding the immediate reporting of adverse drinking water test results to the local medical officer of health."

He then goes on to say, for all intents and purposes, that the government already has guidelines in place and they're fine, so thank you very much.

Minister, once again we have a paper trail that leads to you and your predecessors. You were in fact put on notice, in this case by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, telling you they needed information, they weren't getting it and they were afraid people were going to get sick and die. Why did you fail to heed, once again, warnings given to you by credible parties telling you that people were going to get sick or die if they didn't get information that they desperately wanted?

Hon Mr Newman: These are the very issues that the four investigations will look at, including the public inquiry, to get to the bottom of what happened in Walkerton. That's why there is an existing government protocol in place to share that information, and I know that this government will provide any information it has, because we want to get to the bottom of it.

I say to the leader of the official opposition that on May 29 I announced a proposed regulation that will be coming forward that deals with the notification process. It makes abundantly clear the responsibilities of private labs, of the Ministry of the Environment, of the medical officers of health and of the municipalities and public utilities commissions in this province to exchange information regarding adverse water tests.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: To the same minister: Let me get this straight. You now want us to laud you, to congratulate you for passing a regulation that might have saved lives at Walkerton, the kind of regulation that the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors pleaded with you to pass six and eight and 10 months ago. Is that what you're asking us to do now? It's too late. You should have done

it back then. You should have listened to the warnings back then at that time and not now that we've got a body count as high as 14 in Ontario.

Let me tell you what else these public health inspectors said. They said that your guidelines were meaningless because no one was enforcing them. In February 2000, Ron Hartnett of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors writes to Mr Clement and he says the following:

"Dear Minister Clement:...

"You have outlined the actions an owner of a water system is supposed to take, but who is ensuring that the owner is actually doing this required work?... [If] no one is ensuring that the required actions are, in fact, being done, how would the medical officer of health know that there is a problem with a water supply system" in the first place?

Again, we have another paper trail leading directly to your office, a paper trail which shows beyond any reasonable doubt that you were negligent, that you ignored warnings from credible parties, people who were in the business of making us healthy, keeping us well, preventing us from getting sick and, above all, preventing us from getting so sick that we might die.

Minister, why did you ignore these letters and these warnings, and why today do you fail to do what is necessary to ensure we have no repetition of this disaster?

Hon Mr Newman: The protection of the environment and the protection of our drinking water is an issue that we take very seriously as a government. It's an issue that I take very seriously as Minister of the Environment. That's why there are the four investigations underway, and all relevant documents will be provided to Justice O'Connor, the OPP, the coroner and the Ministry of the Environment's investigative branch, so that we can get to the bottom of what happened in Walkerton.

There is a regulation coming forward that deals with notification, the exchange of information between the laboratories, the municipalities, the public utilities commissions, the Ministry of the Environment and the medical officer of health for the area. It's a very serious matter, and we want to ensure that something that happened in Walkerton never ever again happens in our province.

Mr McGuinty: We have a series of letters from the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors telling you and your predecessors in black and white that they needed a change made. They needed something to be done by you to make sure that they got information in a timely way about contaminated drinking water. They were telling you that they couldn't get their job done, they couldn't fulfill their responsibilities unless you did something in the government. You people in the government had to do something so they would get the information they needed to save lives. You didn't do that.

1420

Now you tell us that you passed a regulation after seven died—maybe it's as high as 14. And last week, late on Friday, the Premier holds a press conference and he

tells us, not that he's hiring 100 inspectors or enforcement officers—he doesn't tell us anything of the sort—he tells us he's hiring a management consultant.

Minister, knowing what you now know, knowing what you've always known, will you today, setting aside negligence in the past, recognizing your responsibilities today, agree to hire 100 inspectors and enforcement officers so we can make sure this kind of tragedy doesn't happen again?

Hon Mr Newman: With respect to the beginning part of the Leader of the Opposition's question, I encourage him not to jump to conclusions, not to point fingers or assess blame, because the investigations are underway and I think the investigations ought to be given the time they need to do the work they are required to do.

Public health and safety and a clean environment are top priorities for the government. We should continue to strive to do better so that we can do more to protect the environment in the province. That's why Valerie Gibbons has been retained to lead a team that will provide counsel on standards and best practices to safeguard the public and environmental health and safety and to develop guidelines to ensure that best practices and standards are communicated and enforced in our province.

Mr McGuinty: Let's add it all together and maybe you can tell me what it adds up to. We've got the Provincial Auditor who warned you on two separate occasions through two separate reports about a pending disaster. We've got the Environmental Commissioner who provided the same kind of warning. We've got internal information from your own ministry providing us with the same kinds of warnings. We've got a letter now from the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, in fact several letters, telling us that trouble was about to happen because they weren't getting the information they needed. We find out that the mayor of Walkerton himself sent you a letter saying that they simply couldn't cope with their responsibilities. And what you and the Premier do last week is you hire a management consultant? We don't need management, we need leadership. We've got to get this government off their duff, recognize the mistakes they've made in the past and begin to take the kinds of steps in the future that will prevent another Walkerton from happening.

Minister, understanding all of that, having thrown it at you here today, will you now recognize that the only responsible thing, or at least one of the responsible things, to do is to hire 100 inspectors and enforcement officers so we can begin once and for all to do the work that your ministry should have been doing all along?

Hon Mr Newman: As we look to the future in environmental protection in our province, the work of Valerie Gibbons will ensure that we remain at the forefront of environmental health and safety standards for water, land and air in the province. Valerie Gibbons and her team will provide an objective view on environmental health and safety practices and she'll work closely with the deputy minister. The work she will do will in no

way hinder the four investigations that are underway. These investigations are going to look to the past to see what happened, ask the question why and also how we can ensure that it doesn't happen again. We all want answers to what happened in Walkerton and these investigations are going to provide those answers. But in the meantime we're doing everything that we humanly can to ensure that Ontarians have a safe and clean supply of water today and in the future.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of the Environment and it's about the quality of our drinking water. Believe me, Minister, people are pleased that your Premier finally recognizes that you need help. But merely hiring a consultant, a babysitter, indicates that you don't recognize the magnitude of the drinking water problem you've created in this province nor do you recognize how far your government has fallen in terms of being able to do anything about it.

You've cut 900 staff from the Ministry of the Environment. You've reduced the number of water inspections by more than two thirds. When communities call your ministry because they've found E coli in the water, your ministry spokesmen say, "Sorry, we can't do anything about it; we don't have the resources."

The Premier said on Friday that you can hire more staff if you recommend it. Well, you've had some time now. How many staff are you going to recommend, who are you going to hire and when are they going to start?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): It's important to note, I say to the leader of the third party, when he was part of a government, they went outside of government to seek expert advice. They did it with Stephen Lewis on the race relations issue. You also went outside to John Sewell on planning issues. You looked outside of your government to try and make things better in the province.

By going outside and getting someone like Valerie Gibbons, who was a deputy minister for nine years in the Ontario civil service, someone who's now in private practice, who brings that expertise, I think we're going to be able to have some recommendations brought forward so that we can best position the Ministry of the Environment to protect the people of Ontario, to protect the environment of Ontario, to ensure that our water is safe, our land is safe and our air is safe.

Mr Hampton: The question was, when are you going to hire the staff and when are they going to start? I recognize that you personally need help. Everybody in Ontario recognizes that you personally need help. But the issue is the magnitude of the problem: Here in Toronto, 11 of 14 beaches are closed because of threats and worries about E coli contamination; my constituency, as far away from Toronto as you can get—hundreds of boil-water advisories, Minister.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has told you that in order to do the infrastructure work in terms of

the water plants and the sewer plants, \$9 billion is needed, but your so-called water fund is broke.

The Premier said you could hire staff to go out there and start addressing this pressing problem. The question is, Minister, when are you going to hire them, when are they going to go to work, and what are you waiting for?

Hon Mr Newman: There has been someone hired to make some recommendations as to how we can best position the Ministry of the Environment so that we have the best-positioned ministry for the 21st century so the people of Ontario have adequate protection—in fact, have the best protection possible—to ensure that the air, land and water in our province is indeed protected.

But I want to bring to everyone's attention a quote from Christina Blizzard's book *Right Turn*. She's talking about the New Democratic Party, and she says on page 160, "The party that made so much hay out of environmental issues ended up doing very little that was positive in the five years that they were in power."

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): Minister, that was pathetic. Nobody is going to take you at all seriously if you try to compare your environmental record to the New Democratic Party record when we were in government. Don't be so ridiculous. We expanded spending, and you've cut it. The reality is, Minister, that you are not doing the inspections any more.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Government members, come to order, please. I need to hear the question.

Ms Churley: On May 29, the Premier told this House that cuts to the MOE had no impact in the delivery of service. But you know that isn't the case. We showed you documents that show that your own ADM told you the cutbacks would reduce service. You cut water plant inspections from 470 a year down to 152. Your staff is so overloaded you haven't been able to get out the 1998 report from the drinking water surveillance program. The regulation that you keep bragging about will not be worth the paper it's printed on unless you bring in the resources to make it happen.

Minister, when are you going to admit that your cuts could create another Walkerton, could cause more deaths? Will you tell us today that you will hire back, immediately, the staff you fired? A consultant, one consultant, to hold your hand is not going to do us any good. We need the staff and the resources brought back now, Minister.

1430

Hon Mr Newman: I find it interesting that the inspection numbers the member opposite uses happen to be for the year that there was the OPSEU strike.

I want to say to her that this is what Leah Casselman, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, says: "I'm surprised they are hiring her because she's straight up. She doesn't play the political game." That's what Leah Casselman said.

I say to the member opposite that it wasn't this party's environmental policies that were rejected in 1995 or 1999; it was your party's.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the acting Premier. I want to return to your government's discrimination against northern cancer patients.

Last fall our caucus raised the issue of Donna Graham of Pickle Lake, who had to drive six hours one way to Thunder Bay in order to get cancer care and who only received a fraction of her costs; the case of Gladys Whelan, a pensioner from Fort Frances who, after three trips to Thunder Bay, stopped going for cancer treatment because she couldn't afford to travel any more; the case of Anna Watson, who came from Fort Frances about six weeks ago and was in this gallery, who spoke of the thousands and thousands of dollars she was out for cancer care that she had to pay out of her own pocket.

Today at Queen's Park we have two other individuals, this time from northeastern Ontario, who have been directly affected by your government's discrimination: Janice Skinner, who has spent over \$40,000 travelling from Capreol, my hometown, to Toronto because her form of cancer is not treated in northern Ontario; secondly, the case of René Boucher, who drives his wife from Iroquois Falls to Sudbury for cancer treatment and who has also spent thousands of dollars.

Those two individuals know that your government is paying 100% of the cost for cancer care for southern Ontario patients while they get back only a fraction of their costs. Janice Skinner said the following today: "I want to be treated fairly. We pay taxes. We all live in Ontario. I feel we are being discriminated against. I just want to be treated fairly."

Minister, when is your government going to end its discrimination against northern cancer patients?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Chair of Management Board.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I know the Minister of Northern Development and Mines would like to answer this.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'm pleased to respond to the member's question.

There was a recent letter to the Sudbury Star from Dr Shumak, from Cancer Care Ontario, who mentions that some of the criticism coming from the opposition is just serving to confuse the issue. I think we have to put the facts on the table to make sure everybody understands that there are two different programs that the members are trying to confuse to try to sow those seeds in northern Ontario.

As an example, if somebody from Tobermory had to travel 300 and some kilometres down to London for hip replacement surgery, that individual would not receive any funding, whereas somebody from Smooth Rock Falls

travelling to Sudbury for a similar procedure would receive funding to assist in their costs.

The goal of this government is to make sure that northern Ontario patients have access to health care services as close to home as possible, and that's why this government is making record investments in cancer services in northern Ontario, in kidney dialysis services in northern Ontario, in new MRIs, more operations and more doctors and specialists in the north. The goal is to ensure that patients get care as close to home and as quickly as possible. It's a goal we've made major strides on, and we're moving ahead in the future.

Ms Martel: Your government surely does have two different programs. You've got a deluxe plan for southern Ontario patients and a second-class plan for second-class cancer patients from northern Ontario. That's what we've got happening here, Minister. Why don't you admit it? It would cost your government \$6 million to end this discrimination.

I remind you that earlier this spring you had \$5 million to blow on partisan television ads which did nothing to add to front-line health care. You've already committed to paying \$23.1 million to cover 100% of the cost of southern Ontario patients to access care. In addition to that, you had a \$5-billion surplus from the last budget, and all you can find is one cent for health care versus one dollar for tax cuts. It would cost you \$6 million to end this, and your government has done nothing.

A month ago the finance minister said publicly that this program would be reviewed. Over a month ago, your Minister of Health said this program would be reviewed. Two cancer patients from northern Ontario are here today, and they're telling you nothing has been done. They're tired of being treated like second-class citizens. When is your government going to put up the small amount of \$6 million to end your discrimination against our patients?

Hon Mr Hudak: I know there's the incentive to play a little bit of politics with this and try to mislead the people of northern Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. You need to withdraw that.

Hon Mr Hudak: I withdraw it, Mr Speaker.

The fact of the matter is that there is the northern Ontario travel grant program, which doesn't exist for patients anywhere else in the province. This is only for northern Ontario patients, to help them get the services they need and to overcome the costs of travel.

With respect to an entirely separate temporary program from Cancer Care Ontario, patients in similar circumstances with respect to re-referrals or times they can't get timely service, Cancer Care Ontario would treat those patients the same, whatever part of the province they're from, when they're in similar circumstances.

The fact of the matter is that what they don't understand and what they don't seem to come to grips with is that it's the Mike Harris government that is building a new hospital in the Sudbury area, where you're from.

You had the opportunity to build that hospital, to add \$100 million to that hospital. You didn't do that.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister, take a seat, please.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I thank you, and on perhaps a more gentle track, I have two delegations, one of which will be leaving shortly, which I'd like to introduce to the House.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker: Not during question period, they don't. I say to the Minister of Energy, during question period they do not. We do not allow question period to be used for that. They have not done that, and I will not. I say to the Minister of Energy, they have not.

New question, member for Sudbury.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is also to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, this is not about politics; it's about people. It's about people who cannot afford the cost of being treated for cancer. It has nothing to do with partisan politics.

Let me explain to you very slowly but very clearly. Mary Jane comes from Toronto, travels north 400 kilometres to Sudbury to be treated for cancer. All her air travel costs are paid; all her hotel costs are paid; all her meal costs are paid; all her taxi costs are paid.

Janice Skinner travels the same 400 kilometres, except she travels them south to Toronto, because Janice Skinner's cancer cannot be treated in Sudbury. She gets 31 cents a kilometre, one way. That's \$124. She receives no hotel costs, no meal costs, no taxi costs. As the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I want you to explain to Janice Skinner why northerners are being discriminated against by the Mike Harris government.

Hon Mr Hudak: I quoted from a letter from Dr Shumak, which I will do again. Dr Shumak is the CEO for Cancer Care Ontario. He backs up what I'm saying, that there are two different sets of programs. One is a permanent program to help northern Ontario residents.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister, take a seat.

Sorry for the interruption. Minister.

Hon Mr Hudak: As Dr Shumak says, there are two different sets of programs. They're trying to confuse for political gain, and I know that's what they're about. It says they're designed to meet different purposes and in fact Dr Shumak, the expert in the area, says there is no inequitable treatment between northern and southern patients who need to be re-referred for radiation treatment.

The member says this is not about politics. The member knows the facts of this matter, but that doesn't stop the member, in his steely heart and political calculations, from taking these poor people with his class action lawsuit and telling them things that are not true. They're against what Dr Shumak is saying. You want to know who is acting in politics? It's the member opposite,

who's taking advantage of his constituents for his own political gain.

1440

The Speaker: The time is up. Supplementary.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the minister has gone a little bit overboard in his defence of a bad policy and is impugning motives. My only motive is to ensure that there is fair treatment.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Supplementary to the same minister. Northern patients who have to travel down here don't hang their hat on the bureaucratic gobbledygook that you're giving us in this House. If you're a northern cancer patient and you cannot get that treatment in their region, northern Ontario, and have to be, let's say, redirected to southern Ontario for treatment, they don't get the same fee, the same support, that a southerner gets when they have to be redirected to the north. That's the difference, and that's all they understand. They don't understand all your different bureaucratise that it's redirect, re-referral. If we have to travel south because we can't get into the very good cancer centre in Sudbury, we get the one-way mileage. If somebody in Oakville has to go to Sudbury or Thunder Bay, they get up to \$4,000, all expenses paid. We don't like the difference; it's not fair. When are you going to fix it?

Hon Mr Hudak: It's true that there is a northern Ontario travel grant program that does not exist in any other parts of the province to help northerners to overcome the cost of travel for distances. So as the member says, if somebody from Oakville, for example, had to travel to Ottawa or to London for treatment, say for knee surgery or a hip replacement, that individual would not get the costs covered, whereas somebody from the north, for similar travel on a re-referral or redirect, would have some of those costs returned. But the point of the matter is—I know that the only vision the Liberals have for northern Ontario health care is to send patients all over the place, whether to the States or other provinces or down south. Our vision for health care in the north is quite a bit different. We want to bring services to northern Ontario; we want to bring more doctors—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister, take a seat. Order. If members want to shout across, we'll just wait, and the clock will continue to run.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Education and it concerns funding for school busing in my riding of Waterloo-Wellington, which comprises areas such as the Waterloo region public school board, the Waterloo separate school board, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Wellington separate school board. I would like to first of all acknowledge the efforts of my colleagues the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and the member for

Guelph-Wellington for their leadership on this issue as well.

We have heard from stakeholders, including board officials and school bus operators, and their first message is one of appreciation to the minister for the additional \$23 million in funding recently budgeted for pupil transportation. At the same time, we are hearing that funding inequities need to be addressed. For example, boards which cut costs some years ago are apparently receiving less relative to boards which did not find savings during that time. There are also concerns that rural boards which have fewer students but much longer bus rides are at a funding disadvantage relative to urban areas. Would the minister update this House on how these new dollars might alleviate these kinds of funding problems in the future?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I thank the member for the question. I have had many discussions with the caucus colleagues he has mentioned about this issue. The transportation of students to schools is extremely important. We want to make sure that it's available, that it's safe, that our students are arriving ready to learn and well-transported, if you will. There's no question, as the honourable member focuses on, that some boards have done a very good job, have been very cost-effective, while others have not been able to take those steps. We've put forward interim funding this year for those school boards, primarily for rural and northern boards, remote boards that have some significant challenges. That brought a total of \$600 million for transportation grants, the highest it has been. But we also know that we need to do more work about how boards get that money, because it's still not supporting them in the way it needs to. We have a working group that is doing that work now to see how we can best financially support those boards to have appropriate bus transportation for our students. The providers have certainly been experiencing some cost pressures, and we want to make sure that we do not jeopardize this very important service for our students.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): Minister, this is a very serious issue in our riding. Our constituents want our school boards to be diligent in finding efficiency and in spending every tax dollar wisely. One way that has been suggested for this to occur is for boards to form consortia, to join forces and co-operate, for instance, in things like designing school bus routes.

What I would like to know is: Do you agree with the concept of consortia, and what steps will you take as minister to ensure that the boards work together and direct as many education dollars as possible to the classroom?

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member from the opposition says there's nothing new about consortia for school boards and transportation. He's right. There wasn't anything new. Their government, unfortunately, didn't take steps to ensure that was indeed happening.

We are taking steps to make sure that those school boards who have not explored this option should indeed do that. Some boards have already saved many millions of dollars, which they're plowing back into the classroom, by being efficient in transportation, by doing consortia among themselves or the coterminous boards. I know, just even in Durham region, some of the potential savings from doing that are quite significant. So we are encouraging that. We're doing it through a number of ways. Most recently, we have money available to boards for the information technology that allows them to do that better. Again, some boards have moved forward with that; others have not been able to. We want to make sure that they have those technology supports. Again, the goal here is to make sure our students have the bus transportation they need and that it is done in the most cost-effective fashion possible.

WATER QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. My question's about mission impossible, that is, your telling the people of this province that you are going to have 630 water treatment plants thoroughly and completely inspected—remembering they take over a week apiece to do if they're to be done properly by expert staff who are suitably qualified, acceptably qualified, know the ins and outs of water treatment plants—you're going to do 630 plants this year, when in 1998-99 you conducted 68% fewer inspections than in 1993-94, the year before your government took office. You said last week you've cut the Ministry of the Environment budget by 44%. You have at least 800 people out the door, probably more, and 37 of those employees were dedicated to water plant inspections.

My question is this: Minister, how on earth are you going to do it properly? How are you going to inspect all of those plants, with qualified inspectors, the way they're supposed to be inspected, and at the same time not be inspecting all the sewage treatment plants in this province that spew forth all kinds of contaminated water?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): Again, we are reviewing all certificates of approval for the water facilities in the province. We are going to ensure that they're all done by the end of this year. We're going to ensure that certificates of approval will be done once every three years thereafter. We're going beyond that: We're going to ensure that each of the 630 facilities in the province are indeed inspected by the end of this year by qualified personnel, and we're going to see that happens.

Mr Bradley: Of course, anybody who knows this file at all knows this cannot be done—that you cannot do it with the staff you have at the present time unless you're pulling people from every other job in the ministry, people who may not have the specific qualifications and people who should be doing other important jobs within the ministry. Either that or you're going to have to head out into the private sector and find the people that you

fired out the door to do those inspections for you, and there aren't even enough of those people.

The Premier has said that somehow, once this bulge is over, you're not going to need permanent staff to conduct those inspections. I know and you know, and anybody who knows this field well knows, that you cannot thoroughly and appropriately inspect all of those plants in a year, and they know that you'll be abandoning sewage treatment plants, which also need inspection. How is it, then, that you're going to be able to maintain a once-a-year schedule of inspection in the years to come, or is it true that you're going to revert back to the once every three years, which proved to be totally inadequate and produced the disastrous results which we see in this province already?

Hon Mr Newman: I remind the member opposite that each and every water facility in this province will be inspected this year and that they will be inspected by qualified personnel to ensure that each and every facility is in compliance. If a facility is not in compliance, a field order will be issued, and we're going to ensure that it is done.

1450

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): My question is for the Solicitor General. Public safety is one of our government's top priorities. We believe that one of the best ways to improve community safety is to invest money into front-line policing. Last month, we presented the Waterloo Regional Police Service with a cheque for \$239,597 as part of our community policing partnership program. Through our community policing partnership program, the Waterloo Regional Police Service will get an additional 53 front-line police officers. To date, 42 of those officers are already on the streets of Kitchener Centre. On the same day, you and I also presented a cheque for \$30,000 to the Waterloo Regional Police Service for their RIDE program, Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere. That means that since 1995 our government has given over \$155,000 to their Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere program. Through our Partners Against Crime front-line policing grants, Waterloo Regional Police have also received \$20,000 in 1999 to purchase Stop Stick tire deflation devices. I would also like to tell the House that community agencies in Kitchener Centre have also been recipients of our Partners Against Crime community crime prevention grant program. And this morning, I presented the Kitchener Downtown Business Association with \$30,000 to assist with their graffiti-busters project.

Minister, all these investments are being made by our government to help keep the streets of Kitchener Centre safe. Could you tell the House about some other investments that our government is making to help keep our community safe?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Solicitor General): I'd like to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for the question. As the people of Ontario know, the battle

against crime takes place not simply with the front-line police officers, but also in our use of science in combatting crime. If I could say a couple of words about the Centre of Forensic Sciences, our Ontario Centre of Forensic Sciences is acknowledged world-wide for their expertise and for being cutting-edge in terms of certain areas, particularly in DNA. We recognize the importance of DNA testing in the fight against crime. Over the last few years, we've doubled the number of staff and we've doubled the amount of space dedicated to our DNA testing.

Recently in the papers, they were criticizing the federal government in terms of the ability of their police to turn around their samples in tests of DNA. It's a matter of months that they're testing. I'm proud to say that at the forensic centre in Ontario, our turnover time is 48 hours. Forty-eight hours is the shortest time scientifically in which analysis can be done.

Mr Wettlaufer: Thank you, Minister. It is nice to know that unlike the federal Liberals, our government is supporting a wide range of initiatives to fight crime, from the front-line police officers on our streets to new and innovative techniques at the Centre of Forensic Sciences.

You mentioned that our investments in the Centre of Forensic Sciences have led to a reduction in DNA turn-around time and that the size of the laboratory and the number of staff have doubled. The federal Auditor General released a report recently, criticizing the federal Liberals and their lack of support for the RCMP laboratory system and the backlog in DNA testing. He went on to suggest that this backlog was a threat to public safety. Minister, would you please tell the House and the people of Kitchener Centre about your concerns with the lack of federal Liberal action in this important area of crime-fighting?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Recently, I wrote to Anne McLellan, who's the justice minister federally, urging her to institute a national DNA bank. There are three areas in which the current DNA testing is failing nationally, as I believe. The first one is that we as a government, along with the Ontario chiefs of police and the Canadian chiefs of police, have been calling for the testing of DNA upon arrest, just as we test and take the samples of fingerprints, because it's a totally unobtrusive way of testing.

Second, we believe there should be a retroactive universal collection of DNA from all the convicts who are currently in the penitentiaries and prisons. Clearly, if we were to have this universal sampling, we would be able to solve all kinds of unsolved crimes, because, believe me, these folks who are our guests right now in corrections did not commit just one crime. We have the ability now to safeguard our communities by doing this testing now on all the prisoners. However, the federal government is resisting this. For what reason, we do not know.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I have a question for the Minister of Education. Minister, today

we have another example of your failure and the failure of your Common Sense Revolution. Your cuts are hurting kids in more ways than one. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides across this province won't be able to pay the \$100,000 that schools must charge for the use of their schools, thanks to your funding formula, which is cutting the heart out of our communities. Since you have centralized education financing, boards of education have lost the flexibility to be able to respond to community needs. Boards cannot help Boy Scouts and Girl Guides any longer. Will you?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I think using school facilities for many community activities is certainly an appropriate use of those facilities. School boards make policies about what they're going to charge for the use of those facilities. For example, the Toronto board, as I understand it, has special rates for groups like Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. It's \$5.70 an hour, as I understand it. They may well be working with the city to change that policy, but school boards have always had the responsibility for determining that policy. I certainly expect them to make appropriate judgments based on what they believe is appropriate for their community.

Mr Marchese: Minister, we know this information. The boards have been subsidizing Boy Scouts and Girl Guides for a long time. They've given them reduced rates for a long time. You know that boards have been reduced to fundraising in so many ways. School councils are fundraising until they drop. A school in Windsor is selling bricks to stay open. You have countless dollars, billions of dollars, to give away to corporations as tax cuts, yet you have squeezed boards till they're dry. They have no more money. They're saying they cannot any longer subsidize the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. So I say to you that you are directly responsible, because of your funding formula, for causing the damage that this will do to the work that is done by the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. You are directly responsible for that, and I am asking you, are you going to be able to help? Boards are no longer able to do that, after you've squeezed them dry. Are you going to be there for them, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The Toronto board, as I understand it, does provide a lower rate for Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. As I said, it works out to about \$5.70 an hour for the use of a school gym, which I would anticipate is much below the cost that the board would incur in order to do that worthwhile opportunity. I would certainly congratulate school boards that do have that kind of flexible structure for groups that they believe are helping their students.

Secondly, I should remind the honourable member, since he keeps forgetting, that the tax reductions that we brought in in this province are predominantly benefiting those in the lower- and middle-income groups. As a matter of fact, there are lower-income folks who no longer pay any Ontario income tax because of our tax cuts, which is certainly, for a lower-income family, a great benefit to them.

The other issue the honourable member raises—there's a recent report from the education ministers

across the country that talks about the fact that parent groups are fundraising across the country. They've done it before; it is not a new thing. It's certainly a pressure that parents are experiencing in all provinces.

Finally, there is indeed more money today out there in our education system than there was when we came into office.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, I want to return to the issue raised a short while ago and I want you to tell me why the Mike Harris government is discriminating between cancer patients living in the north and cancer patients living in the south. Janice Skinner, who was in here just a few moments ago, over the course of the past 14 months has had to contribute \$10,000 towards her travel costs and other expenses, but her counterpart living in Toronto has had to contribute zero over the past 14 months. You tell us there are two different programs. There is just one group of people, Minister, surely you understand that—one group of Ontarians sick with cancer.

Tell us now, because we don't get it over here: How is it that you can countenance discrimination, and you discriminate against people suffering from cancer in the north as opposed to those living in the south?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The Leader of the Opposition is right, he just doesn't get it. There is nothing new there. I'll tell him the difference.

There is an 18% increase in funding for the cancer centre in Thunder Bay, a 15% increase in the cancer centre in Sudbury, a new hospital and a new cancer centre going into Thunder Bay, a \$100-million investment in a hospital and the cancer centre in Sudbury and a brand new cancer treatment in Sault Ste Marie. The difference is that the Mike Harris government is acting to improve services for northern Ontario patients far beyond anything you even comprehended when you ran for this office last year.

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Mr McGuinty: Discrimination is still discrimination, even if you call it something else. This is discrimination, pure and simple, and it's unadulterated. It's there for everybody to see.

You told us that you were coming here to fix the government. You didn't want to be "the government." You were going to be there for the people. Well, here's a people problem. You've got a policy in place that clearly discriminates against people who live in the north. People in the south will not countenance this. People in the north will not countenance this. This is anti-Ontarian. Certainly my party believes that anybody in our province who happens to be stricken with cancer deserves equal quality treatment.

Stop trying to defend the indefensible. Fix this problem. You said you were going to fix the government. Fix

this problem and make it right for the people of Ontario who live in the north.

Hon Mr Hudak: I guess in the earlier questions to the Minister of the Environment it was Judge McGuinty, and now it's Dr McGuinty. In fact, a real doctor, Dr Shumak, who is the CEO of Cancer Care Ontario, says, "Cancer Care Ontario's program does not discriminate against anyone." It's true. You may know better, Dr McGuinty, but I'm telling you what I know. As I said, record increases into health care in this province, a new hospital in Thunder Bay and \$100 million going to Sudbury.

I want to say—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister take his seat, please. Order. Minister.

Hon Mr Hudak: As I said, Dr Shumak, the expert on the issue, says this program does not discriminate against anyone, and that's the fact. I know your vision is just to send patients travelling wherever; that's your vision for health care. Ours is to improve services to northern Ontario patients. That's why we brought in some 300 doctors and specialists, new hospitals, new cancer centres and MRIs. This record is far beyond anything you even comprehended.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is to the Minister of Correctional Services. On a recent Tuesday, the member for Niagara Centre introduced a private member's bill that would amend the Ministry of Correctional Services Act to allow victims to attend parole hearings. I was indeed surprised, but heartened, to see that the NDP apparently now believes that the victims of crime should be given a voice in our justice system. Minister of Correctional Services, what is your opinion of this proposed legislation?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): I too was actually quite surprised to see that the member for Niagara Centre has finally agreed with this government's perspective on the rights of victims to participate more actively and fully in the justice system, including whether or not individuals who are sentenced for committing a crime are eligible for parole. I only wish that he was there to support this government when we took the initiative to make sure that parole was indeed considered a privilege to be earned as opposed to a right that was automatically granted. I wish he was supportive of that when we made that change in 1995. I take from the theme and context of his bill that he and his party now do support that. We have made great strides to make parole something that should be a privilege for individuals who are sentenced to earn as opposed to a right that's automatically granted to them.

Mr Galt: Thank you, Minister, for that response. Certainly it's obvious that this government takes the rights of victims very, very seriously.

I'm now left wondering if the Minister of Correctional Services might just elaborate on some of the steps the

Ontario government has taken. As members of this House are aware, public safety has been a prime feature of the Blueprint election platform. There's no question that the Blueprint clearly outlines what steps we will take to ensure that the rights of victims of crime are respected in this province.

Minister, perhaps the Liberals are unaware of our commitments to victims of crime. Can you please enlighten them for me.

Hon Mr Sampson: Not only do the Liberals apparently not believe in it, but they're heckling and joking over there when we talk about the rights of victims in the criminal justice system. They just don't get it and neither do their federal cousins, by the way, who have a federal parole system and a quota system to get people out of jail.

We believe that parole should be something that people earn in this province, and that's what we've done. We've made a lot of strides to make sure that victims are more active in the parole process and more active in the criminal justice system, to make sure their voices are heard. We're prepared to stand up for the rights of victims of crime. The Liberals aren't; we are.

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): My question is to the Attorney General. Mr Minister, we all agree that justice delayed is justice denied, but worst of all, when a convicted individual refuses to comply with the remedy ordered, the victim is further victimized but this time by the system.

Could you please tell the people of Ontario what procedures or practices are in place to ensure that convicted individuals comply with tribunal decisions so that victims are not further victimized?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member opposite for the question. It's unclear to me what the member is asking about—about the obligations of convicted criminals to obey administrative tribunals. If the member can elucidate and perhaps give me some idea of what he's asking about, I'll endeavour to respond.

Mr Curling: I thought a minister would have some sort of procedure in place for when someone has been convicted. But let me make it clearer to you, Mr Minister.

This government specifically promised to beef up the resources of the Ontario Human Rights Commission at the time it shut down the Employment Equity Commission. It is a widely known fact that the Ontario Human Rights Commission lacks the resources and mandate to be effective. This in itself denies justice. Further to that, it also lacks the necessary teeth to enforce its rulings.

We have known repeat offenders who make a mockery of the system by refusing to comply with the board orders. Would you say, Mr Minister, that this is the time to have a total review of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, giving it the necessary resources and

mandate to do its job? Quite often, whenever the board states its convictions and its ruling, it's completely denied and the individual goes scot-free without complying to those orders. What have you got in place to ensure that when these things have been ordered, there are procedures to make them happen?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I refer it to the Minister of Citizenship.

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Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. He asked a couple of questions about the Ontario Human Rights Commission and I'd like to say that on a number of different avenues we're very proud of the work that the Ontario Human Rights Commission is doing in the province of Ontario.

When we took office in 1995, there was an incredible backlog at the Ontario Human Rights Commission and people were waiting for a long time to be heard. We've implemented a mediation process that ensures that there is better client service, that people who feel they have a right to be heard in front of the tribunal have the ability to have that happen. Let me tell you that 60% of the complaints filed are resolved, right now, in less than six months.

What happens, in effect, is that people who come before the Human Rights Commission as a result of some concern or something they feel is a wrongdoing are able to be heard very quickly. The Human Rights Commission continues to do that. It continues to ensure that people get the hearings they deserve. They go through the mediation process, and they're also able to go before the board of inquiry. We believe that things are operating well at the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions is over. The member for Essex on a point of order.

VISITORS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Several weeks ago, I was privileged to be principal for a day at Gosfield north elementary public school, and I am pleased to say today that I have the principal, Bill Kotevich, with me as an MPP for the day.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member for Parkdale-High Park on a point of order.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): A point of order relating to the change of business in the House. I had intended to file this with you as a point of privilege tomorrow. However, the changing order of Bill 74 has affected that, so I'd like to provide this to you, Mr Speaker, as supplementary information; that is, the assistant deputy minister of education has already issued directions to school boards as if Bill 74 had already passed. I have in my possession a memo sent on the

impact of Bill 74 that clearly states that the bill is already assumed to be passed and the measures have already taken place. I'll provide that to you as supplementary.

The Speaker: I would appreciate that.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have in my possession petitions literally carrying thousands of signatures. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

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

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not have a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

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

That's signed, as I said, by hundreds, if not thousands, of my constituents.

DURHAM COLLEGE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It is my distinct pleasure to be recognized. I am presenting this on behalf of the Lions Club of Newcastle and their recording secretary, Frank Hoar, along with numerous other members of my riding of Durham. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support Durham College in their bid for university status;

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

"We feel for the economic well-being of Durham region a university is necessary. We strongly support the bid by Durham College to achieve this status in the immediate future."

I sign and present this petition with all the intensity possible.

WATER EXTRACTION

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we strenuously object to permits to take water being issued by the Ministry of the Environment without adequate assessment of the consequences and without adequate consultation with the public and those people and groups who have expertise and interest;

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

"We request a moratorium on the issuing of permits to take water for non-farm, commercial and industrial use and the rescinding of all existing commercial water taking permits that are for bulk or bottled water export, outside of Ontario, until a comprehensive evaluation of our water needs is completed. An independent non-partisan body should undertake this evaluation."

I will very happily sign my name to this petition.

FARMLAND

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Canada's class 1 farmland is a nationally important resource that is fast disappearing; and

"Whereas 8,000 acres of Canada's best farmland north and east of Toronto was expropriated in 1973 to be retained as parkland and farmland in perpetuity; and

"Whereas it was the stated intention of this and previous governments to protect this area of the Rouge-Duffin agricultural preserve as parkland and farmland forever; and

"Whereas the Ontario Realty Corp is charged with selling this public land; and

"Whereas this sale is being conducted in a manner that threatens the existing community and the future of farming in the agricultural preserve;

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

"We request that the government of Ontario actively seek implementation of agricultural easements on all the farmland in the Rouge-Duffin agricultural preserve.

"We request that the government of Ontario honour the promise of the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet, specifically that the sale of the farmland will be at prices affordable to the farmers to ensure the continuation of farming in the agricultural preserve."

PESTICIDES

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I have today about 1,200 individual petition sheets from a lot of people from my area of the province. They say:

"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:

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

I attach my name to this petition as well.

DURHAM COLLEGE

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): It is my honour to present a petition on behalf of a fellow Lion, Frank Hoar, secretary of the Lions Club of Newcastle.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support Durham College in their bid for university status;

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

"We feel that for the economic well-being of Durham region a university is necessary. We strongly support the bid by Durham College to achieve this status in the immediate future."

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

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

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“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

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

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

I have signatures of another 150 concerned constituents to add to the thousands of constituents who have forwarded this petition to the Legislature in the past. I affix my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): Last Friday, I met in my constituency with members of the land use committee looking after issues on the Oak Ridges moraine. Minister Flaherty and Minister Ecker were with me as well at a well-received meeting, so on their behalf I’m reading a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is a glacial ridge running across the top of Toronto including Caledon, King, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch Stouffville, Uxbridge, Pickering, Scugog, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington; and

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is the headwater for about 35 rivers and streams flowing south to Lake Ontario and north to Lake Simcoe; and

“Whereas the drinking water for millions of GTA residents, the wetlands, wildlife and natural areas will suffer irreparable damage if industrial, commercial and/or residential development is permitted without protective planning for preservation,

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

“That the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything in its power to ensure the Oak Ridges moraine remains zoned as agricultural and rural;

“Work with the Ontario Municipal Board to ensure conservation of the Oak Ridges moraine;

“Provide a policy statement to enshrine its position.”

I am pleased to sign and endorse this petition.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): “Whereas the government of Ontario has stated its intention to close the Monteith Correctional Centre; and

“Whereas this closure will result in the loss of 90 jobs in Iroquois Falls and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas this job loss will be devastating to the community,

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

“We call upon the government of Ontario to cease plans to close the Monteith Correctional Centre and continue to publicly operate this facility.”

DURHAM COLLEGE

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I appreciate being able to read a number of these because my constituents continue to send these petitions. This one is from the Newcastle Lions Club and I present it on their behalf. I might mention the member for Northumberland is a past district governor of Lions.

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support Durham College in their bid for university status;”—I might add I do as well—“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“We feel for the economic well-being of Durham region a university is necessary. We strongly support the bid by Durham College to achieve this status in the immediate future.”

I sign and support this petition on their behalf.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is the rain barrel of southern Ontario and the headwaters for over 65 rivers and streams, from Cobourg to Caledon; and

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is threatened by uncontrolled development that is destroying precious natural wetlands, forests, groundwater and wildlife; and

“Whereas 465 world-renowned scientists, local residents and naturalists all support an immediate development freeze and the implementation of a comprehensive protection plan for the moraine; and

“Whereas the province has the power to coordinate planning over a wide area of nine regions and 26 municipalities and the province must act quickly; and

“Whereas every month new developments are being approved that will destroy the environmental integrity of the moraine;

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

“That the provincial government immediately freeze development on the Oak Ridges moraine and pass Bill 12, the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection and Preservation Act, so that there will be a comprehensive plan to protect and preserve the moraine for future generations.”

I am in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I'd like to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

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

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

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

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes 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;

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

I am pleased to put my name on this as well.

DELAYED START OF SCHOOL

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas for 1998 and 1999, a delayed start program, developed by community councils with input from students, had been accepted and successfully implemented for the schools of Glendale High School, Norwich District High School, and East Elgin Secondary School; and

"Whereas to this date there has not been resolve to this issue for September 2000, we hereby petition the Legislative Assembly to provide leadership and resolve for this very important local issue;

"Whereas this plan has, for two years, proven itself to be irrefutably beneficial to the students of these schools and developed with their best interests in mind;

"With the full support of all the parties concerned, we, the undersigned students of the schools who will be affected by this decision, support the continuation of the late-start program as it has existed."

It's signed by a number of residents from Tillsonburg, Springfield and Otterville. I affix my name to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I'm sorry, I overlooked the proper rotation. At this point I would recognize the member for Hamilton West.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): For the time being.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): No, for quite a while, Margaret, actually. I announced it today. I'm staying here. I would miss you.

Applause.

Mr Christopherson: Thank you.

Hon Mrs Marland: I would miss you too, David.

Mr Christopherson: That's sweet, Margaret, really.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Break it up, you two.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): "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;

"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;

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

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

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

I continue to support these petitions by adding my name.

1530

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE
COMMERCE ÉLECTRONIQUE

Mr Flaherty moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 88, An Act to promote the use of information technology in commercial and other transactions by

resolving legal uncertainties and removing statutory barriers that affect electronic communication / *Projet de loi 88, Loi visant à promouvoir l'utilisation des technologies de l'information dans les opérations commerciales et autres en éliminant les incertitudes juridiques et les obstacles législatifs qui ont une incidence sur les communications électroniques.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Would the Attorney General like to start off debate?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I propose to share my time with the members for Etobicoke North, Northumberland and Durham.

Over the past five years, Ontario has experienced tremendous economic growth. Ontario's economic turnaround didn't happen by accident. It was the result of hard work by the people of the province as well as key initiatives that arose from strong and focused leadership. I was reminded of the relationship between success and work at the commencement ceremony at Trafalgar Castle School in Whitby last Saturday morning, where the valedictorian said, "The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary." Our government believes we must continue to work to develop initiatives that keep our economy competitive, growing and strong. That's why we have introduced the Electronic Commerce Act. If passed, the act would boost the online growth of Ontario's businesses by cutting red tape and removing outdated legal barriers to e-commerce.

This government places a high level of importance on the development of e-commerce in Ontario and is committed to seeing Ontario play a leading role in the development of the on-line economy across Canada. Terms like "dot.com," "e-mail" and "downloading" are now part of our everyday language. More and more, the people of Ontario are going on-line to conduct business, to send an e-mail or to shop. There is no doubt that the World Wide Web is becoming the communications hub for individuals and businesses.

Here in Ontario we want to bring our laws in line with those technological advances to encourage investment and establish consumer confidence. Currently in Ontario we still use the old law of contracts, based on ink and paper arrangements, an old law that doesn't recognize electronic contracts and therefore inhibits on-line business growth.

If passed, the Electronic Commerce Act would make it clear that electronic contracts, documents and signatures can have the same legal force and effect as contracts, documents and signatures on paper. Ontario's economic success depends on our ability to make e-commerce run as smoothly as possible. E-commerce is the new way of doing business, and many forward-thinking companies have already recognized the huge potential of e-business and are creating exciting new ways to generate commercial success. Electronic publications, on-line financial services, virtual auctions and virtual shopping are just a few of the emerging trends that are revolutionizing many industries. For example, companies like Procter and

Gamble and several automobile suppliers have created Internet buying systems. These systems provide a higher level of convenience and comprehensiveness for business partners and consumers.

What has hindered the rapid growth of these buying systems is the uncertainty about the law that governs on-line business. If passed, our bill would guarantee that a contract in electronic form would be legal and enforceable.

This bill would also help promote people's confidence in e-business. People need to have confidence in the validity of their electronic transactions.

As well, if passed, our bill would set up rules for automated transactions and for correcting mistakes made on a computer. For example, when shopping on-line, the proposed act would allow consumers to cancel a mistaken order unless the merchant provided a way for the consumer to confirm their order before it is processed. This should encourage merchants to design Web sites with a confirming "Are you sure?" message. This would serve as a double-check when someone is making a purchase or signing a contract on-line. We recognize the future of e-commerce will depend on consumer confidence and trust. This kind of rule will help strengthen that confidence.

We also recognize that the world of e-business has no borders and that the laws that govern e-business should also be borderless. In fact, this bill is based on an international model developed by the United Nations. That means the Ontario law, if passed, will be consistent with e-laws around the world. The UN model has influenced legislation in the United States and many of Ontario's other trading partners. It also served as the model for the national Uniform Electronic Commerce Act. Most, if not all, Canadian provinces will be basing their own provincial statutes on the uniform act that is the foundation of our bill. I'm pleased to note that Ontario is one of the first provinces to be moving forward with an e-business bill, along with Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Since I introduced the proposed Electronic Commerce Act last week, I've heard from several business leaders who are reacting positively to our government's understanding of the business climate. John Wetmore for one, who is the president and CEO of IBM Canada Ltd, is encouraged by this bill and our recognition that a universal law is needed for e-commerce. For companies like IBM Canada, this bill is vital for positioning Canadian companies as world business leaders. Without this bill, Ontario would most certainly be left behind.

The Internet has helped companies and people transcend geographic boundaries. This bill would do the same. This bill would help small start-up enterprises compete on an international stage. These companies can use the Internet to quickly enter the marketplace by offering competitive products with substantially reduced overhead costs. What is holding some small companies back from plunging into e-business is that there is no law in place that clearly states electronic business transactions are legally valid. This bill would remove the

outdated legal barriers that have restricted e-business growth and would help unleash new opportunities for creative start-up companies.

The future growth of e-commerce in Ontario and Canada depends on business confidence and consumer trust. A recent survey of on-line Canadian shoppers finds they are now buying more products and services from Canadian Web sites rather than from American sources. This is encouraging, and we believe this bill would strengthen this trend by providing a new level of consumer confidence in their on-line transactions with Ontario-based companies.

Protecting one's privacy on-line is a primary concern for everyone in Ontario. It is a concern that this government takes very seriously. The people of Ontario want to be able to conduct e-business secure in the knowledge that their personal information isn't being misused. They want to have the protection of the law, and we understand this. The laws in Canada that already exist to protect individual privacy are applicable to on-line transactions as well as off-line transactions. In Ontario, the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations is currently reviewing and will be addressing the privacy issue in an Ontario context. That is not to say there are not privacy provisions in this proposed bill; indeed there are.

We have had extensive discussions with staff of the Information and Privacy Commission. A number of provisions were incorporated in the proposed bill at the suggestion of the Information and Privacy Commission to ensure it would not weaken existing privacy protections. For example, the bill does not override privacy and access-to-information statutes. Consumers may also be concerned about the potential for Internet-based fraud or theft. The proposed Electronic Commerce Act does not change or affect existing laws that protect people from fraud or theft. Electronic commerce is not inherently more risky or more threatened by fraud than paper commerce. I know some people may not feel comfortable conducting their business electronically, however, and this bill would not force people to do so. It would simply provide those who wish to do their business electronically with the assurance that their transactions are legally binding.

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The same can be said for businesses. We're not forcing businesses to conduct their business on-line, but the reality is that businesses must adapt to market conditions. The market in Ontario, Canada and around the world is moving towards electronic commerce.

Our proposed Electronic Commerce Act would help ensure the survival of forward-looking businesses by demonstrating to other countries that Ontario has the foresight to create legislation that validates electronic documents and signatures.

Telegraph signals were introduced in the 1800s; the telephone came later in that same century. Both were used to help businesses enter into contracts. Today, a growing number of contracts are sealed electronically. It

only makes sense that in the 21st century Ontario should have a law that says you can do business on the Internet the same way you can on paper.

By passing this legislation, this province would be inviting even more new investment in Ontario. This legislation recognizes that electronic commerce is a real and effective way of doing business now and in the future in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I think today is very historic in marking how the Ontario Legislature, as it enters I guess the sixth month of the 21st century, is witnessing the passage, hopefully in the next few days, of Bill 88, the Electronic Commerce Act. I'm certainly glad to join in some remarks regarding what this particular bill means in terms of business for the next number of decades. In my estimation, it's going to have an enormous amount of meaning, substance and impact on how business and a lot of other activities are covered in the province of Ontario and throughout Canada.

I must say that in the last five years the Internet has probably penetrated nearly 50% of Canadian households—some provinces much higher. I think Alberta is the leader; Ontario is probably second. Saskatchewan is claiming that it introduced the first e-commerce bill—which it had to withdraw for privacy considerations, from what I can gather from sources out on the prairies. Regardless of that, the Internet took five years; it took about 25 years for television to penetrate. In terms of penetration, we mean the number of homes that were using television a number of ways. It probably took another 75 years for electricity to be utilized by businesses, residences, hospitals and the public sector when you look at it in terms of comparison. The point here is that the speed of change, the rapidity of that change, has telescoped down so quickly, which is why it is so absolutely crucial and necessary to have this e-commerce bill introduced and passed before we rise at the end of this month or sooner, depending on what happens. I guess you never know what might come forth from the other side.

I'd like to add that the Internet and the advancement of technology holds out enormous potential. It allows people, businesses, organizations around the world to communicate, share information, make transactions instantly. This has led to some very startling changes. In the world of medicine, for example, we can now have collaboration to develop life-saving cures. We can have police departments across borders working together to catch criminals. We can have businesses and consumers around the world gaining the opportunity for prosperity as well as greater choice and service.

From a cost perspective, the cost of transferring one terabyte of data, which is the equivalent of 25,000 CDs, will drop to under US\$300 by the year 2003, contrasted to \$80,000 for that kind of service and capacity in 1998. These are a few examples of how the Internet is impacting our lives and how technology is advancing rapidly daily.

Over a quarter billion people access the Internet today and use it to conduct business, purchase goods, communicate and interact with governments around the world. For example, the number of Internet users in China reached 12 million people last weekend. More than 25 million children in the US are on-line. That's three times the number of children who were on-line in 1997.

We must ensure that the tools are in place for on-line commerce to develop to its enormous promise. Unfortunately, our existing laws regarding legal and binding relationships, including contracts, were developed for an older system, for a paper-based world, and whether we like it or not, that system is fast becoming a way of the past.

The requirement for a paper trail has been so fundamental in our society that a justice department review of federal legislation found that of more than 600 federal statutes, 300 made references to "obtaining or sending information in a way that appeared limited to paper."

Business owners have worried that e-commerce will never reach its full potential unless two parties can complete a contract by using a computer to sign and send legally binding documents. If e-commerce over the Internet is to develop, consumers and businesses require the ability to make sound, binding contracts with digital signatures. This government should be on the forefront of this development in order to promote business and small business entrepreneurship. A digital signature works by identifying information in a secret code that only the participating parties can unscramble.

Bill 88 will provide convenience and service for the people of Ontario as they conduct business on-line. It will also establish a framework for future e-commerce in this electronic age. It will also ensure greater on-line certainty in that regard.

By making electronic contracts, documents and signatures the legal equivalent of paper contracts, documents and signatures, we can provide Ontarians with a new level of certainty in their on-line electronic transactions. By making contracts agreed to on-line legal and binding, we will create an environment in this province that promotes and encourages economic growth through innovation and the introduction of new and emerging technologies. Ontario, as Canada's economic engine, must always make sure that it has a vision for the future by keeping up with the technological advances of this fast-paced electronic age. We must also make sure that our citizens have every opportunity to interact with the government in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Governments worldwide have been moving to consider and implement e-commerce enabling legislation, and Ontario must not be left behind. Currently in the United States both houses of Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate, are writing legislation. It is expected compromises will be worked out, with a final draft to be passed and signed into law by President Clinton before the political conventions of 2000.

In Canada, a national organization, the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, comprised of government and private sector representatives, has drafted a model piece of legislation. We must keep pushing the envelope and raising the bar of expectations to ensure that we are not left behind in this regard.

In addition to those comments, I would also like to place on the record what I think this will mean for all sectors of business in this province. You can see at the moment the emergence of a whole set of supply chains or what are called digital marketplaces. These phenomena are usually a collaboration of companies and organizations from a particular sector of the economy, whether it be the property real estate investment business, on-line brokerages, the plastics industry, the chemicals industry, the pulp and paper industry or the entertainment industry, just to name a few examples of what is starting to occur on Web sites. With the introduction of the Attorney General's Bill 88, I think this piece of legislation, which will honour electronic or digital signatures as a parallel, will help in great part to accelerate that type of business development in cyberspace.

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You're also going to see this kind of stuff in a number of areas in the medical world. As I mentioned, with the rapidity, pace and rate of change, people will want the opportunity, once they know that privacy and security are protected through a whole set of technological devices: fire walls and scrambled codes that are so hard to detect that it becomes nearly impossible—I say "nearly" because at the present moment the Internet, while it is one of the most interesting, flexible and innovative types of communications devices, also possesses within its infrastructure an inherent fragility. That inherent fragility, unfortunately, has been penetrated to some extent by hackers, most of whom have been working overtime. We've seen this recent phenomenon in terms of different viruses over the last two years, some of which have been enormously destructive of data and the collection of information that is stored in so many management databases.

Keeping that in mind, it is important that we can assure and make certain that the types of security being developed by a whole set of companies, a lot of them Canadian, from Certicom to, I think it's called, Zero-Knowledge out of Montreal—these are the leading types of companies that can provide the assurance we're going to need as we function in a cyber world. It has to be remembered that you have enormous private, commercial intelligence going over fibre optic lines or wireless lines, which is probably the next advancement in technology in this industry.

I am very happy to have had the opportunity at this historic time to make my contribution to this debate today. I'm glad to see that when Bill 70 was passed the Attorney General took my good advice and used it as a platform for the development of Bill 88. It leaves me a mighty happy individual in today's Legislature when I can see that we're moving quickly to capture the

importance of the e-commerce world. It not only means new investment and greater confidence for the citizens of Ontario, but it means an enormous number of jobs.

When we hear from the opposition, I hope they will stand in their places, be crystal clear for once and guarantee that they will support Bill 88 in its present form without any qualifications, equivocation or reservations of any kind whatsoever. This is the type of bill they keep telling us is an opportunity by which we can work together. We often hear the phrase "work together." I'm hoping today that we on this side won't be disappointed when we hear from members opposite as to how they view this bill and that for once they'll stay on the subject matter that has been presented.

It would be interesting to hear, and I would challenge them to present, any specific sophisticated alternatives they may have that would advance this whole piece of legislation, not only in this area but in how we handle other technological challenges that are sure to be presenting themselves in the next few years.

I hope they don't deviate from the content of this bill. There's sufficient substance in it to debate for the next number of hours or days. So I'm hoping that they will stand in their places, that they will clear their minds and that they, for once, will advocate and support a bill which is progressive, technologically sophisticated, helps business in this province, throughout Canada and the world because we're becoming a more globalized, interconnected world and that helps to create an integrated economy. We often hear the phrases "new" and "old," but when you look at this bill, it is a fundamental and crucial bridge for bringing those economies together, symbolized by nothing greater than the digital marketplaces we have in so many business sectors.

I would like to congratulate the Attorney General for advancing this piece of legislation and I'm happy to have been a major part in getting it done.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): As I start out on my presentation this afternoon, congratulations are very much in order to the member for Etobicoke North for bringing this and having the advanced thought of bringing it forward some time ago, and also to the Attorney General, for helping to move our government into the 21st century.

I'd like to quote a little bit from the National Post that made reference to this legislation on Tuesday, June 13. It's a quote, actually, from John Wetmore, the president and CEO of IBM Canada Ltd. He said: "Governments around the world are taking steps to ensure electronic signatures and documents are legally recognized. In Canada, private contracts are a matter of provincial jurisdiction. We would encourage all provinces in Canada to adopt similar measures to Ontario and help position Canada as a leader in e-business."

In framing the legislation, the Attorney General worked closely with the Ontario privacy commissioner, who made changes to the proposed legislation to protect individual privacy. I think that's particularly important and is part of this legislation. He goes on to say: "If

passed, the new bill would prohibit organizations from collecting 'biometric' information, including finger or iris scans, signature information or voice recognition without consent from the individual."

To put it in context in my presentation this afternoon, I'd like to bring people up to date in this bill, Bill 88, the Electronic Commerce Act if they're not aware, of some of the things that have been happening in the province of Ontario and the world as it relates to computers and to the Internet. Sales on the Internet are mushrooming at one phenomenal rate. We think in terms of e-commerce, and I would suggest that maybe what we're dealing with on the Internet with e-commerce is much like the Eaton's catalogue at the turn of the century. We all know how well-thumbed those catalogues became. They became dog-eared and well-examined.

There's an interesting story—and I think I have the right island. There was a young lad who lived with his parents, and his parents did market gardening and grew a lot of jalapeno peppers. My understanding is it was from the island of Jamaica. This young lad thought he'd be helpful with his dad and so he advertised on the Internet the fact that they had jalapeno peppers for sale. They received a few orders and everything was rolling along just beautifully, until, lo and behold, from Texas—of course, where else would you get a great big order? The order came in and not only could they not fill the order from that farm but all of the farms on the Caribbean island were unable to fill that particular order for jalapeno peppers.

I bring that story to your attention because that gives you some indication of the power of e-commerce and the power of the Internet when we advertise on that system. Anyone listening, don't think that if you advertise there you're to sell in that kind of quantity. That may have been a fluke of luck for this one young man.

I think some of the changes that we're looking at—if you go back to 1950 when they were writing about the future and what would it be like in the world and in Ontario in the year 2000, the word "computer" never came up in those predictions. Of course, very understandably. We didn't have a word called "computer." There were no computers. It was something that came quite a few years—a decade or two—after that.

It's also interesting to note that in 1993, we only had a few hundred people on the Internet. Now we have hundreds of millions of people that are using the Internet and have their Web pages. The computing power that we have in just a small chip is absolutely phenomenal. I'm told that some of these cards you get that play "Happy Birthday" or "Happy Easter" or whatever actually have more computing power in those cards worth a few dollars than all the computing power that was available to put a man on the moon back in 1969. That's the kind of change we've had.

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I recall back in 1967, I believe, when I was on the Northumberland-Newcastle board of education, they had had computers for some time. They occupied three class-

rooms in the high school in Port Hope, all air-conditioned. They were using them for bus routes etc, and they were going to get rid of them and replace them with some new computers. I complained bitterly that they were just going to take them off to the dump, but when they explained to me that they had as much computing power sitting on a desk, a desktop model, as there had been in all three classrooms, they got their point across. To carry that one step further, today we have as much computing power in the little hand-held pocket organizer that most members of this Legislature carry on a daily basis. In just over two or three decades it has gone from what would be in three classrooms—large classrooms, had to be air-conditioned—to a little pocket organizer that we carry. That's the expansion. That's what we're dealing with in this legislation.

Recently, listening to a futurist talk about it, he said the technology is here today, but it's going to be a while before it's on the market, that our computer screen will be our eyeglasses. We'll just put on a set of eyeglasses and we will see the computer screen right there. They will be voice activated. We'll probably carry a little something on our belts with a wire up to the back of our glasses. The signals will be received via satellite and we'll be computing, we'll be on the Internet, simply through voice activation. That is the direction in which we are indeed going.

I'm sure there are lots of people listening this afternoon to some of the comments about this and saying, "We never use a computer, we never use the Internet," but probably most of them do use the automatic tellers, known as the ATMs, and as soon as you plug into one of those you are indeed on the Internet and using computers. Driving your car, using appliances—they all have microchips in them and to some extent are computers.

This change in Bill 88, the Electronic Commerce Act, has a lot of meaning to the province of Ontario. Just as we committed in our Blueprint and in the throne speech back in the fall, it's about investment, it's about jobs, and certainly we're going to see a tremendous amount of investment in Ontario because of this bill.

Quite a few things are going to happen once this bill is passed. It's going to ensure that electronic contracts, documents and signatures have the same legal effect as contracts, documents and signatures on paper. That, in a nutshell, is what this bill is about. It's so cumbersome to put it on paper. We talked about the paperless world once upon a time. We really haven't arrived at it. I think we're multiplying the paper even faster than ever, but once we move into recognizing that you don't have to hold that signature on a piece of paper in a file, maybe we really will be starting to move in the direction of a paperless society. Certainly this bill will be one step in that direction.

Second, this bill would set rules for automated transactions and for the correction of mistakes made on computers. We all see things coming out of computers and paper being printed off from them where there are mistakes, and certainly that recognition has to be there.

Often it's just a typographical error of inputting and either the spell checker or the grammar check didn't pick it up for that individual.

It's also going to adopt national and international standards for e-commerce law. I'm thrilled to see that the United Nations has already made a move to recognize that there is a need for international standards.

It also would not require anyone to use or accept electronic documents. I can see that some people would be very uncomfortable being forced into using these documents. Where is it? They want hard copy; they want the paper. If that's the case, then they will not be forced, through this legislation, to necessarily accept it, but if they want to accept it, it's going to carry the weight of law with it.

The bill also, if passed, would not prescribe particular technology that must be used. That's certainly understandable because the technology, as we're all aware, over the last few decades, particularly information technology, has changed at just one phenomenal rate. Consequently, we wouldn't want to get narrowed down into one particular type of technology.

Consistent with this government, we've consulted extensively on this particular legislation. I referred a little earlier to the fact that there's been extensive consultation with the Information and Privacy Commissioner. She has pointed out some things that, for example, shouldn't be in the bill. This bill will not allow organizations to collect biometric information, as I mentioned—fingerprints, iris scans, that kind of thing—on individuals unless they were to give their consent.

Also interesting are the standards present in this bill. The standards go along with the United Nations' model law on electronic commerce, passed back in November 1996, which gives a standard that can be set up internationally. So often we see three or four different codes, or millions or hundreds, or whatever, various codes, and then you try to bring them together later on. At least in this case, compliments to the United Nations for setting this up in advance.

We're not quite the first province to be bringing this in, but we're right with the other two provinces that have. Saskatchewan introduced it May and Manitoba introduced on June 5 a similar electronic commerce act. Also, I understand that the province of Quebec has indicated plans to introduce similar legislation and, looking at the time of year, probably that's going to come in some time this fall.

It does require some acknowledgement from the federal government, and I'm pleased to see that they have brought in Bill C-6, which is the kind of legislation that permits the use of electronic documents and gives the provinces the opportunity to pass their laws.

Under the present law, laws applicable to the use of electronic communications can be uncertain, since many legal rules assume the use of paper documents. We can overcome that, as lawyers, in passing all the various things in the past, needed that signature on paper, with witnesses etc. Certainly, it is widely agreed that the

uncertainty of the legal status of such communications inhibits investment in businesses that would like to use high technology. In the past this has been limited, and in the future we're going to be able to move ahead. Sometimes we might refer to them as paper barriers. We're going to overcome those paper barriers.

It's interesting to note that many other countries around the world are also moving in this direction. Australia's e-commerce legislation, the Electronic Transactions Act, 1999, and the electronic transactions regulations of 2000 came into effect on March 15, 2000. Similarly, Ireland and the United Kingdom and India are also implementing e-business and e-government strategies. I understand there's a state that has passed some e-commerce as well.

We're very committed to this. Back on October 21, 1999, the speech from the throne stated: "Your government wants Ontario at the forefront of this revolutionary technology. It has already endorsed a voluntary electronic commerce code of conduct to set a framework for fair business practices on the Internet. Now it is setting an ambitious goal to ensure that Ontario's consumers and businesses seize the opportunities and enjoy the benefits offered by the Internet."

Similarly, Mr Speaker, it was also in our Blueprint when we campaigned last spring, and I'm sure you would remember that campaign quite well. The Blueprint committed the government "to build a global Internet and electronic business hub" here in the province of Ontario. Certainly by getting this in relatively early to other countries, we in the province of Ontario will be able to lead and attract business right here to the province.

Again, I compliment Mr Hastings for bringing forward his bill. I understand it's now in the standing committee on general government for consideration. But with what's happening with the Attorney General and Bill 88, maybe that bill will not be necessary.

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In closing, as I know the member for Durham is getting quite excited that he have some time, I just wanted to make some reference to a newspaper very close to my riding, and it does come into the riding. The Belleville Intelligencer had just an excellent editorial on this bill, if I can quote a few pieces of it:

"The party that pledges to make it easier to do business in Ontario is delivering.

"Tuesday, the Tories introduced legislation that will give electronic contracts, signatures and documents the same legal effect as their paper equivalent."

It goes on to say, "The first province to introduce a complete set of commercial laws to govern Internet business, Ontario is definitely taking that leadership role.

"But, as Flaherty pointed out, it is crucial provinces work together. While contract regulation is a provincial affair, it would be wise for other provinces to get on board as soon as possible—not necessarily by adopting Ontario's proposed laws, but by devising their own in a timely fashion.

"If the provinces could devise consistent commercial laws, Canadian business would be better for it."

It goes on, near the end, "According to estimates, by the year 2003, \$1.3 trillion in goods and services will change hands worldwide via the Internet." I can't quite think in terms of trillions, but it's certainly a tremendous amount of commerce. "This latest announcement from Mike Harris's government will poise Ontario's e-businesses and those using electronic services to take a slice of that pie."

As I wind up and close here, it's important to recognize the tremendous advancement that we've had in electronic information. It's really putting Ontario, Canada—actually it's putting the world really ahead by leaps and bounds as to what we can do. There was a great controversy some 10 or 15 years ago over free trade. Well, this plugs right into free trade and recognizes what Canada can do, what Ontario can do on that international market. It gives us a better opportunity to compete internationally.

This is all about investment and it's all about job creation. I congratulate the member for Etobicoke North and also the Attorney General for bringing this bill forward so that we in Ontario will really be able to move into the 21st century of commerce and investment.

I now introduce the member for Durham, John O'Toole, to continue the debate and complete our segment of this debate.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair. Perhaps I will catch you later this afternoon.

The member for Northumberland has left little to be said. He has made the argument unquestionably, in my mind, for the need for Bill 88. So although there are 16 minutes left, I have some points that I do want to get on the record. For my constituents in the riding of Durham, it's very important.

I'm going to start by just reading the preamble to Bill 88. This is always a good place to start for some clarification, especially for the people watching this afternoon. I'm speaking directly to you.

"The bill removes barriers to the legally effective use of electronic communications by governments and by the private sector. It is not intended to require the use of particular technology or to have a large impact on the methods that people use to communicate." So there are no requirements here. This is a law of empowerment, if you will. "It does not require anyone to use, provide or accept information in electronic form." It's purely allowing commerce to continue to remove the barriers, as we've always said, in much of our communication.

It's important to put this in not just an Ontario context but in a Canadian context and indeed an international context. As you would probably know, Mr Speaker, and I know the opposition will agree with this, and the third party will agree as well because there are so few of them here, Ontario usually leads the way—that's important,

and I see the members on the other side nodding—especially since 1995.

“The bill is based on the Uniform Electronic Commerce Act which the Uniform Law Conference of Canada adopted in 1999”

I might say the member for Etobicoke North led even them, led the federal government. Mr Hastings has been talking about this incessantly—well, not incessantly, but a for a long time—and he has brought it forward.

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): Passionately.

Mr O’Toole: “Passionately”; that’s the more correct word.

It is “consistent in principle with the United Nations Model Law on Electronic Commerce.” So there it is. You sort of say, “We’re trying to find international harmony and agreement in the world of commerce.” We’ve all talked e-commerce, B2B and all these fancy jargon words, but what it really means is allowing business to take place.

I think the member for Northumberland went to some extent to make the point, but I’m going to go overboard a little bit. I try to relate most legislation to how it affects my constituents in the riding of Durham. I think immediately of consulting—

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): How does it affect the people in your riding?

Mr O’Toole: The people in my riding, exactly. The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale is always supportive.

Anshel Associates—Arnold Bark is an engineer. He’s a consultant who works from his home. He probably does more of his business in the e-environment, in the e-world, than many people in this Legislature, some of whom are still having difficulty with a rotary phone. Kim Beatty is from Beatty Inc; Ron Collis—now there’s another gentleman—is from Collis and Reed Research. These are people who are very technical. He’s a mathematician, I believe. He actually leads the Clarington Business Group, which is a small group of home entrepreneurs who meet—in fact, I believe it’s tomorrow morning—at Silk’s Café for breakfast, where they talk about current business. I’m going to provide them with a copy of Bill 88. Ron Collis, who has a Web site and communicates with their membership, will make sure the members know what changes this government is making to help small business. Adrian Foster is another very computer-literate financial adviser, from Foster Financial; Walter Gibson, who’s a well-known, I might say, international consultant with Gibson Associates, certainly would be using e-commerce for contract information and perhaps even bidding on contracts as far away as Australia. I looked in my notes here, and Australia is one of the countries that have adopted this model UN format. Victoria Greene is with the Clarington Board of Trade.

All of the people I’ve mentioned, I could say with some assurance, will be happy with this Bill 88 and the enhancement of the electronic business opportunities in Ontario. I just want to make sure I don’t miss anyone,

because my constituents mean more to me than they mean to other people. Jim Schell, for instance, from Blue Circle Cement, who is also a Clarington councillor, is eminently familiar with business and is well respected in the community as a publicly elected person. I might say for the record that the company he works for, Blue Circle Cement, is an international company. Imagine, without the provisions in e-commerce, their inability to do business throughout the world. John Wells, from John Wells Associates—I know his son is a designer and developer of software and Web site technologies.

I always like to go to the bill, which I have already started, but there are lots of sections in here which I think some members should pay attention to. The one that is very important is the whole issue of providing a sense that there is security in this process. I have some notes on that and I’ll be finding them shortly, with your indulgence, Mr Speaker. I think it’s important to get it right. Jane Stewart, the HRDC minister in Ottawa, would be well familiar with this issue.

Mr Gill: She’s called the boondoggle minister.

Mr O’Toole: She’s the boondoggle minister from Ottawa, but that’s forgiven; that’s overlooked. She was also chastised just recently by the privacy commissioner federally that there was some building of a sort of database on individual Canadians.

What I like is accountability. That’s what this bill is about, I guess: trying to be accountable. I’m going to read the provisions of privacy. Individual privacy and security of information is paramount. These are Minister Flaherty’s own words, you might say:

“The government’s proposed e-commerce bill incorporates a number of provisions that reflect consultations with the Information and Privacy Commissioner.”

1620

So there you have it. It conforms with the Privacy Commissioner. As you know, her report was just issued within the last week or so, and I read in that report that she was scrutinizing this whole smart card, e-commerce technology. In fact, she wasn’t very supportive of it at all in her annual report, if you’ve read it, which I’m sure you have, Mr Speaker.

For example, the bill does not—I stress the words “does not”—permit people to collect biometric information—that would be fingerprints and scanning and iris identification, that sort of technology; it doesn’t permit that—or dynamic signatures or voice recognition or information about individuals without their known consent.

Some of that should be repeated. Privacy is paramount to this whole e-commerce world.

I would say this: It’s really too bad that Mike Harris isn’t the Prime Minister of Canada. I may be changing the subject somewhat here, but what I mean is, he has the courage to move forward for the right reasons. What’s really missing here is a national image, a national set of standards so that we can get on with it and Canada can be a leader. That’s really paramount here. Canada needs to take a far richer role.

I'm not talking directly about Bill 88 here. What I'm talking about is the whole smart card technology piece—fighting some of the constitutional issues and those issues of individual rights and freedoms and resolving those issues before provinces individually—Ontario leading the way, I might say, on the smart technology. For instance, in health care it's important so that people in Vancouver or Toronto or Montreal or Saint John or Halifax, where my son lives, could have patient information systems available. They could have the transparency of provincial billing and billing numbers, and perhaps assist in such things as organ donations and transfer of patient information, which may help save lives. This seems to me to be another area that needs leadership. It needs strong leadership from the federal government, which seems to be missing in most things that I see.

"The Ontario government realizes that the implementation of new technologies creates some risks for privacy. The government is working to ensure that the privacy and the protection of individual freedoms and rights is maintained." So there's very strong language in Bill 88 to ensure and protect.

The federal law also safeguards personal information used in e-business.

Exclusions: I found this quite interesting when I was going through, because in the few remaining moments—unfortunately, the member for Northumberland took a little more than his fair share, but that's fine. I overlook it. There's nothing wrong with that.

I will tell a small anecdote. I recall, three or four municipal elections ago in the town of Newcastle then—now it's the municipality of Clarington; that's a story for another day—there was a person who submitted his nomination papers by fax. Imagine that. It just turned out, because of timing, the individual—and I might say for the record it was a person who was mayor; John Winters was his name, a very well respected business person who filed by fax. He was on business and happened to be in Florida, left himself short and filed his nomination papers by fax. Guess what? They weren't accepted. That's a small story.

E-commerce some 10 years ago, I guess, was being challenged back then. Finally, this government has done the right thing. We've come forward, we've changed the laws, we've made it permissible.

The proposed Electronic Commerce Act does not apply to wills, personal power of attorney, and most negotiable instruments—for example, a cheque—most land transfers or election documents. There we have it: election documents. These documents are excluded because they require more detailed rules or more safeguards for their users than can be established by a general statute, which is what Bill 88 is. This is general; you ought to try reading it.

Other jurisdictions, for instance, that have adopted this—it's the uniform law here, the model law of the United Nations. The Uniform Law Conference of Canada, a federal-provincial-territorial legal body, adopted the Uniform Electronic Commerce Act, as I said

earlier, in 1999. The uniform act is based on the specifications set out in the United Nations Model Law on Electronic Commerce. So certainly there has been some deliberation on the issue of how it applies nationally and internationally.

Ontario's proposed e-commerce bill is consistent with these widely accepted international standards. You'd be interested in knowing that the model law has also included the United States, Australia—I might add that I have a daughter living in Australia, just north of Ayers Rock; I'd say hello to her, but there's no television there—Singapore, Hong Kong, Ireland, India, Argentina and Columbia. So it is internationally accepted, and Ontario is leading the way. I believe I heard the minister in his remarks say that Saskatchewan and maybe Alberta were the other provinces that have taken this giant step. Perhaps Ontario, as usual, leads the way in many things.

I want to pay some respect for a few minutes to the member for Etobicoke North. He has a futuristic way of looking at things. I would say all members here could learn from him. Two or three things he has initiated under private members' business have certainly been visionary and I believe impressive. I thank him. I know he did work with the Attorney General and they just weren't able to coordinate the exact language, so when his bill was introduced it wasn't quite at the state—he probably didn't have the resources of the Attorney General at his disposal.

The member for Northumberland should most certainly be acknowledged, and certainly our Attorney General, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, who by the way is the member from the Whitby-Ajax area. I have a lot of respect for him. He has brought this in. It was introduced on June 13 and here we are today. Hopefully it will be passed and become law before this session is done.

I'm looking forward to comments from the other side, hopefully supportive and instructive, to say the least. Let's get on with doing business. With that, there may be other members here, if they had anything to say—Mr Gill, did you want to add?

Mr Gill: No, you're doing quite well, thank you.

Mr O'Toole: You're quite happy with it? It would appear that on this side it's unanimous. We're prepared to move ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): We support this bill. We have a number of questions that we wish to raise, but none the less I want to discuss the importance of certainty in commerce through certainty in law.

I appreciated the comments by the member for Northumberland with respect to recognizing the legislative history of this particular bill. I had a moment of astonishment when I heard from the member for Durham that he hopes or wishes that the Premier of Ontario were the Prime Minister because then we could get some national blueprint or leadership on this, when in fact that's exactly what we have here. We have a federal bill which has set out the guidelines in which other provinces may opt into the new e-commerce law system. The

member should talk to his colleague in the row in front of him so he can discover, apparently for the first time, that we already have a national vision, which other provinces are entering into. We are entering into it here in Ontario, whether it's early or late or on time. We're here; we're debating the bill now. I detected more than a few comments from the other side with respect to the emphasis on federal-provincial squabbling. We'll have more to say on that when we respond in kind.

Yes, we support the bill. Let's get on with getting this bill passed. We have a number of privacy concerns, which I know the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale is going to discuss at some length, and we look forward to that debate.

1630

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I appreciate the opportunity to respond to some of the comments that were made by government members about Bill 88. I notice that the focus by most of the members was on how this bill was going to create more investment, increased investment and job creation in the province etc. There was a lot of to-do about how this was going to make it so much easier for business to do business in this province and internationally.

That is a laudable goal and it's certainly an important principle of the bill. But I have to say that I hope, through the course of debate and public hearings on this bill, soon the rights of individuals and citizens to have guaranteed access to documents in paper form will be as important as what appears to be the government's preoccupation with easing the ability of business to do business.

I say that because it's clear that section 2 of Bill 88 ensures that the provincial government is bound by the new act. Being bound by the new act certainly shifts people's concerns with respect to how they will be able to continue to get access to government documents, government information. Will people in different parts of the province, by virtue of the fact that they may not be hooked up to the Internet, be discriminated against, have their access impeded, have their access diminished etc? What I don't want to see is this bill being used by the government in some way, shape or form to create a loophole for itself or its agencies, boards and commissions to actually evade its responsibilities to continue to provide information to citizens in paper form.

I say that because if you look at the recent report by the privacy commissioner, she was very critical of this government's giving information to citizens. She was very critical of the government fees for FOI requests. She was very critical that the government does not provide two hours of free search etc. So I don't want to see the government use this bill to somehow impede people's access to information.

Mr Gill: It is a pleasure to rise and take part in this discussion. It is a very important discussion because e-commerce is here to stay. It is here to stay whether a lot of people like the Internet or not. I know there are things that still need to be addressed in terms of a lot of unwanted Web sites where children are accessing some

areas they shouldn't be. Even in the public libraries—I know that's a discussion for another day—kids can access some information which they should not access.

The Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations is currently reviewing the issues of privacy and security of information-gathering electronically. I know there are a lot of people even using ATMs, and when they use ATMs they will utilize the machine for every purpose but to deposit cash money. So I think there is some paranoia still out there and I am sure, as we make laws, as Mr Flaherty goes about making sure the laws of Ontario are as good as or better than anywhere in the world, they will make sure none of the concerns are outstanding and that the safety factors are built in.

It is indeed a pleasure and a lot of good members—in fact, the member for Etobicoke North has spearheaded this. He brought in a private member's bill and, based on that, Mr Flaherty introduced the legislation. As I said earlier, the time has come where we start interacting as the world does business. As you know, 80% of e-commerce is business-to-business transactions. I am looking forward to the quick passage of this bill.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I too would like to add my few words in the couple of minutes I have just to reiterate what my colleague on this side of the House has already said, that we will be supporting this bill. It leads one to question, though, why it has taken the government so long to bring in this kind of a bill. E-commerce has been around for at least the last five to 10 years now, and it's kind of interesting that provinces such as Saskatchewan, I understand, in effect had a bill of this nature as long as three or four years ago. Since this government always likes to pride itself on the fact that we indeed are the commercial centre of this country, as we know we are, I ask myself, why were we not the leaders in this regard, in getting this kind of legislation enacted, and why did we leave it to provinces like Saskatchewan to come up with this kind of legislation some two or three years ago?

We're all concerned about the privacy issues. You may recall, Mr Speaker, that we had a bill just last week, one of the education bills, in which school boards can now in effect get personal information on students of a nature that they never had the ability to get before. I think people in general are very concerned about how their privacy can be protected with the mass of information technology that's out there these days.

So we will have some questions to ask about this bill. We will also want to get some assurances from the government that constructive amendments proposed by any member in the House will be accepted by the government, and we hope that we in Ontario will once again become the leaders in this area rather than the followers.

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

Mr Hastings: First I'd like to set the record straight. On the point about Saskatchewan, they introduced their e-commerce bill on December 10, 1999, not four years

ago. We introduced our private member's bill on April 28, I believe. So there's not a point that we're followers here, and there was a whole set of other items on the legislative agenda. As well, e-commerce has only been around for about six years, actually, when you look at the advance of the Internet.

With respect to privacy concerns, if you look to subsection 27(2) of the act, it clearly sets out and requires, at the request of the privacy commissioner, that public bodies must keep paper originals as long as they would like to have them in existing law. It's a complementary bill.

The member for Nickel Belt brings up the point about the mythology of the digital divide, which is one of the preoccupations of President Clinton. In point of fact in this country, to give some credit to the federal government, they were one of the first to probably get the country interconnected by the Internet by telecommunications. We do not really have a digital divide in this country, with the exception that I believe when I introduced my private member's bill, the classroom technology tax credit act, in 1998, the former member for Algoma objected to the introduction of the bill. He considered it and had it referred to the Speaker because it was potentially a tax bill that we were introducing, and the Speaker ruled in our favour.

There was another attempt at that time to remedy the so-called digital divide that the member for Nickel Belt is concerned about. In addition to that, I can provide some specific assurances. All the members opposite have to do is go to their public libraries and a number of their schools—not all schools but a large number of schools in Ontario today have Internet connections. The whole point here isn't about obsession with the technology. The key here is access to information. The technology is simply a means of allowing our children or adults to gain windows into—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Bryant: I rise today to speak on behalf of the official opposition on this bill. We support the bill. In many ways this bill is, of course, a catching up to the market. In particular, what it's doing is trying to align existing laws with the way people are doing business, the way people are engaging in commerce. It has to be more true now than ever that certainty in commerce requires a measure of certainty coming from legislation. That's what we do here. We are legislators. Notwithstanding all the cries about the virtues of the free market and the virtues of cutting red tape, we are here to pass legislation to provide some certainty with respect to commerce.

E-commerce, electronic commerce, which has been ably described by the members opposite, is like every other kind of commerce where there's an agreement, the chief difference being the means and not so much the ends. For most agreements that took place in commerce, say 25 years ago, those agreements would typically involve an oral or written offer and an oral or written acceptance for there to be an agreement. There are a number of other requisites—there needs to be some con-

sideration that passes between the parties—but at the end of the day, what makes the agreement an agreement is a meeting of the minds. The two people engaging in the commercial transaction agree on what is expected, what the expectations are, and they need some support from the common law, from statutory law, such that they know that will be enforceable.

1640

The free market itself is not a jungle, strictly speaking. It's not a jungle in any sense of the word when it comes to commerce, because people have to be able to turn to the courts and to legislation in order to get some certainty with respect to their commerce so they know that if there is an offer and an acceptance and an agreement, and there is a meeting of the minds, that if one of the parties decides to opt out or there is any uncertainty about what the agreement was, they will have the support of legislation or case law.

Case law has been developing; the jurisprudence has been developing in the area of e-commerce for some time. To a large degree this legislation is responding not only to that but to international efforts to try to gain some certainty with respect to electronic commerce. That has resulted in the uniform practices, which I will speak of in a moment and which have been referred to already, that all nations are trying to comport to and that all provinces hopefully will also comport to with respect to the national legislation that has been passed by Ottawa this year.

With respect to a meeting of the minds, the reason this legislation is important is because there is some confusion as to whether there truly is a meeting of the minds right now when two or more parties are engaging in an electronic commercial transaction. We have already discussed in this House, a few weeks ago I guess, the private member's bill of Mr Hastings, the member for Etobicoke North. At that time, we raised some of these issues and the need for this legislation. Mr Hastings has been duly congratulated and given the credit he deserves for bringing forth this legislation in private members' business, and we now have a government bill. We will turn many of the questions we had with respect to that bill, which we supported, to the government bill.

If you are on the Internet right now and you click the box that says "I agree" or otherwise click a box that suggests you have engaged in the transaction, the question is how you enforce that. Right now, under the existing legislation, there is a vacuum, because many bills refer to paper or oral agreements, and this is neither. There has been an effort for some time in the courts for parties to take the square peg and put it in the round hole of the existing legislation and say that these are akin to written agreements, and of course they are. If you print the electronic transaction, it becomes a written agreement. But for all of us who have any questions or uncertainty with respect to those commercial transactions, it is important, as with all our laws' supervision of commercial agreements, that we have certainty not only in terms of analogous arguments but just as importantly, if

not more importantly, that we have some certainty in our laws that those engaging in e-commerce in or outside Ontario involving a party from Ontario can have some comfort, can turn to legislation at the federal and provincial levels and know what an agreement means, so that people understand precisely what the meeting of the minds is when that e-commerce transaction takes place. We know what it means to click on "I agree," and is that good enough and for how long is it good enough? How is it enforceable, and what needs to precede it? That's what this bill is trying to address, I hope, and that's why we support the bill in principle.

E-commerce is certainly about to threaten, if not overtake, paper transactions in terms of the amount of commercial activity; \$1.3 trillion in e-commerce is expected to be conducted by the year 2003. It's because of that explosion of a relatively unregulated market that, first, the federal government and now the provincial governments in due course are responding to international efforts and responding to the reality of this billions of dollars, and soon trillions of dollars, that are being spent through commercial activity that, by and large, is unregulated by legislation until laws such as this are passed.

We've heard also that Saskatchewan led the way provincially. There is some discussion as to whether Saskatchewan or Ontario is the leader, or maybe Quebec is the leader because Quebec has had legislation similar to the federal legislation that has been on the books for some time. Who should get credit for that? I frankly don't think it's terribly relevant and I don't think it's of much concern to the people of Ontario who got there first. I know that there is some concern that e-commerce is an unregulated market and that it is important for the government to do something about that. That requires legislation, that requires the government to act as the government—not as plumbers but as government—to set forth legislation that deals with, in this case, an unregulated commercial market.

That said, historically, chronologically, there was some suggestion at some point during some of the speeches that have been heard in this House today from the government side of the House that this legislation was pioneering. Again, I don't think it's terribly relevant, but let's understand the context in which this takes place. Bill C-6, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, received royal assent on April 13, 2000. The full effect of its privacy provisions will go into effect on January 1, 2001, and there is a time period in which the act will apply in full force, depending on whether or not the province has in fact legislated on point and depending on the timing of it all.

The point of the national legislation was to create a level playing field for businesses, predictable rules for everybody. That's the certainty in commerce that I was discussing before, and just as we applaud the provincial government for coming forth with legislation, so do we applaud the federal government for filling in that legislative lacuna.

As with the provincial legislation, the federal legislation—it was all the same issues. A lot of the old legislation, as it now is, refers to agreements being in writing, being certified or being signed. It is like the rules used to be decades ago and, with greater relevancy, a century ago with the importance of having a seal on an agreement, a seal on a contract. Well, no longer is the need for a seal on a written contract, some courts have said, deemed to be mandatory. Similarly, does it make sense in the year 2000 that all agreements be in writing? Of course, the answer is no; not only that, they aren't. So we are catching up to the market in that sense.

So the point of the national legislation, as with provincial legislation, is to provide a way to adjust the current laws, provincial and federal, so that there is an electronic alternative which brings with it the certainty that is provided by this legislation. Or relative certainty; as everybody here knows very well, legislators who have served far longer than I have, there is no science to the law, there is no science to legislation. We do our best to comport and ensure that in fact we understand precisely what the law is, but there will always be arguments to be made on either side with respect to an agreement. So this legislation will not provide the watertight security that maybe some would desire, but it at least provides the same security so that you have at least as much protection with respect to electronic commerce as you have at present with respect to oral agreements and written agreements.

1650

The point also with the federal legislation was to encourage some kind of harmony between the federal and provincial privacy protection laws. "Harmony" and federal and provincial, at least when it comes to Ontario and the federal government, I don't think would be the operative word. We have not had harmony for some time. I, for one, believe that there are no angels in this respect. That said, I would be remiss if I did not respond to the suggestions by the members opposite that somehow the federal government is to blame in toto, in its entirety, for the current situation of an unregulated market. With all due respect, I think this government needs to accept the fact that it is the government, not the plumbers. They say they're not the government, they came here to fix the government. Well, this is a moment in which they're acting like a government and filling in a legislative gap that's needed. Engaging in the rhetoric of fed-bashing, ever popular in many parts of this country, I don't think is part of this province's tradition. It's a sad chapter in federal-provincial relations in this province.

On the coming into force of the national legislation, it will first apply to the federally regulated private sector, including banking, inter-provincial transportation etc. That's how it will work. At some point, it will supersede the provincial laws in the event that the provinces do not legislate on point. Of course, we are here today. Three years after the federal legislation comes into force, that law, the federal law, will apply more broadly to all personal information collected otherwise, unless a similar

bill is passed in the province. It's in this context that this takes place.

I say to the members opposite who would suggest that this legislation is pioneering legislation that they are ignoring the fact that a tremendous amount of work went into the federal legislation, which combined both e-commerce and privacy issues at once, in one bill, and the thinking was—and the call-out came from Ottawa—the provinces then need to fill in that gap.

I'm going to conclude my remarks with some reference to this interesting description in the compendium to this bill. I heard it in the Attorney General's speech. He said that this bill will "reduce red tape and legal uncertainty in the adoption of modern, efficient communications." Reduce red tape and legal uncertainty. We heard about the benefits of the Common Sense Revolution from the government members and you know that we on this side of the House take issue with the rooster taking credit for the sun rising and would suggest that in fact the "booming economy" the Attorney General referred to in his leadoff speech owes as much to efforts by Alan Greenspan and Paul Martin as it does to the Common Sense Revolution. Be that as it may, I also recognize that people in Ontario are going to give the sitting government of the day credit for, in the words of the Attorney General, a "booming economy." But there are costs to that, and it would be wrong if we passed this debate without discussing the costs of the Common Sense Revolution. We hear about the benefits; what about the costs?

We all know that politically, red tape has become a hot potato. We don't hear as much from the government about red tape, so I was surprised to see it in the compendium—proudly reducing red tape. We know what happened when we reduced red tape through the Ministry of the Environment. We know what happened. We know what the costs were. Thousands are sick, people of Ontario have lost their confidence in their drinking water and at least 14 people have died as a result of this—although we're going to find out what the numbers are through the inquiry.

The suggestion that you can reduce red tape and legal uncertainty with respect to this act is a non sequitur. It just does not follow. The whole point is to provide some legal protections here, to provide that legal certainty. This government still has its wagon hitched to the language of Gingrich and Thatcher, and it will soon learn that the people of Ontario look to governments to govern, not to act as plumbers, because we see what happens when they do that. We've seen the benefits and now we're seeing the costs of the Common Sense Revolution.

We support the fact that this government has passed legislation that comports with the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, that comports with the federal legislation that has already been passed and received royal assent on April 13, 2000. We look forward to getting answers to a number of concerns about privacy issues that I know the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has raised before in this House and will no doubt raise again.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): It's a pleasure to join in this debate and add to the remarks of my colleague the member for St Paul's on this issue. He brings to this issue, obviously, the background of a learned lawyer, and the counsel to the government is wise indeed.

The technological evolution that is going on is one that is fuelling much new growth in many parts of our province. In my own riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale I've had the opportunity in the last few weeks to visit just a couple of companies that are great beneficiaries of this electronic evolution, or revolution. Flow Network is a company that has in very recent time gone through an extraordinary expansion of their business. They're a great success story, because the service they provide from their lovely converted warehouse building on King Street is provided almost exclusively to a client base in the United States. They are a great success story on so many fronts. Their energy and enthusiasm, the vibe that one feels when entering their offices is an incredible one. Our responsibility as legislators is to do all we can to ensure that companies like Flow Network have a chance to continue to expand.

Similarly, I had an opportunity to attend the opening of a new office building, a converted office building, on Adelaide Street that is home to UUNET, an MCI WorldCom company, here again a company that is hiring many new people, fine young graduates, and giving them an opportunity to work in an exciting and fast-paced environment. They are contributing in an extraordinary way to the growth in my own riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale. We hear, in the Toronto region, a lot about extraordinary growth in the GTA, with specific reference to the 905, but in my own riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale we've got an extraordinary re-use going on of office buildings, heritage buildings that are being renovated and taken up in large measure by companies that are at the forefront of this electronic commerce revolution. It's with that in mind that I stand and comment on this.

I want to pick up a little bit on what my colleague the member for St Paul's was saying with respect to the issue of red tape. The government, in its press release with respect to the Electronic Commerce Act, goes to some measure to say that the bill would cut red tape and remove outdated legal barriers to e-commerce. In point of fact, I believe the bill intends to provide a regulatory framework, which one could argue is red tape, but in its haste to slap this red-tape moniker on everything the government makes an unfortunate mistake: It fails to distinguish those things which may be burdens to business and those rules which serve as clarity.

I know the member for St Paul's commented on this point, and I believe it's worth mentioning. The government cannot resist opportunities to use the words "red tape," because it is red meat that fuels them opposite.

I would just say as a reminder to the government that when you use the phrase "red tape," to many people, to many of the citizens in the province of Ontario, we're really talking about adequate protections for our citizens.

1700

I would like on that point to repeat the comment of my colleague who led off, which is to say that our party will support this bill. We'll support this bill as far as it goes, but in a similar debate not that long ago in response to the private member's bill by the member from Etobicoke North—very similar, in fact, to the bill before this House today—we made the point rather clearly, I believe, that there is an absence of adequate protections with respect to privacy.

We know that in the United States election right now and in the House of Commons in recent weeks, this whole issue of adequate protections and privacy has been raised. These are issues which are tracking, spiking up in the polls, and yet the government opposite, in its wisdom, has decided to bring forward a bill which does the piece which provides a more sure operating basis for business, and we support that, but it fails to do the part with respect to the adequate protections required from the standpoint of privacy.

I note in the government's own propaganda, the government of Ontario press release, they say that a federal law also provides safeguards for personal information used in e-business. It's interesting that the government opposite, which uses every opportunity it can to bash the federal government, is forced in its own press release to make reference to the bill in the federal House, Bill C-6, which is a far superior piece of work to what is before us.

What we really, as opposition members, have a responsibility to do is to remind the government opposite that they have a responsibility to bring forward adequate protections with respect to the privacy of our citizens. On that issue, we should be very clear. The government, with respect to the protection of privacy, has failed one very dramatic test already. We know that personal information pertaining to 50,000 accounts of clients of the Province of Ontario Savings Office—as my colleague the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has highlighted, this government not only failed to protect the privacy of its individual clients in this case, it went out of its way to release that information to public entities and to allow sophisticated telephone marketing to take place around that. We cannot highlight enough the need to ensure more adequate protections than are currently in there.

Maybe we could more adequately call this bill “the taking care of business, but doing nothing to protect the privacy of individuals” bill. I think that speaks rather well to the motivation of the government opposite. They seem motivated to take care of business for the business community, to provide the necessary framework from which to operate, but do nothing related to the need to more adequately protect people's privacy.

That's a key contribution we would like to make to this debate. We raised it just a few weeks ago in the debate during private members' hour on the bill by the member from Etobicoke North and we do so again today. This follows very closely on that bill, and at the time we stood in this House and said, “Interesting, isn't it, that on an issue as dramatic as this one, on an issue so important

to the future of the Ontario economy, the government of Ontario, with all its resources, is relying upon a private member, a government backbencher, to introduce legislation?” Still, months later, we have legislation introduced into this House which does only one piece of the work.

Our party's view is that this bill requires a very careful clause-by-clause review. We need to begin to take a look at the specific technical issues that are addressed. We know from the experience in the province of Saskatchewan, which has been out front of Ontario on this issue, that they moved in a way where they didn't get some of the technical details right. They were forced to reintroduce a bill that mimicked, but had some changes to, a previous piece of legislation. It is somewhat reminiscent of this government's attempts to deal with property tax reform in Ontario, where bill after bill after bill has been introduced—eight in total, I think—in an attempt to try and correct the problems, omissions and errors that were highlighted in the early one.

With all of that in mind, with the increasing importance and reliance on technology and the inherent risks in that with respect to the protection of personal information, the government has an obligation to do two things: to introduce companion legislation to this bill that offers more adequate privacy protection for taxpayers and citizens alike; but also the government has a responsibility at the very same time to ensure that the office of the privacy commissioner is enhanced and that the role she plays in ensuring the protection of individuals' information is given a much stronger backbone. We have evidence from across the floor that the government has acted irresponsibly in terms of protecting people's personal information, but also, as this continues to evolve, the capacity for information-gathering techniques, for all-in-one files, as we've seen with the issue in the federal House—these are protections that Ontario citizens absolutely require.

We want to see some commitment from the government that the requirements relating to privacy and confidentiality, contained as an example in the federal government's Bill C-6, are met. Again, we want to ensure that there is nothing, no initiative of this government, that would in any way restrict the powers of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. In fact it's our belief that that role, again, given the increasing importance of technology, ought to be improved.

We know the government has promised a resolution in this House before the end of the sitting that I believe would call for a review of the privacy and information act over the summer in standing committee. I would repeat that we think it's even more important that we move forward in such a way and to enhance the role of the privacy and information act.

The government would seem to be lacking in vision. They've gone and done the simple piece, which is the piece that the lawyers were able to work out, but they haven't done the piece that's really fundamentally important to average Ontarians across the breadth of our

province. I would say that the government should be condemned for the absence of that. We would have preferred to see a more complete package that moves forward.

In closing, our comments are offered as an incentive to the government to do the rest of the job. This is good as far as it goes, and we support it, but we have a responsibility as legislators to protect the citizens of Ontario and the privacy of the information they supply and are required to supply. There is ample evidence that the government opposite has, at least in one case, been rather wanton in their aggressive tactics to distribute that information with the potential to privatize a Province of Ontario Savings Office. With that in mind, we look forward to the government moving on and offering enhanced privacy protection for the citizens of Ontario.

1710

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I too welcome the opportunity to make a few comments with regard to Bill 88, because the Internet, and access to the Internet and use of the Internet, certainly is a buzzword these days and one that should be dealt with by the government. We should enact those controls, regulations and safeguards that we all need.

I would like to speak to this bill in several areas. As far as some opening comments, we speak of access to the Internet. Certainly in those areas of the province where telephone and cable access are readily available, I'm sure many, if not most, of the households have access to the Internet. But we must realize too that there are vast areas of the province that have no cable access to the Internet, may not have any short-wave or microwave or radio connection to the Internet and certainly don't have it by way of telephone, because they're on party lines. I think one of the objectives of the government of the day should be to work toward having access availability for everyone in the province, and I think mainly in the area of education, because not only is e-commerce important on the Internet, but the educational value of the Internet should not be overlooked. Access for all is something that we should strive for.

While doing that and in order to protect those who do use the Internet, we have to keep in mind what it's used for. I think many of us think of the Internet as the availability of information. I think a lot of time is spent surfing the Internet for information and entertainment. Only a few years ago I didn't have access to the Internet, nor was I particularly interested in it, but I felt that to encourage myself to keep up to the latest technology, I had best get myself a laptop and get on the Internet. Now the problem is that it has almost become attached to me, and it seems like I can't get away from the Internet. Its informational value is certainly one that all of us recognize.

I thought about it today, and I haven't yet used the Internet for commerce. I've not conducted any legal business over the Internet. I haven't purchased anything over the Internet yet. I haven't given out any confidential information with regard to banking or credit card information over the Internet.

I might say on the lighter side, since we have the television medium today that we communicate through, if there's someone out there with a nice white, 1958 MGA with red interior that they want to sell, why they can certainly get hold of me. It might be the first Internet transaction that I conduct of a legal nature, but that goes back somewhat to my youth that I want to return to.

I certainly use the Internet a lot for e-mail. In fact, some of us here in the Legislature may suggest that the Internet is abused when it comes to e-mail. This afternoon just for interest I looked at my e-mail that I've deleted over the last month and a half, and I have about 1,300 e-mail messages that I have received and either acted on or have dismissed as something that I'm not particularly interested in.

But I want to direct the point of my remarks toward privacy and confidentiality. Practically every day we can read or hear in the media of abuses of the Internet and abuses of confidentiality and privacy. It would seem that the number of hackers, those who can access private, confidential, restricted, highly sensitive information, notwithstanding the safeguards that have been built into the system, is growing all the time. It almost seems to be a challenge to be able to get to someone's private, confidential information. That is most important, and I'm not so sure this bill goes far enough to address that. I would suggest that after second reading the justice committee it will go before take very careful consideration of whether this bill goes far enough to protect the confidentiality and privacy of information that all of us might have on our computers or might be tempted to use our computers to transmit.

The example was given by a colleague of the provincial savings office, where citizens thought their information was confidential, and it isn't. That, we think, was a manual misuse of the information in that it was simply given out. We can't let that happen when it comes to the information that may be on our computers and in our files. I caution people, the residents of the province of Ontario, that when you're using the Internet, notwithstanding any piece of legislation, the bottom line is that you have to have confidence in the system you're using, that the information you choose to put on that system and you choose to send out is kept in the greatest of confidentiality.

I know the government has talked with the privacy commissioner and had meetings with regard to this, but I think they're going to have to go over it a second or a third or a fourth time, to make absolutely sure that every step has been taken that's humanly possible to protect our private and confidential information. After all, that's the one thing we hold most dearly.

I used the example of the Province of Ontario Savings Office that the Ministry of Finance chose to simply give out information to third parties as one example. But there could be health information. If for any reason whatsoever information is transmitted, whether it's to a provincial body like the Ministry of Health or whether it's financial information that's transmitted to the Ministry of Finance,

we have to be absolutely sure that's kept in the utmost confidentiality.

When it comes to e-commerce, as I said, I haven't conducted any yet; I don't know all of the pitfalls that might be involved. But we certainly have to have confidence in the system when we give out something as sacred as our credit card number. There has to be a way—and we're not so sure it's in this bill—that the receiver can be sure, first, that it's being used validly and by the person who should be able to use it; and second, that once having received that information, they're going to keep it in a very confidential manner.

Just recently, the United States Congress passed a bill with regard to e-commerce. In the debate on that bill and leading up to its passing, there was concern that consumers, many of whom still don't have e-mail, might unwittingly give up their right to get paper notices. In other words, they might receive some innocuous request with regard to private or confidential information or commercial information and they may not realize that in signing a document they're giving away the right to have that communicated to them on paper.

The administration in the United States therefore proposed that companies can begin sending contracts, documents and notices via e-mail, but they first must send a test to the customer, who would have to send back a confirmation that the file could be opened and read. In other words, it has to be made abundantly clear that from that point on, you're going to be dealing with confidential information via e-commerce. Lobbyists for the financial institutions called the provisions unnecessary and cumbersome, but finally gave in after high-tech companies endorsed the bill and the administration insisted that it be there.

Just in a regular door-to-door contract where someone selling something door-to-door, we have over the years learned that you have to give a cooling-off period, that people who buy something at the door have to understand absolutely what it is they're buying and what the terms of the contract are. We can do no less when it comes to e-commerce.

For anybody who's used a computer, who may have formulated a message, it's so easy to send it off by the touch of a button and after that say, "Oops, I shouldn't have done that." In fact, your e-mail even has the ability to recall a message. The only thing with that is, the message is out. It may have been read already, before it's recalled. So there are these technical intricacies that we have to make sure people are educated in and understand, because we don't want any mistakes that can't be undone, particularly when it comes to anything of a legal nature or anything of a financial nature. You don't want to find that you've approved something, the money has gone out of your account, the deal is done and you really didn't understand the consequences before you conducted that transaction. As I said, it can be just as easily done by the click of a button.

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I agree with what they have done in the United States, and that is that you have to have confirmation from the

receiver, from the other party, that you are in fact doing business by e-mail and that this is a different world you're operating in. I suppose any of us have signed contracts where we've had a lawyer across the desk from us. The lawyer can explain to us what the contract means, what the ramifications of that contract are, and you have an opportunity to sit back in your chair, read it and ask questions. With the speed at which we do business today and with the speed at which e-commerce can be conducted, we don't have that luxury of time, so you have to completely understand what you're doing.

When it comes to the committee dealing with this bill, they're going to have to be absolutely careful with every paragraph of the bill. Saskatchewan, as we know, passed a bill regarding e-commerce only very recently, and found themselves suddenly in the position where there had to be amendments made to it because it just wasn't complete. I know we can learn from Saskatchewan's experience and we can learn from the federal legislation in those areas of privacy and confidentiality, that we ought not make those kinds of mistakes. If we take appropriate time on this bill and scrutinize it in the right way, we will be able to make ourselves as comfortable as possible with it. As has been mentioned, we certainly support the intent of the bill, because we are moving into a different world.

I just add one small comment in closing: I certainly wish there was some way that gambling on the Internet could be controlled, because this is one area where the Internet needs regulation. I have no idea how it's done, because that's obviously something of a technical nature, but that's an instance where the Internet is used and where confidential financial information is used and can be abused.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'm going to start off where my colleague from Essex South—

Mr Crozier: Just Essex.

Mr Bradley: He's got all of Essex now. That's really a large portion of the province to cover, and a very beautiful part, I might add.

I'm going to start where he left off, because he mentioned a subject in which I have a good deal of interest. That is the subject of gambling, particularly government-sponsored gambling such as we see in Ontario, which is completely out of control, of course, as the government had a goal at one time of having video lottery terminals—the crack cocaine of gambling—in every bar and every restaurant in every village, town and city in Ontario. That was the goal, because the money would be rolling in.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): That was the last government. That was four years ago.

Mr Bradley: That was the last government, the member for Kitchener points out; the last Harris government wanted that.

Gambling on the Internet, electronic gambling, is a challenge that governments have to meet, but this government has set the pace in terms of the expansion of gambling, that is, until it hit a brick wall today. For years

I have been advocating in this House a moratorium on the expansion of gambling opportunities in Ontario because, as we know, the gambling activities sponsored by the government, encouraged by the government and advertised by the government of Ontario, prey upon the most vulnerable people in our society, the most desperate people, people who aren't well connected so they can get the good jobs, or might not have the money for post-secondary education, or simply may not have the capability of acquiring some of the more lucrative jobs in our society. In desperation, some of those people turn to gambling. The more gambling opportunities you provide for those individuals, some of them addicted to the field of gambling, the worse it is.

I noticed this morning that the Chair of Management Board, the Honourable Chris Hodgson, was in full retreat. That seems to be the mode since the government has been severely damaged by the events surrounding water safety in Ontario. We had a retreat on Bill 74 on the part of the Minister of Education. She was waving the white flag on that. I'm not convinced the flag is waving as wildly as some people think, but there was a perception, at the very least, that there was a retreat there.

We see a retreat now on gambling, because we know this government wanted to have 44 new Mike Harris gambling halls. These were purveyed as charity casinos in this province. They got a lot of flak, I suspect even from some of their own backbenchers, but certainly from this side of the House, about establishing those, because they weren't tourist casinos. They were meant to prey upon the people in a specific area. The people weren't flying in from England or from the United States or other places for a tourist event. These were to prey on people who live in a specific area, take money that might be spent in more productive ways and fire it away on gambling.

Then we saw the expansion, and the minister said, "Oh, no, no; we're just having four of them, and all these rules are out there." Meanwhile, while they were closing the front door, they opened the back door and said, "Let's get those slot machines in the racetracks." Racetracks have encountered, partially because of the competition from casinos but also for other reasons, some financial difficulties. At least there's a sport there which is involved in racing. There's no sport in those mindless slot machines, no sport there at all, but there was in horse racing. In desperation, some of the owners of racetracks embraced slot machines simply because they were having financial difficulties. A part of those difficulties could have been solved if the province didn't have such a large take of the operation at these racetracks.

Now we have seen a full—I won't say a full retreat—a retreat for three years on the part of this government in the field of gambling. I guess, from time to time, those of us in opposition can feel vindicated in the tough stance we have taken on issues such as the safety of water, such as Bill 74, such as gambling in this province. I think irreparable damage has been done in some cases. I've not condemned only this government; I've condemned all

governments across this country, across North America, who are engaged in a gambling orgy, who are cutting taxes massively for the corporate sector, which now, as a percentage of all taxes paid, are at an all-time low while they're busy taxing people who are the most vulnerable and desperate and most addicted.

I'm concerned. I'm glad the member for Essex mentioned gambling on the Internet, because I think that is something, when we talk about electronic commerce, we'll want to try to control, because that is yet another opportunity for people who are addicted to get into that field.

I noticed, for one of the casinos, they had the kind of advertisement that in fact follows my logic. They have somebody who ties some bed sheets together and sneaks out the window and heads down to the casino while others are visiting in the house. That's often what happens. It's a person who sneaks out of the household, blows the cheque, maxes out the credit card, and the family is left in very desperate circumstances. Governments have aided and abetted this, in my view. Now they're even advertising. They're looking at that as a great opportunity.

When the member mentions the Internet, and when he mentions e-commerce, that's what it brings to mind, Mr Speaker, because I know you were wondering how this bit could possibly fit on this piece of legislation. That's why I wanted to draw it in.

1730

I have a feeling, nothing better than just a feeling, that there's going to be a bit of regret in this piece of legislation, not anything malicious on the part of the government in this case, but that we're going to find that people are going to use e-commerce in such a way as to bamboozle some people who may not be as familiar with electronic equipment and the modern ways of communicating as others. I certainly hope that all the safeguards are built into it. I'll be interested in the amendments that might come forward, I'll be interested in any hearings that we might have, the input we might have on this legislation. While it appears, on the surface at least, to be reasonable in an electronic age, I think the cautions that my colleague from Essex noted are important.

They have a situation in the USA where there must be confirmation from the other party that you are doing business by e-mail so that everything is on the table, everybody knows exactly what's happening. There may be some people who in fact choose not to engage in commerce by e-mail. I've heard of people who don't want to use the machines at the bank. We have banks where they have a machine set out there and you can use it, I guess. The only thing I can think of where it would be useful would be for making bail maybe at 2 o'clock in the morning or something. These machines are for the convenience of individuals, but there are people who like to actually communicate with a human being.

Now, the banks are quite happy, thank you, to have you using these machines, because that means that they can hire fewer staff. I prefer to deal on a personal basis

with individuals who are human beings, who have jobs. Certainly one could never accuse the banks of over-paying their employees, for instance, yet the ATMs and other electronic equipment they have available for us they encourage you to use. They tell you it's cheaper. They force the tellers to tell you that you should be using electronic equipment as opposed to dealing with the tellers. While that may help the bottom line of the banks, and heaven knows they've been struggling lately with their profit margins, it does mean that hundreds and eventually thousands of people lose their jobs as they keep closing branches. In fact they took the money machine out of this building, the Royal Bank. There was a machine downstairs from which one could obtain funds at the appropriate time, or deposit funds. It was very useful for people who work in the precinct. The Royal Bank yanked it out, I think, because they said there wasn't enough business in it or something of that nature. So they're even pulling out.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): That's because they're very cost-effective people.

Mr Bradley: We are very cautious people in terms of finance around here, quite obviously. But with what I read in the paper today, perhaps there will be a need for those machines around this House. Anyway, I urge the Royal Bank to do that, Mr Cleghorn, who is the top person in the bank, the chairman of the Royal Bank, to reconsider and have that particular machine re-established in the House.

So I do have those cautions. I've no reason to say that this bill is evil, that there's any intention on the part of the government to be tricky with it, nothing like that. I just have a feeling that down the line you're going to have people out there who are going to try to manipulate the system in such a way as to fool those who may not be as familiar with electronic equipment and electronic ways of communicating in the present circumstances.

I'm worried about confidentiality. We saw the situation with POSO, the Province of Ontario Savings Office, and Ann Cavoukian, the commissioner in charge of freedom of information and privacy, complained, I think justifiably, about the lack of co-operation she was getting from the Harris government, which in 1997 had released to a bank and to a polling company information, including the names and addresses and telephone numbers and the amount of money that people had in the Province of Ontario Savings Office, which by the way is a good office. I know this government's itching to privatize it, just the way they're itching to privatize the sewer and water services in this province, just the way, if you read the internal documents coming out of cabinet now, they wanted municipalities to make sure they were going to get in the business of privatization. Because what would happen, you would know, Mr Speaker, is that the Fraser Institute, aided and abetted by certain Conservative members of caucus, would call in local municipal politicians to hear—I don't know the person's name; somebody maybe could help me out—Skip Crick or something like this, who used to be the deputy mayor of

Indianapolis. He's the guru of privatization. He's the guy who's there to put your local municipal workers out of work and replace them with profit-making private sector people delivering what we would consider to be essential government services.

Ann Cavoukian, as commissioner, cautioned us against that. I was outraged when I knew that some of my own constituents, in the St Catharines Province of Ontario Savings Office, were subject to the fact that the government was selling this private information. We have the Minister of Transportation making all kinds of information about drivers available to people around the province. Companies can get hold of that information and utilize it for commercial reasons. I don't think the government should be doing that. I remember there was a major kerfuffle in Ottawa when Bruce Phillips, appointed by Brian Mulroney as a commissioner on information and privacy at the federal level, issued a report saying this information is available from the federal government, a wide variety of information. I too expressed concern about this. Mike Duffy was on television talking to Ken Shaw. This was a major event. They weren't even using it for anything.

Meanwhile, here at Queen's Park, they were giving away the information from POSO and the Ministry of Transportation. I guess they just hadn't heard about it, but I did not see much about that until it was raised significantly in this House, particularly by my colleague the member from Renfrew, who raised it in a point of privilege or a point of order, one of the two, with the Speaker of the assembly, who in fact said there was a prima facie case of contempt of the Legislature on the part of the government.

So I hope that within this legislation there are the necessary safeguards against information being provided to people, information that all individuals wish to keep as private information, their own private business; that that information is not purveyed to commercial companies for whatever purpose. I know many of my colleagues have that same concern and want to see that kind of guarantee as we move into the area the federal and Saskatchewan government have already moved into.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I guess my question is generally to the comments made by the member for St Catharines as regards the effects as we move down this road of new technology. Number one, I'd be interested to hear a little bit more about how he feels about how some people don't want to be served by technology. They don't want to deal with bank machines; they'd rather deal with an individual. As we go down this road, there's potential for even more technology being in your face rather than having actual people provide the services. I understand, for example, that in the insurance business in North America they're looking at this legislation as a real opportunity to do away with a lot of the work now being done by brokers. Rather than buying an insurance policy from your local insurance company, De Laplante in my area, which I buy from, people would

go on the Internet, buy their policy as they need it and cancel it when they need to, or if they're not driving the car for two weeks, put a pause on the policy.

Obviously, there are some savings to people, but at the end of the day I'm really worried about what all this technology means to people and their ability to find good employment, good jobs. At the same time we've got these technologies coming in, taking work away from individuals, because this is what this leads to, I'd also like to know how he feels about how government, especially this government, the Conservatives, has done away with public sector jobs by the thousands and what that means generally to the society and what it means to our economy when you have an economy that's ramping up with more and more activity in the marketplace but you have less and less people potentially being employed by way of what this technology does to them.

1740

Mr Galt: It's interesting to listen to the presentations made by the members from St Paul's, Essex and also from St Catharines and some of their thoughts. Compliments to the opposition in co-operating and working together on this particular bill. I'm often asked in the riding, "Why don't you people up there in Queen's Park ever get along?" So often when we do agree on a bill it's not headlined in the Toronto Star, the Globe or whatever. This is one where there's a lot of co-operation, and it's a bill that, in spite of the understanding and agreement, we are carrying out some debate on. So I do compliment the members in opposition for their recognition of this legislation.

This is nothing all that new or unique. We've been dealing for a very long period of time with voice contracts, over-the-telephone contracts with insurance agents, for example. My spouse has been in the insurance business for some time, and they make binding coverage of car insurance over the telephone. I'm sure some of the members here are quite familiar with that. That was binding, and that could be done simply with a phone call and the commitment was there. Similarly with the purchase of stocks with investment dealers; again, a contract just because you confirm over the telephone that in fact is what you really want.

I agree with many of the comments made by the members of the opposition that this will in fact move Ontario into the 21st century with information technology. It will be recognizing, kind of moving in the direction of the paperless society that we talked so much about many years ago when computers came in.

All in all, I thank the opposition for their support on this particular legislation and look forward to its speedy passage prior to the House rising on June 22nd, I believe.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I'm pleased to rise and make comment on the words that my colleagues have put forth today regarding Bill 88. It doesn't happen very often that we have agreement in this Legislature on pieces of legislation, and it's unfortunate that the government doesn't take the lead from this example that has been set here and work towards drafting

legislation that gets more unanimous support from members of this Legislature, in particular legislation that we know is going to benefit all citizens of Ontario.

Mr Galt: Be nice, though.

Mr Peters: I am being nice on this piece of legislation.

I do compliment the members, because they brought forth a number of good points that need to be taken into consideration at the committee level. We have seen, as we've entered the 21st century, a new way of doing business. I myself spend a lot of time on the e-Bay searching for items of interest, in particular to add to my Jumbo collection. I've been very successful in procuring Jumbo items all across North America, both Canada and the United States. It's important to know that there are going to be protections in place, not only for individuals who are purchasers but for individuals who are using this as a new method, as a way to market a particular product.

We will be supporting this legislation. It is important that this legislation has come forward at this time, but we do at all times need to ensure that we are going to be respecting individuals' privacy. It's incumbent on us as government to ensure that individual rights are protected, and we have to make sure that this legislation does fit into the parameters of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

I compliment all members on this side on their comments.

Mr Gill: It's a pleasure to take part in this ongoing debate about e-commerce and, like I said earlier, the time has come that we actually went ahead with some of these new innovations.

At the same time, I want to try to alleviate some of the concerns of the member for Timmins-James Bay, as if this new technology is going to take over all the jobs and it's going to eliminate many jobs. Any new technology certainly affects people when it comes in. It shifts some jobs and some of the technologies. It's just like when—and I'm going back many years before my time—the cotton gin came in. Somebody said, "Every farmer is now going to be displaced and is going to be taken over by machines." These machines and technologies are to be considered complementary. When computers came in everybody said, "This is going to be a paperless society from now on." As the member from Northumberland said before, we are actually using much more paper, because the desire of mankind to get more information is there. Everybody wants the full report to be on their desk every morning, and perhaps that gives us additional information to make better decisions.

I want to highlight some of the things this bill is going to bring forward. It ensures that electronic contracts, documents and signatures have the same legal effect as those written on paper, which is very important. I think one of the points brought forward was that perhaps a fax copy is going to be considered binding. It also establishes rules for automated transactions and for correcting mistakes made on the computer. Adopting national and international standards for e-commerce—very important,

because we have become a global village and it's absolutely important that we deal in international standards.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Bradley: On behalf of my colleagues who spoke earlier and myself, I thank members of the Legislature who have offered their comments and questions. The questions from the member for Timmins-James Bay expressed a concern about people losing their jobs. I'm concerned in both situations that we're more and more dealing not with individuals but simply with machines. I understand they are there to assist us. They have provided us with some modern conveniences, and they are very helpful. Most of us in this Legislature would not have had fax machines in our constituency offices 10 years ago. Now fax machines are considered somewhat dated as we constantly deal with e-mail. So I recognize there is a significant change taking place electronically.

However, I continue to worry about the jobs that could be lost, first of all in the banking situation, where I don't see a cost reduction to the consumer, because the fees keep going up. I simply see the bottom line for the banks being enhanced by this as they make unprecedented profits while they're turfing bodies out in the street. These are people who have worked hard for a bank and dedicated themselves to a bank, and then are no longer with them and the branches are closed.

The member mentioned the same situation of eliminating brokers, in terms of providing insurance for people. That's a concern you have, that a lot of jobs in that industry will disappear. We've seen public sector jobs disappear as well. There are still individuals who want to deal with another human being. I hope we don't lose sight of that. I hope this bill doesn't have the dire consequences that some believe it might, and I hope it does enhance our commercial transactions.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bisson: I would ask for unanimous consent to defer our lead as our critic is not here for this issue.

The Acting Speaker: Do we have consent to defer the lead? Agreed.

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much. I want to say, first of all, that I'll be supporting this legislation. I don't want members of the assembly to get the idea, based on the comments from the speech by the member for St Catharines, that I or the New Democratic Party is opposed to changes in technology, not at all. But I think we need to recognize that in this legislation we're going to be giving financial institutions, insurance companies and various businesses out there the ability to utilize an electronic signature to make a contract legal and binding.

1750

I think there's a whole bunch of questions we have to look at in some detail to make sure we don't open a Pandora's box of potential fraud or other issues that may come of it. One of the points we want to put on the record right at the beginning is to make sure the government has good public consultation, and not what this government normally does, which is to say, "Let's introduce a bill in the House with a time allocation motion

and then push it through the committee stages in a day or a day and a half of committee hearings."

I think you have to have fairly good and fairly wide public hearings in order to give people on all sides, not only people in the financial sectors—insurance companies and other people in commerce—but also people within the legal profession an opportunity to know that this is coming so that they can comment. I'd be interested to know, for example, what some of the more learned minds of our legal system have to say about utilizing electronic signatures in order to OK contracts. I would also want to see what the public has to say because there are a whole bunch of issues that come up.

I want to raise as part of the debate some of what I was reading in preparation for this bill. I knew it was coming. I'm known as not being technologically challenged. In fact, the joke in our caucus is and always has been that I'm probably more in tune with new technologies than most other people out there. I've been utilizing technology not only in my office as an MPP but in the job I did before when it comes to utilization of computers, Internet, and all things that are related to this bill.

I want to raise as one issue the experience in the United States. You would know that Congress has passed a bill in the United States, and it is soon to be signed into law by President Clinton, that will give companies across the United States that are on the Internet the ability to accept a signature, by way of electronic signature, the same as it would in the case of somebody signing a contract. That means if, for example, you go out and buy a house, or you go to court, you make settlement in court over an item, or you want to buy an insurance contract or whatever, now as it stands you have to sign in the presence of witnesses, in many cases, for your signature to take hold. The reason for that is fairly simple. We want to make sure that people are not utilizing signatures in a way of fraud, so that in fact you are protected, so we know that once you sign, it really is you. In the United States, the American Congress has passed a law that is going to allow electronic signatures to have the same weight as signatures that are done in person.

Here are some of the issues they are finding in the United States. They're looking at ways to be able to give validity to a signature that is given electronically. They haven't come to terms with this yet, and I find it kind of interesting. They're saying, for example, that maybe the way it has to be done is that you go to a Web site and you get issued a security code, a PIN of some type, then that PIN is sent back to you, and any time you sign a document with that particular financial institution, you would have to punch in your PIN. That might be fair and good, but you know how many hackers have been out there. I think we all recognize that if you have somebody who runs some sort of encryption program that breaks into a code or figures out a group of codes, that means potentially, if you were dealing with a financial institution—a broker would be a good example—where this would be used, somebody can be out there making trades

on the Internet utilizing your particular code. It's a possibility. All I'm saying is that I'm not opposed to the idea; I just think we need to figure out that we utilize technologies that make sense and that are as secure as possible to make sure we don't end up with the fraudulent activity that could come out of this.

They're also looking, for example, at one other way of doing it, which would be that people would have to buy a type of scanner for their computers where they would either do a handprint or a thumbprint in order to be able to be validated as themselves. That sounds to me like a pretty reasonable suggestion. The problem is, what happens if I don't own a scanner that is able to deal with my handprint? Will we end up in a situation where the company will say, "The only way we'll do business with you is if you utilize Internet technologies by way of a signature"? It excludes people, possibly, from participating in whatever economic activity it might be.

I want to make sure that question is answered as we go through the committee process. It could be that it's not even an issue. It very well could be that we're going to draft this legislation in a way that says: "You still have a choice, as a consumer, about how you sign your contract. If you want to do it electronically, you have that right, and if you want to do it the old-fashioned way, then you have that right." If that's the case, and people are guaranteed access to be able to do whatever type of electronic trade they're involved in, that they still have the ability to go one way or another, then I think it's fine, I don't think there's a problem, but we need to make sure that people are given that option.

I look for an example. As members of the assembly would know, my own father is sitting here in the Legislature. Dad is 73, 74 years old. He's not very big on the Internet. He looks at the stock pages every morning as he looks at his investments, and he wants to make sure, when he makes his investments, that he makes the proper choice, but he likes to go down to his broker and make his trade himself. He's one of those old cats that does it the old-fashioned way. We have a saying in French: "Les bons papiers font les bons amis." In other words, good papers make good friends. He is one of these guys who likes to have everything signed in person in order to make sure that he has some control over security. What do we do with people like my father or other people who are not comfortable with or don't want to use technologies? We need to make sure, by way of this bill, that people are still given that option.

The way the bill is written, it could be construed that an e-commerce business, whatever it might be, will say, "The only way you do business with us is by way of electronic signature," and people who don't like using technology may get boxed in. I know what the Tories are going to say to this one. They are going to say automatically: "Oh, you just have to decide not to do business on the Internet. Then you don't have to worry about that. You won't be subject to this legislation." Well, I'm sorry, it doesn't work that way. The reality is that many businesses—and the Attorney General is here and he'll understand what I'm talking about—are moving the way of new technology and it is not inconceivable that a particular financial institution such as a bank, an insurance company, a stock house, whatever it might be, or even maybe the Attorney General's own department, will say: "The only way you can do business with us is by way of the electronic files because we don't keep paper files any more. We only deal with things electronically and so therefore we only accept an electronic signature, pass code, thumb print or whatever it might be." It may end up excluding people like my father and others who don't want to use those type of technologies.

I see the member from Etobicoke saying: "Oh, don't worry. Everything will be fine." That's what you guys said when you privatized water testing; you guys said everything would be fine. What happened? People died. So I don't trust you; I'm sorry.

My job as an opposition member is to raise these issues and say to the government, "Listen, not a bad idea." This is a problem with the government. I am standing here and saying, "Not a bad idea." I'm in favour of what you're doing, but all I'm saying is that you have to make sure there are safeguards put in place to deal with issues of fraud but also, more important, to make sure that people's access is not taken away because we allow this technology to be put in place. Because it's not inconceivable that the Attorney General all of sudden would say, for example, "When dealing with FRO, the only way we do business is on-line." God knows what would happen then. We could end up in a situation where things can get even more mucked than they are now.

I notice that it's almost 6 of the clock and I would suggest that maybe we recess until 6:45.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for your assistance.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock this evening.

The House adjourned at 1758.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	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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