

No. 76B



N° 76B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 21 June 2000**

**Mercredi 21 juin 2000**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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Greffier  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 21 June 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 21 juin 2000

*The House met at 1845.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE  
COMMERCE ÉLECTRONIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 19, 2000, on the motion for second reading of 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 Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin):** I believe it's the third party. The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Mr Speaker, say that with feeling, "the third party." I don't believe we have a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Two minutes. You guys are getting slow trying to hold quorum in this Legislature. I've got to say that when we were government, and I'm sure when the Liberals were government, we didn't have problems keeping quorum. I really wonder sometimes.

This is resuming debate in regard to the e-commerce bill which the government brought forward this week, I guess it was, at the beginning of this week. I was saying our caucus, myself included, is generally supportive of what the government is doing here. We understand the government is trying to find a way to regulate some of the activities that happen on the Internet when it comes to electronic commerce. As we know, presently there is really no standard in regard to how we deal with finding ways to validate trades that are made on the Internet or commerce that is done on the Internet to make sure that people, when they engage in some sort of commerce on the Internet, can verify that they are themselves. As we

know, right now the only way they can verify is whatever protocol they have set up on a particular Internet site, and it varies from site to site. So there is a problem. If you have a document, is that document actually signed and is it actually the signature of the person supposedly sending in the e-mail saying, "I want you to release this information" or "I want to purchase" or "I want to do business with the government"?

I think the idea is basically not a bad one, to say we are moving towards trying to find ways to utilize technologies that are more in keeping with where these technologies are going and understanding that if we're able to find a way to make sure the signature of the person who's sending the e-mail is valid, that's maybe not a bad thing. For example, if you're trying to do business with the government of Ontario and you want to sign some sort of legal document, basically the signed document on the Internet by way of e-mail would have the same validity as a document that's signed in person in the presence of witnesses.

As I was saying in this debate earlier, the premise is not a bad one, and I think we can support that. The problem is, we need to make sure this bill goes to committee in order to deal with the many issues that arise from this particular bill; for example, what standard or what protocol the Internet will be utilizing when it comes to Ontario for making sure the signature is indeed the signature of the person who signed.

I was saying earlier that there are different technologies. If I wanted to contact the Ministry of the Attorney General by way of the Internet and to get some information from the Family Responsibility Office, as an example, the Ministry of the Attorney General could decide by way of a PIN, as much as you have with your bank card. That would be the way to ensure that it is actually you asking to access the information and not somebody else who's trying to get it, or if you're trying to sign a document to give authority to the Ministry of the Attorney General or some e-commerce business to purchase or to OK some type of transaction on the Internet, release of information, for example, that in fact it is proven that you're the person who's sending in the request and that it holds the same weight in law. As it stands right now, only my signature will stand up in court. An e-mail obviously doesn't have the same weight as a signature, as there's no way to make sure the person who signed is actually the person who sent the e-mail.

The issue for me as a New Democrat is, if we're going to go the way of this new technology, which I think is a good idea, we have to make sure a couple of things

happen. The first is, we need to talk to the best people we can when it comes to figuring out what type of technology we're going to use to make sure the signature is valid. As I was saying earlier, one of the technologies is a PIN. Another one is putting scanners on computers that are used for this type of function, so that a palm print or a thumb print is a way of authorizing a signature on a document or release of information by way of my signature. There are various types of encryption methods that could be utilized.

I just want to make sure, as do other members in this assembly, that if we go this way, we have good public hearings to allow people—and I'm not just saying the normal half day or 30 minutes of public hearings that we normally have now that the Conservatives have taken power with yet a second majority, but rather good, extensive public hearings. I see this as a non-partisan issue, so that we can tell people across this province: "Listen, your government is looking at doing this. We, as members of the assembly, want to make sure that we cover off the bases." If there is technology out there that's better than another, we want to know what it is. We need to talk to the experts within the field who can tell us which way we should do this and how it can best be done in order to protect the public.

The other issue I want to put on the record again is the whole issue of making sure that if we go this way, we don't take away the ability of individuals to transact business with the government because the only choice they would have is to do it by way of the Internet. I'll just give you an example. Do people know the initials FRO? Certainly as members of the assembly, we know what it is. It's the Family Responsibility Office, the old SCOE. Ever since Charles Harnick, the former Attorney General, decided to centralize all of the services out of Toronto, we've had nothing but a mess in the Family Responsibility Office. Payers of support payments—the husbands in most cases; in some cases wives but mostly ex-husbands—who are trying to make sure their responsibilities for payment of support payments are met are sending in the money, or in some cases are being garnished. The money is being received by the Family Responsibility Office, and unfortunately there's been a mess at the Family Responsibility Office for the longest time because this government says: "Government is bad. Get rid of all the civil servants. We don't need those pesky civil servants getting in the way of business." We've got rid of all of those people and now it takes forever to try to process anything.

So the payment is received in the Family Responsibility Office and the left hand of the Family Responsibility Office doesn't know what the right hand did. The payment comes in this hand, and the left hand doesn't tell the right hand to make sure to sign off to the payee that the money has actually been received. What they end up doing is putting the payer in arrears. Often what ends up happening is that the employer gets pestered by more requests to get payment, to put him into a garnishee situation or, in many cases, as we know, the payer ends up having to pay twice. There's a whole difficulty.

My point is this. If we go the way of this technology and the government says: "Hey, we can save money. We don't have to use stamps. We don't have to send documents by way of Purolator or Priority Post or registered letter. We can save lots of money if we just do it digitally by way of the Internet," and from now on we have a government policy that says no more can you get stuff on paper, I don't want to go that way, and I think most Ontarians don't want to go that way. I would suggest even some Conservative—or should I say Reform, CCRAP, Alliance, whatever they're called these days?—don't want to go that way, either.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** There he goes, the Reform guy again. I like that.

They don't want to go that way either, because it means those people who are not comfortable with or don't want to use technologies could potentially end up in a situation where they would be forced to use a technology that they don't want to use to get documents or to authorize record-keeping on the part of the province of Ontario. I know some members across the way in the Reform party—or CCRAP, or merde, or whatever it's called—would say, "We're not going to go that far." I think that's an issue we have to talk about at committee, because there is a danger, once we go down this path, that the government, for cost savings—either your government or our future government or somebody else—may be tempted to say we could save a lot of money if we did everything electronically. I think we need to look at that issue to make sure we don't end up in a situation of barring people's access to information or to their records or transactions with their government or others by way of this new technology only.

I say to the government across the way, in many, many instances you guys—mostly guys, some women—have come into this House and said: "Oh, well, we know best. We're Conservatives"—Reform, CCRAP, merde, whatever you're called. "We're going to get rid of government. We're going to make things more efficient." We find out after the fact that it's not more efficient. Walkerton is a good example. You guys said you were going to make water testing and water purification plants more efficient. You were going to get rid of regulation. You were going to get rid of red tape. You were going to get rid of all those pesky enforcement officers that worked for the Ministry of the Environment. You slashed their budget by half. There is a cost. People in Ontario died, and it's suspected many more died as a result of that decision.

I said earlier, in another debate, you guys deregulated Ontario Hydro and you privatized it and you said: "We're all going to save money. We're all going to have cheaper rates." I remember Mr Harris getting up and promising we were going to pay less for hydro as a result of privatization. Now the Minister of Energy has got to run in the House and introduce legislation to re-regulate the rates because the private sector is going to the Ontario Energy Board saying, "Jack the rates up"—in Toronto

alone, 6%. You said, in the example of NorOntair, that if you got the public sector out of transportation in northern Ontario, the private sector was going to run in and they were going to fill the demand by the public for offer great airline services in northern Ontario. Now the best airline in northern Ontario is Bisson Air. I'm a pilot. I've bought my own airplane—I can afford to do that; I make a good wage here—in order to be able to travel east, west and north. That's the only way you can do it nowadays. Unfortunately, not many people are as lucky as me to make \$81,000 per year, 33% more if the Tories had their way, to be able to do that.

You have demonstrated that your policies, quite frankly, don't work and that you've failed the people of Ontario. The direction that you're taking is not only too fast but, quite frankly, it's in the wrong direction. I say, as a New Democrat, you guys—some women—should basically decide to do the right thing, and that is to remember that your government is governing on behalf of the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Technology is great. Advances in technology are great because they allow for the quick and immediate exchange of information. In fact, Ontarians seeking equal cancer care launched a Web site after their news conference. It's up. It's running. I want to let the people of Ontario know how to get to their Web site. It's [www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html](http://www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html). It's very, very important for Ontarians—

**The Acting Speaker:** Excuse me. You have to keep that sign down.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Mr Speaker, you're not against equal cancer treatment? Thank you very much, and I apologize for breaking the rules here. But I want the people to go into that Web site and to see the cause that Ontarians seeking equal cancer care are fighting for. When you go in, you'll see the logo—and I know the Minister of Health is here tonight and is very, very interested in the logo. It says: "Cancer doesn't know where you live. Cancer treatment travel grants do." I would suggest to the minister and to the members of the government that they go into that Web site and there's a form where you can sign up. Sign up and show the former chair of the Northeast CCOR, the former vice-chair of Cancer Care Ontario, that you too want equal treatment for cancer patients regardless of where they live across the province of Ontario. I would suggest that if you use the toll-free phone number or the Internet address, you will be able to show that you too believe there should not be discrimination in health care policy in the province of Ontario and that the wrong should be righted.

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**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm very pleased to respond to the member for Timmins-James Bay on Bill 88.

If you look at the intention here by Minister Flaherty, it's to move forward in an industry initiative to encourage and support e-commerce in today's B2B communications. I know of an anecdote in my own riding of Durham

where an individual tried to complete a transaction using a fax and it was questioned as to whether it was a legal document. I think this clarifies, and yet there are areas where the bill does not apply. For instance, in making consent/capacity decisions, where there are aspects involved in more personal detail, it is not permitted. There's a requirement for people, where possible, to deal face to face. So that's what the primary option would be.

You have to be realistic in an e-commerce world. Where people are transacting business, many from their own homes, they should be given much more access or fewer barriers to commerce in our society.

In my concluding remarks, I moved yesterday a private member's bill on the use of hand-held cellular phones while driving a vehicle. I'm interested in hearing from people at my Web site, [www.johnotoolempp.ca](http://www.johnotoolempp.ca), my own Web site. Look it up and let me know your views. I'm suggesting that if you were to use a hands-free device and have both hands on the wheel and your mind and intention to drive safely, that's very important.

This is another form of commerce. We have to get connected. I think Minister Flaherty's done a spectacular job and I expect all members to support it.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** I certainly support this bill. Today I supported and spoke to another very important bill, an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act requiring branding of motor vehicles. I listened to the debate of the opposition. They spoke about roads and they spoke about Walkerton and they said they supported the bill, yet refused to even talk about it the bill. I wonder if they even understood it.

Let me make it clear. The member for Kingston and the Islands obviously did not understand branding of motor vehicles and has no concept of what a branded vehicle is. That work, the recommendations to the Minister of Transportation, came from the Ontario Crime Control Commission—myself, the MPP for Cambridge, Gerry Martiniuk. We made some very important recommendations, one that motor vehicles should mandatorily be branded, and not only that but some recommendations for the federal government to increase patrols on our ports where some stolen vehicles are being shipped out of this country, very expensive vehicles—a \$600-million loss in Canada to auto theft, approximately \$50 per insured vehicle.

When the member for Kingston and the Islands took 40 minutes or so to debate this issue, he spoke about roads and he spoke about Walkerton. But really, what he should understand is that mandatory auto branding is for consumer protection, consumers in my riding and consumers in his riding, to allow full disclosure of vehicles that have been written off and then repaired and resold in a legitimate market, and to prevent theft. So I take this opportunity to remind him of what this bill was really all about.

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I do want to congratulate the member for Timmins-James Bay on his comments. To the last speaker, the member for London-Fanshawe, that bill was debated earlier today. We're now

on Bill 88, the Electronic Commerce Act. I just want to bring that to the attention of the House.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Caplan:** I certainly will, and please don't interrupt me.

I did want to talk about Bill 88 because it is a very important bill. Bill 88 is important because we do need laws and a structure around electronic commerce, around what constitutes a legal contract, how you have consensus. There is a gaping hole in Bill 88, and I hope the government members will take notice of this. It has to do with issues around privacy and confidentiality of information. This is a critical issue. We've seen examples here in the province of Ontario where those kinds of breaches of privacy and confidentiality can have serious, serious effects.

It was not long ago in this House that Speaker Carr found a prima facie case of contempt of the Legislature because of the actions of the Ministry of Finance, ministry of privatization, in giving out confidential information to private companies, for whatever reason. And then we saw government officials and public servants block the attempt of our privacy commissioner to get to the bottom of that particular situation.

I would be remiss, because this is about information on the Internet, if I did not note the Web site to get information about the health care apartheid that is going on. My colleague from Sudbury has chronicled it very well and I certainly want to encourage all members of Ontario to support the member for Sudbury in making sure that this blatant discrimination is eliminated.

**The Acting Speaker:** Two-minute response.

**Mr Bisson:** To the members for Sudbury and Don Valley East, and the other ridings—I'm sorry, I don't remember the names—from the Conservative benches, I want to thank you for your comments.

I want to make my point this way: why I think we need to be careful when treading into new technologies when it comes to having them replace what have been legal practices that have existed for a long time, such as official signatures on documents.

I said earlier it's important that if we go this way we find a technology that works and that has some integrity, and that we make sure we don't end up putting ourselves in a position where the technology may get the better of us; and also that we don't end up giving people no option to go back to the old technologies. I'll tell you why I say that. I know I can't hold this up for long, Mr Speaker; it's against the rules. I'll turn it back this way.

My point is this. In the new technologies—I'll give you an example. Here are two Web sites. One Web site is called [www.vianet.on.ca](http://www.vianet.on.ca) or is that a forward slash? It depends on how you look at it. Then comes a squiggly whatever you call it. Then [/funding/travel.htm](http://funding/travel.htm). It's a mouthful. Now, if you remember what I said, you got my point. The other one was [www.john](http://www.john)—underscore, slash or hyphen; I don't remember which one—otoole—was that with the hyphen or without?—[on.something.ca](http://on.something.ca).

My point is, who remembers all this stuff? If we're going to work with technology, let's make it easy so that people understand and there's no confusion.

If you want to visit a Web site, then go to a simple one: [www.gillesbisson.com](http://www.gillesbisson.com). How can it be simpler? If at any time anybody has to check up on anything or let me know how they feel about this: [www.gillesbisson.com](http://www.gillesbisson.com).

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington):** I'm very pleased to add my voice to the debate tonight. We're debating Bill 88, and the full title of this bill is 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.

I was listening to my colleague across the way read out the e-mail address and I thought, "Well, I'm not the only one who is not very literate in computer language." There are a few people on my staff who will be giggling tonight if they know that I am speaking to this bill, because I am—I am ashamed to admit, but it will be fixed by the end of the summer—relatively computer-illiterate. So if Val or Lynda or Vijay or Lanny are watching, they are not to laugh too hard that I am speaking to this bill.

**1910**

I have a lot of constituents in my riding who know how important electronic commerce is who would be embarrassed if they were fully cognizant of my ignorance in this matter. When I read things like this, that right now 300 million people are accessing the Internet on a regular basis and that over the next three years we know that worldwide e-business will reach US\$1.3 trillion annually, I know what the effect is on Ontario and I know how important establishing a strong economy for Ontario has been for us over the last while. When these kinds of things are important to Ontario as a whole, they're important to my riding of Guelph-Wellington.

This legislation is being presented in the House by the Attorney General. It's my view that this piece of legislation could have been introduced by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade or the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations because this piece of legislation is about making sure that Ontario is at the forefront of being able to allow its citizens, its businesses, its public institutions, to be part of electronic commerce and electronic legislation. It brings Ontario laws in line with technological advances by setting out general and flexible laws—I understand that's quite important—which will ensure that electronic contracts, documents and signatures have the same legal effect as contracts, documents and signatures on paper.

We spend a great deal of time making sure that Ontario is open for business, that companies and businesses and entrepreneurs around the world know Ontario is a place to invest. We've spent a great deal of time working to ensure that our education system is improving and able to be one of the best education systems in the world, because we know how very important talented people are to those businesses.

What we are doing here in Ontario is bringing our legislation in line with other jurisdictions around the world. This legislation implements the uniform Electronic Commerce Act, which was adopted in 1999 by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, which is a federal-provincial-territorial legal body, and this brings us in line with other jurisdictions. Other countries that have adopted a similar type of law include the United States, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Bermuda, Argentina and Colombia. There's one country there that jumps out at me: Ireland. Ireland has done tremendous things in turning its economy around.

**Mr Brad Clark (Stoney Creek):** What about Toronto?

**Mrs Elliott:** My colleague is giggling about perhaps Toronto being listed there as a country.

When we look at Ireland, we know what tremendous changes they have made, and they have been very astute in looking to the future so that their country is growing and thriving. Ontario needs to pay very close attention to all the things that are happening around the world so we remain a world leader, so our young people have every opportunity, so investors look here with confidence. And Bill 88, in my view, is an essential part of that.

Now, there are some people who are concerned about electronic commerce and electronic business. They're worried that we're not able to protect our privacy and our information. What has pleased me about this bill is that it does contain a number of provisions that respond to the Information and Privacy Commission concerns that were raised. For instance, this act will not apply to facilitate the use of biometric information, information based on measuring physical characteristics like fingerprints and iris scans, unless its use is specifically authorized by other legislation or expressly consented to by the individual. The Information and Privacy Commissioner here has said she's comfortable with the bill in the form it has taken, and there have been a number of discussions with her office.

The other thing that constituents may wish to know is that federal law also safeguards the use of personal information used in e-business.

I'm pleased that those kinds of concerns were taken into consideration as this bill was drafted.

Before I speak a little bit further about the bill, I want to remind our constituents how very important it is for Ontario to be enacting these pieces of legislation. In 1995 we promised that we would create 725,000 jobs here in Ontario. We're going to exceed those expectations, and we've made even further commitments—

*Applause.*

**Mrs Elliott:** Yes, we're very proud of that, because that's a stark contrast to what was happening under the NDP and Liberal governments before that, where jobs were being lost and debt and deficits were created in the face of a strong economy under the Liberals and just generally skyrocketing debt and deficits and jobs lost under the NDP.

We feel it's very important to turn that sort of thing around. Not only have we committed to that and

exceeded that first promise under the Blueprint, we've committed to 825,000 jobs, and so we want to do everything we can to ensure we're on track for those targets. Again, it's because making hope and opportunity and every available job possible for our young people is so very important to us.

The other thing we have done consistently in our term of office, both from 1995 to 1999 and since then, is make every effort to make sure that with whatever legislation we're presenting or new ideas that are being brought forth, we've taken the time to consider the red tape aspect of legislation. When you come here to Queen's Park, it's very easy to think in terms of making laws, creating policy and adding more because there are often lots of reasons and it seems like the right thing to do, but it's also very easy to forget the consequences of every one of our actions on small and medium-sized businesses across the province. Making sure our red tape obligations and requirements are not overwhelming is very important. This bill fits into that category in assisting small and medium-sized businesses.

For any of the constituents who may be watching, or viewers across Ontario for that matter, there's an excellent report that our government distributes called the Ontario Business Report. It comes through the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and it highlights our success stories, new ideas, new ventures being undertaken in Ontario. I know it's distributed widely across the province, but if anyone is interested in this remarkable publication, I suggest they contact their local MPP and ask that they receive a copy of this. It's very worthwhile reading, and I'm sure that any entrepreneurs would find it very valuable in spending the time.

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to make a member's statement in the House. In Guelph, we've established what we call quality awards. The chamber of commerce, with KPMG and the city, have decided they want to honour excellent businesses that have taken the time to find ways to make their businesses the very best they can be and who are working to continually improve their businesses. We had an awards ceremony on Friday night in my riding where—I'm not sure of the exact number—I would guess roughly 20 businesses were honoured. These were not simply honours presented willy-nilly to businesses; these were businesses that had taken the time to participate in a relatively onerous process, examining their business practices, their hiring procedures, every aspect of how they do business, and these were then evaluated by experts in the field.

What I noticed was that several of these businesses—and many of them were small businesses—have taken the time to begin to stick their feet into the business of e-commerce. They've recognized that e-commerce is one opportunity for a very small business with a minimal investment perhaps in space and in buildings to be able to compete with very large businesses. Some of them are extraordinarily successful. This type of legislation is very important to them.

Just to close off, I want to remind our viewers that there are four or five key points included in this legis-

lation. First of all, it is enabling legislation. It doesn't require anybody to accept electronic communications. Governments and ministries aren't forced to go electronic before they're ready. It simply allows such communications to be valid when they are used in the instance where laws now require the use of paper documents.

It's minimalist legislation. It doesn't prescribe that certain technology be used. It gives very wide latitude to governments and business to choose the methods they wish to communicate. Again, it deals with this whole issue of reducing red tape and minimizes legal uncertainty in the adoption of modern, efficient communications. It's harmonized. Time and time again, we have spoken in the House about various pieces of legislation—we talked about one this afternoon—where it's very important that, if we can at all, we harmonize our legislation with other jurisdictions, particularly in this case trading partners. It's great to be the leader, but it's also great to be part of a bigger team, particularly when your own constituents can benefit from that. As I said, this legislation is implemented with the uniform Electronic Commerce Act. It removes barriers without placing unnecessary or burdensome requirements on others.

#### 1920

The other thing that is quite important for this specific piece of legislation is that it has broad support among the legal community. It was developed by a working group that included many private sector participants. They include: IBM Canada, Microsoft Canada, Information Technology Association of Canada, the Canadian Bankers Association and ARM International, which is an association of archivists and record managers.

Despite my own personal illiteracy in e-commerce, I know how important this is to my constituents and to business people across the province. I know how important this is to government, to be able to be modern and responsive in communicating with our constituents. I am very pleased to add my voice in support of Bill 88, the Electronic Commerce Act.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions. The member for—

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** Scarborough-Rouge River, one of the province's wonderful places.

I just want to take a few minutes and comment on the remarks of the member from Guelph-Wellington. What comes to mind when I hear progressive legislation come about is that the people are always ahead of the government. The people are not as illiterate as you may feel; they're way ahead. When I go to them, they are asking for my e-mail right away so they can communicate with me. They're right on target.

As a matter of fact, one of the beautiful things about the Internet and about all this e-mail and e-commerce and what have you, is even the address itself gives a message. You can almost know what they do in their message. One could say "Alvin Curling hot mail." You know what's happening there. As a matter of fact, I was very impressed and pleased to see a message so profound given

in one of the e-mails I saw. This e-mail was the O-SECC Web site. It was a beautiful Web site. I think we all should plug into that. It's Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care. Just in the message itself, the Web site itself, is beautiful and I encourage all those who are watching to plug into that Web site and see what it says: [www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html](http://www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html). Sometimes it's just by the visual of it all, and I don't have to read very quickly, as you can see that. That itself gives a perfect message of what the people are about, what they need, and as a matter of fact, brings us closer to the north, although the north is quite upset today that we're not so close, especially with cancer care. They're concerned about why they're not being bridged and funded that way. I think it's a great way to go.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further comments or questions?

**Mr Mazzilli:** I certainly rise to support this legislation, but again, I want to go back to the member from Kingston and the Islands, who obviously was not paying attention through today's debate, who was talking, again, about roads and so on when the debate was an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act to require mandatory branding of automobiles in the province of Ontario. Just so that his constituents get it right, the intent of this government is consumer protection; to protect consumers by giving them full disclosure on vehicles that have been repaired after being written off by insurance companies, and also to prevent the re-VINing—the vehicle identification number—of stolen vehicles. Presently in the province of Ontario, many written-off vehicles are purchased strictly for the value of that vehicle identification number. A vehicle of a similar make and model and year is stolen and simply replaces the one that has been written off and claimed to have been repaired, when in fact there has never been a repair.

Not only is the consumer protected from purchasing a vehicle like that, and perhaps losing it at a later time when it's discovered that it is stolen, but also, if you speak to auto recyclers, they are having to purchase salvage to be sold for used parts from the United States, because our written-off product here in this province has gone up in price to a point where our local recyclers cannot afford it—simply for the value of the VIN, not the salvage. This will add enormous value to the availability of used parts in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further comments or questions?

**Mr Bartolucci:** I, too, share something in common with the member from Guelph-Wellington: We're both learning how to work our computer and trying to maximize the effectiveness. I was happy today to be able to take a letter off the computer from David Livingston, and I'd like to read, in part, what it says:

"My wife and I live in Timmins and we have a three-year-old daughter—three in July—who was diagnosed with cancer at just a little over a year of age. Since then, we have travelled to Toronto on many occasions. We would most definitely like to see the travel grant structure changed to reflect equality between patients in the north and south. I have exhausted most of my financial



resources over the past two years travelling back and forth with my wife and then-infant daughter to Toronto. All we have ever managed to get for subsidy has been the travel grant in the amount of \$107 x two each time we go. As you can imagine, this barely pays the gas. When one is faced with the cost of lodging and meals etc while our young one was undergoing chemotherapy when she was first diagnosed, then I am certain that even Mike the spike could appreciate the financial onus placed on parents.

“We must make our next journey for a checkup on July 17 and would certainly like to have this discrimination erased and corrected for the benefit of all.”

I suggest to the Minister of Health, who is in the House this evening, that she listen to people like David Livingston. This is real life. This is real hardship. This is a loving father wanting only equal treatment as he helps his child overcome what we all know in this House is a horrible, horrible illness. I would suggest, with all due respect to everyone in here, that we think carefully about our government policies.

**Mr Caplan:** It's really very hard to follow that very heart-wrenching story that the member from Sudbury was talking about. But with regard to Bill 88 and the comments of the member from Guelph-Wellington, I would just like to indicate that the federal government passed Bill C-6, which she referred to. I'll read the title and what the bill is about: An Act to support and promote electronic commerce by protecting personal information that is collected, used or disclosed in certain circumstances, by providing for the use of electronic means to communicate or record information or transactions and by amending the Canada Evidence Act, the Statutory Instruments Act and the Statute Revision Act.

Bill C-6 covers the entire legal territory of transactions: contracts etc, but it also covers privacy and confidentiality issues. In fact, it places the onus on the provinces to enact similar legislation which will be compatible with that act, which is not unusual for a lot of the federal acts as they relate to this area.

There is a three-year window and a three-year time frame in which the provinces have to comply with that act. Bill 88 is the perfect opportunity to deal with contracts and transactions and privacy and confidentiality issues. No one disagrees that we need to have rules, we need to have a framework and we need to get this done. The world is changing. No one conceived of this 15 or 20 years ago. This wasn't even in the vocabulary. But this is important today and will be important in the future. Privacy and confidentiality issues are part and parcel of what needs to be covered under this kind of legislation.

I say in the greatest spirit of co-operation with members of the government: This is the time to do it. Put it on the table. Let's get it done.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Clark:** Are you responding?

**Mrs Elliott:** Sorry, Speaker. I was listening so intently to my colleague across the way.

I thank all of the presenters who have commented on my remarks. It is a very interesting field, one I don't

pretend to understand by any stretch of the imagination, but I am cognizant of its tremendous growth.

**1930**

My colleague across the way indicated that the federal government has taken action on this, and that's good. My notes indicated some of the differences from other jurisdictions. Saskatchewan's and Manitoba's legislation are being designed slightly differently than ours.

What our minister has decided to do is to listen to the various stakeholders with whom he has consulted to get their best advice, and of course, as I indicated, very importantly, to the privacy commissioner to ensure that whatever we undertake in this piece of legislation is very comfortable for that officer, whose job it is to speak on behalf of citizens to maintain their privacy.

Bill 88 is an enabling piece of legislation. It is a flexible piece of legislation. It allows Ontario to keep its place as a leader. That's very important to us. As I indicated, our 725,000-job target was reached and exceeded, with another 825,000 yet to be accomplished. We're very much looking forward to that. This type of legislation is important for that because it allows us to be a player. It does not in any way disadvantage our businesses and our entrepreneurs; in fact, it does exactly the opposite.

I'm very pleased to hear support from my colleagues across the way and I know our colleagues on this side of the House are supportive. I hope that when it comes to the vote they will stand in their place and vote in support of this Bill 88.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** Let me first of all say it is nice that in this House we've had three or four bills in a row now, as we get near the end of our session, where there has been a certain amount of unanimity among all caucuses, because we realize these laws are needed. That's a very good sign for the people of Ontario because I think the best laws are the laws that come as a result of discussions between the parties and discussions with the various groups of people out there that have an interest in them.

We saw it with the franchise bill, with which you, Mr Speaker, were very much involved. We saw it today with Brian's Law. The other thing that was nice about that today was that there were actually members in this House who did not agree with that law and they were able to vote their conscience and vote against that bill. I think that says about as much for the system as if we had all voted in favour of it. Those members, I'm sure, really felt that as far as they were concerned they could not support the law. They felt that the freedoms of the individuals would perhaps be unduly and harshly dealt with. So it was nice to see in this House that it wasn't a whipped vote, and I say that with all good intentions because I think the people of Ontario want people to come here and to vote their conscience.

That reminds me of something else, the comments that the member for London-Fanshawe has made on a number of occasions here this evening. He accused me of not

speaking to a bill this afternoon. Of course, nothing can be further from the truth. I spoke about the same thing the Minister of Transportation spoke about in this House earlier today, in that he wants to make Ontario roads the safest roads in the whole world. I simply pointed out to him that all the actions the Ministry of Transportation has taken, with respect to downloading roads to the local municipalities, with respect to selling off the 407, with respect to the privatization of the road maintenance contracts that clean our highways and clear them with snow removal equipment in the winter, certainly are not what I would regard as being in the spirit of trying to make our roads the safest in the whole world.

If the minister is really true to his words, he should examine some of the policies his government has already taken and reverse them to truly make them the safest roads of all the road networks in the world.

That leads me to one other thing. I see the Minister of Health is in the House tonight. I've got a high regard for the Minister of Health. She's been given a very difficult task. She has been given her marching orders by the ministry whiz kids, by the Premier's whiz kids, to implement a very unpopular program, but she's doing the best she can. That's why I, as one person on our side of the House, like my colleague from Sudbury and many of the other northern members and many of the other members clear across this House—I'm sure many members on the Conservative side as well—cannot understand why this Minister of Health, who I'm sure wants to do the right thing when it comes to treating people across Ontario the same when it comes to cancer treatment and the expenses they incur, is so persistent in treating people from northern Ontario differently than people from southern Ontario when they have to be sent elsewhere for treatment.

I can't understand it. When somebody contracts cancer in southern Ontario and has to be sent to northern Ontario, they get all their expenses paid—they get their accommodation, travel, food and lodging etc paid—yet when somebody has to come the other way, they only get mileage expenses for one way.

I would implore the minister to do the right thing, and once the House is finished, as it will be tomorrow, to sit down with her ministry officials and say, "Maybe the policy we have been pronouncing and implementing is not right." Let's do the right thing and make sure that people who have the dreaded disease of cancer are treated the same clear across the province as far as travel and accommodation are concerned. I'm sure that this minister, within the next couple of weeks or so when she's no longer under pressure from the opposition in the House, will do the right thing. Certainly Ontarians who are seeking equal cancer care treatment, this group that has started off—the Web site has been announced, [www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html](http://www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html)—ought to be congratulated for putting this effort forward. Hopefully the minister will respond to that.

Getting to the bill we're dealing with tonight, it's kind of interesting that we've heard this government, on at

least a dozen or so occasions over the past three months we've been here, condemn the federal government on just about every occasion. Yet on this bill, which has support from all sides of the House, nobody on that side of the House has given the federal government credit in this particular case. They've actually come up with legislation, which is called C-6, and have been shown to be true leaders in this area.

It would have been nice if, let's say, the Minister of Agriculture, whom I know to be a good individual, or the Minister of Health, who's in the House, or even the Minister of Municipal Affairs had stood in their place and said: "We are following the lead of the federal government in this case. We think this e-commerce bill is the right way to go because an awful lot of business is being transacted on the Internet right now. We want to make sure that the laws that govern this domain are the same across the whole country and we give them full credit."

Is it so difficult to do that, to give them full credit where the federal government has in fact taken the lead on an issue and you're just following their lead? You're actually implementing exactly what they have implemented at the federal level. It would have been nice to have seen some sort of attention paid to that, where they could at least say, "Yes, the federal government did the right thing here and we're following their lead."

Having said that, I think there are some concerns about this bill, and most of the concerns deal with the whole issue of privacy of information. Even a sometime user of the Internet like myself has a concern about that. We've all scanned the various Web sites and every now and then you can buy something or whatever, and we've always been warned, "Don't give them your credit card number," or, "Don't give them too much information," because you don't know exactly who is going to get this information later on.

I think that's a general concern of people out there and that makes all the more important why it is so necessary for this bill, once it has been given second reading, and it may very well be given second reading before the House adjourns tomorrow, to go to the justice committee. I think it should hear not only from the general public out there, but it should truly hear from people who are dealing with the Internet, who are knowledgeable about the Internet, perhaps from other jurisdictions as well where they've dealt with these problems before; certainly from some of the people within the federal departments etc, because we want to make sure the ultimate bill that will be passed by this House is as airtight as possible when it comes to privacy concerns and the confidential information that people want about the Internet.

#### 1940

I would strongly suggest that we not just go through the normal routine. It would have been nice, for example, if this bill had been referred to committee after first reading. I still think, generally speaking, that most legislation should be referred to committee after first reading. I know that this bill has the support of all three parties of the House, but I think it would be nice to do that with

most pieces of legislation. We all know that after second reading, after the various parties, the various individuals have taken a position on a bill in this House, it is sometimes very difficult to change some of the substantial sections of a particular bill. I think we get much better legislation if the committee members who form a part of these committees that a particular bill happens to be sent to can approach that bill with as little—how shall I put it?—political baggage as possible.

I urge the government—over the past year we've had two or three bills that have been referred to committee after first reading; I think it has worked well in most situations—to adopt that as a general principle for its legislation. I know that there will be some pieces of legislation where, because of the political bias the bill may have either one way or the other, it may not be possible for them to do so because it may tamper with their political agenda. But I also maintain that at least half the bills, if not two thirds of the bills that are passed by this House, really are not, by their very nature, partisan in nature. Yet, by only referring them to committee after second reading, quite often they become that way. I've already indicated a few of them today where it has worked extremely well.

I think Brian's Law was an excellent example, where the member for Ottawa Centre, who has introduced on various occasions a private member's bill calling for the kinds of amendments that were adopted in the mental health field that were set out in Brian's Law, was finally able to convince I guess the Minister of Health and her departmental officials about that, and as a result of the three parties coming together and the extensive discussions and debate that went back and forth, and the public hearings they had after first reading, hopefully we have a bill there that all Ontarians can be proud of.

The other thing I like about that bill, and I think more bills should have that, is the fact that it has an automatic review component to it. We are entering into a new field, and it is good that it has this component in it that within two or three years the bill will be reviewed, not only from a staff viewpoint but also from a political viewpoint, to determine that it really does what we hope the bill sets out to achieve.

I will be brief tonight because I know we have many other speakers who may want to speak on this as well. As has already been pointed out, the amount of worldwide commerce that's being done on the Internet is some \$1.3 trillion worth, and 80% of all the e-commerce worldwide is conducted business to business rather than as non-business-related matters. I think we're just on the threshold of coming into an age where e-commerce is going to blossom, and people like myself are even starting to use it.

I listened with great interest to how the member for Guelph-Wellington is going to learn all about the Internet this summer. Well, I can tell her that I started about a year and a half, two years ago, and I was one of those people who was afraid that if you touched the wrong button, the darn thing would explode. It didn't happen; it

didn't explode. That was about three years ago. I think I've come a long way. I'm still a novice at it, but even my children are sometimes surprised at how their father, who didn't grow up with that kind of technology, is able to get on to different sites and do different things. Sometimes I even show them a thing or two on the Internet. I'm proud of that, you know, because it isn't very often that young people in our society can say to their father or mother or older person, "My gosh, you really know something about a new, modern technology that has come along," more than they do. So I would encourage the member for Guelph-Wellington to use her summer wisely. I'm sure she can be totally knowledgeable and competent in the Internet system. It is the way of the future.

You may recall, Speaker—oh, the Speaker has changed. But I'm sure this Speaker is just as interested as the last Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** No, I haven't.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I stand corrected. You certainly have not changed from the day I came here. We both first came here in 1995. I totally agree with that. You're still the same person you were back then, and a wonderful Speaker at that.

**Interjection:** And we're glad he's healthy.

**Mr Gerretsen:** And we're glad you're healthy, Speaker, and I hope you enjoy a good summer holiday as well because you really deserve a good holiday.

Again, I think this is the way of the future, and I would just ask the Minister of Health, for whom I have a high regard, to look at the travel policy of northern Ontarians who are suffering with cancer when they have to come down south. We've heard all sorts of answers about, "Well, there are different policies." People don't want to hear about that. All they know is that if somebody has to travel from southern Ontario to northern Ontario for cancer treatment, they get their accommodation, their travel and their food paid for, and when people come the other way out of necessity, they only get 31 cents a kilometre, one way. That simply isn't fair.

If there's one thing we should all try to accomplish in government—and we all see the world a little in a different fashion; I realize that—surely to goodness, when all is said and done, government, above everything else, should treat all people fairly, particularly people who are in similar circumstances. I think if we remember that, then by the actions we perform here on behalf of Ontarians, the people out there will be well served.

So, Minister, I ask you to look at that policy, and I'm also glad that everyone supports this much-needed piece of legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Mazzilli:** I too support Bill 88, the Electronic Commerce Act, and as you've heard, all three parties do. I just want to take a moment, as the member for Kingston and the Islands brought it upon himself, to speak about health care, something that's very important in this province.

As summer approaches, and I know the Liberals will be on the golf courses with their federal cousins, I just want to take this opportunity to beg, on behalf of my constituents and the people of Ontario, that the Liberals across the floor, as they're on the golf course with their federal Liberal cousins, demand that the federal Liberals return the money they cut from health care, demand that Ontario be treated as an equal partner. We know that equal partners normally, in today's society, would be a 50-50 split. Do you know what the partnership is with the federal government when it comes to health care? Ten per cent. Is that being a partner at the table? Ten per cent. So we demand that they become equal partners in health care in Ontario. Again, as the Liberals are on the golf course with their federal cousins, please, on behalf of Ontarians, demand that they return that money to Ontario.

#### 1950

The other issue, and I only have a moment to speak about it, is the federal gas taxes that are collected in Ontario, approximately \$5 billion. The need is there to improve our infrastructure in order to grow as a province in business. We need to continue cutting taxes, but also add to the infrastructure. We need the help of the federal Liberal government to reinvest the \$5 billion a year that they're taking in gas taxes back into Ontario. Ontarians cannot do it alone and demand that the federal Liberals take part in this very important province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Bartolucci:** I thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for his very excellent suggestions with regard to Bill 88. The member has outlined some of the steps necessary to ensure that Bill 88 is a strong piece of legislation, and it looks like it's going to get all-party support. I also want to thank him, obviously, for his words with regard to cancer care, the health care apartheid that we're experiencing in this province right now.

I'd like to share a little story, another one that I accessed on my computer. It's from Sue and Dan who live in Kapuskasing. Their first travel grant arrived after their son died at 21 months of age after he lost his battle with leukemia. They had to live in a downtown Toronto hotel for about eight months while doctors battled to save their son. The financial toll: They had to live on credit, and at the end of it all they were \$20,000 in debt. In total, they spent \$35,000. They had to pay their own accommodation and all other expenses.

Dan says: "I was more than a little upset to hear about how southern Ontario people have their expenses paid. It kind of turned my stomach."

Sue said: "I've seen three-year-olds walking around Sick Children's Hospital alone, having chemo, with no parents because they can't afford it. Meanwhile, this government has the money to send people up north to study how frogs mate." The junior Minister of Northern Development and Mines is in the House today and he knows about that program. Their priorities are really screwed up, and that's what Sue said.

It's an easy problem to fix. I urge the Minister of Health and I urge the government to come to their senses. Make sure there is equal access to money for those who are travelling to be treated for cancer.

**Mr Curling:** I was going to comment on it, but after listening to my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, I realize that after all his struggles and where he is now, attaining a point that he's now literally computer literate, it really tells me that if my colleague from Kingston and the Islands can do it, we can all do it.

The other aspect—

**Interjection:** There's a compliment for you.

**Mr Curling:** As a matter of fact, because of his efforts and his determination, we just have to model after what he has done.

But in regard to the bill itself, I must emphasize to the government—which has a record, as we know, of rushing things through—that because we have unanimous consent with everyone co-operating, here's a time for us to examine it all in detail, looking at the privacy aspect of it, making sure that it's done very well because it is so important. As we know, the technology's moving so fast ahead that we are scrambling now to put laws in place, and not only Ontario but all over the world people have realized that they were lax in putting good legislation in place.

Here we are in Ontario with a great opportunity, an opportunity where all three parties have recognized the importance of this, so much so that without this, commerce itself in Ontario, regardless of how progressive we are, could be left out in the dark. If we have good legislation, it will assist us. Many countries who would be called the Third World today have done e-commerce and have put together some of their establishments in a way that they are competing on the world market. Ontario, which is quite progressive, could find itself at the back in all of this.

Here is a wonderful opportunity, as I said, and as I emphasize again, my colleague from Kingston and the Islands has made such wonderful progress in that, and if he can progress, Ontario can progress. Of course—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for East Don Valley.

**Mr Caplan:** Don Valley East, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That's the same as East Don Valley.

**Mr Caplan:** I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Kingston and the Islands on his very insightful remarks. He certainly touched on a lot of aspects of this legislation, Bill 88, which are of critical importance.

I'd like to point out to the members of the House and let all Ontarians know that the youngest members of our province, young people, students, are really on the forefront of a lot of these kinds of changes. They are the vanguard, if you will. The students at Don Mills Collegiate in my riding, for example, designed the Web

site and the logo for Toronto's Olympic bid. These are young people doing things that we've never even thought of and never even conceived of before. That's why we need to bring our thinking into line, bring our laws into line, to have a kind of framework, not necessarily for what's in existence today, but for what will be there in the future. When you look at the future, you always have to have an eye to the past as well for where things have broken down.

We've seen in this province, because the privacy concerns were not adequately guarded, that 50,000 Ontario residents had their personal information disclosed, inappropriately given to a private company.

**Interjection: POSO.**

**Mr Caplan:** The Province of Ontario Savings Office. It's a scandal that that could happen. That's why we need to strengthen privacy and confidentiality arrangements.

Some people will argue, and perhaps rightly so, that you can do it in a separate piece of legislation, but here's the concern. What could potentially happen is a weakening of our existing freedom-of-information, privacy and confidentiality arrangements in the name of modernizing them. That's what I fear. I can assure members of this House that I will be vigilant in making sure that does not happen and that Ontario does have—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Kingston and the Islands has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Gerretsen:** The member from Don Valley East brings up an excellent point. With everything that's happened in Walkerton, the POSO controversy and the disclosure of the 50,000 bits of information that were given out about individuals to the general public is a perfect example as to what could possibly happen if we don't have the e-commerce laws properly thought out and properly codified etc.

I would just like to remind the member for London-Fanshawe of something. I agree with him that as far as gasoline taxes are concerned, whether they're collected at the federal level or at the provincial level, they ought to be put back into transportation. No question about it. That's what it was collected for; that's what it should go back into. Whether we're talking about transportation costs for roads or public transit, various other transit, that's where the money should go to. It should happen at the federal level, and it should happen at the provincial level. No question about that.

But I get a little sick and tired of hearing about this transfer for health care dollars from the federal government. The fact is that you in your coffers last year had an extra \$5 billion. Let me repeat: You collected \$5 billion more than you anticipated. You could have solved every education problem, every health care problem and just about every problem that's out there if you had wanted to put some of those resources towards that. Instead, you're giving people back a \$200 cheque. Do people like \$200 cheques? Sure they do, but it doesn't make any sense. You would have been better off spending that money back in the Ministry of the Environment, making sure

every Ontarian has good, sound, safe, clean drinking water. That's where the money should go to.

Don't talk to me about the lack of transfers. You had the money to do all the things you needed to do all along from the surplus funds.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I appreciate the opportunity tonight to share with the House and the folks out there some thoughts on this bill. This is a very important bill introduced by the Attorney General to the House, Bill 88. However, in my view, as critic for economic development for the NDP caucus here at Queen's Park, it's a bill that has a lot to do with the economy, how we develop the economy, how we work to include as many people as we can in that new economy and actually catch up with the rest of the world out there. I say "catch up with the rest of the world" very consciously and carefully, because although this bill presented by the government does speak of a progressive action and being part of the new economy that's out there, that can, if we're not careful, blind us in many significant and important and actually difficult ways; it is, in fact, simply a game of catch-up by this government. Even when this government takes a lead in something, when you look at it closely enough and study it and carefully analyze what's going on out there in other jurisdictions, you find that they're not taking the lead at all; they're simply playing catch-up and doing what they should have done a year or two ago, if they were really in tune with the economy that we're all grappling with out there today and wanted to position Ontario in a way that would see us actually taking the lead.

**2000**

I want to start off my few comments tonight by suggesting that, like in everything else where the economy is concerned, although this government touts itself as having done so much and created so much opportunity and developed so much economy in this province, when you look at it more closely and talk to people out there, particularly people in jurisdictions that are a distance from Toronto, you find there's a different picture altogether and that there are actually some very real concerns. That's because this government is not giving leadership. It's because this government over and over again tells us all—I give them credit for that—that they really don't want to be government, that they're here to fix government and, as such, are not willing to make the investment, take the time and make the effort to lead the way, to roll up their sleeves and get in there with all the players in the communities across this province and actually do the very difficult, tough and agonizing work that's required to be a leader in the world economy today.

As most analysts who are being truthful will tell you, the economy that is booming in Ontario today, that accrues by way of profit to fewer and fewer people every day, is driven by the US economy. Certainly, in the US they are doing some things that reflect an understanding of the economy, that reflect an understanding of what needs to be done if you're going to take leadership in this

new economy that's coming at us, and they're doing something to make sure that as many people as possible are included in a positive and constructive and exciting way.

In Ontario, the economy that we're taking advantage of is actually the tailwind of the US economy. Yes, there are a few among us who are doing really well and making some very good profits as this economy flies by; there are many, many Ontarians who are not benefiting at all. That's by way of some of the direct action of this government but, even more importantly, because of the inaction of this government. By default many people are not participating in the way that they could.

I'll speak for a few minutes later on—because I'll be on my feet here for about an hour tonight—about the impact of this economy on those who are at the very bottom end of the economic structure in this community and how they've been hurt very severely by decisions that are made by this government, ideologically driven and not really taking into account the impact that has on the overall economy.

I want to speak just for a couple of minutes, before I get into talking about Bill 88 and the e-commerce bill in a more specific way, to say that there are a lot of people in this province who, yes, have one of those 700,000 or 800,000 jobs that this government brags it has created. But I have to tell you, more and more of those people are becoming anxious about those jobs. Yes, they have a job. Some of them, in fact, have two or three of those 700,000 or 800,000 jobs, because that's what it takes, in the economy that's out there today with inflation and the cost of living that is happening, to make ends meet, to pay the bills in the way that you could have paid the bills five or 10 years ago with the proceeds of one job or perhaps a job and a half between two partners in a family situation.

The folks out there across this province today who have jobs are anxious. They're anxious because in many cases those jobs are contract positions. They don't have the security that used to go with some of the really good, longer-term jobs that were there 10 or 15 years ago and, of course, with a contract position you know they're eventually going to come to an end and then you're going to have to compete again with somebody else for that job, and probably take a cut in income in one way or another in order to achieve success. People are being run into the ground, are losing energy, are losing enthusiasm and are quite worried.

Even those people who have those secure long-term jobs, the jobs that all of us used to look at, at one time, and say, "I wish I had that job," or, "I aspire to that job," or, as they're going through university, "I'm going to work hard and get good grades, good marks, and get that good job that such-and-such a person was doing," whether it's in Wawa or Sault Ste Marie or Sudbury or Toronto—I have to tell you that today, even those jobs are less secure, and are under attack, because you don't know from one day to the next when a government agency is going to be downsized or restructured in a way that sees literally hundreds of people out of work. You

don't know when, for example, a banking institution, a bank branch in some community is going to be closed down or amalgamated with another branch.

Always, always, that means there are more people out of work, people lose their jobs, because where you see in the paper so often these days so many of our really important business enterprises making ever more historically record-high profits, some might say obscene profits in some instances, it's not long after, and sometimes even in the same section of the same newspaper, that there's a story about the plans that particular enterprise has to lay off 200 or 300 more people. That's the only way, now, that they have to keep up with the demand that's out there because of the new economy that's in front of us, and the fact that there are a few people, the ones who manage this new economy, with interest in stocks or shares of some sort, who want that 15% or 20% every year, and it doesn't matter what the impact is on the workers in that organization or what it's going to do to communities or families or individuals.

I say all that just by way of indicating to you that even though it may present—and certainly if you read the financial sections of the major newspapers in this country you would believe that there's an economy out there that is just the greatest thing since sliced bread—as creating all kinds of opportunity and wealth and income and stability for a whole lot of people in the province, in fact that's not true. There are a few, yes, at the top of the heap who are making good money, who are secure and they're laughing all the way to the bank, but I have to tell you that with every day that goes by, more and more people who call Ontario home are feeling anxious about this economy. More and more people, particularly those living in communities outside Toronto, like Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury and Kingston—the further away, the more anxiety—are feeling nervous about their future and are not particularly happy at what they see going on around them by way of indicators re the economy as it plays out in their neighbourhood or in their backyard.

That speaks to this bill as well. I think it's a good bill. It's a good start. It should have been introduced one or two or three years ago, when this government recognized, finally, that we had to be part of some of the new economic engines that are being dreamed up every day out there, but in a way that gives us some control over how we participate and shows by way of leadership that this government actually understands what's going on out there and wants to play a role and wants to do the right thing.

It's interesting that the first government in this country to move in this direction, to recognize what needed to be done—that if you're going to include as many people as possible in the new economy that's blowing out there, you have to pass legislation such as this—is the government of Saskatchewan, interestingly enough a New Democrat government. Electronic transfer of information and the conducting of business dealings electronically is not new. The federal government understands it. The government of Saskatchewan has introduced legislation.

I was over in Ireland some six or seven weeks ago preparing for a trade mission, which I will be part of, from Sault Ste Marie to that country in the next week. While I was there, that country, taking advantage of the new economy that's happening for them, participating in the European Economic Community and wanting to reach out to the rest of the world, was already well down the road to having in place good e-commerce legislation.

**2010**

Even though this government needs to be recognized tonight and given kudos for bringing this forward in a way that will be inclusive of all of us here—I believe they are committed to hearings so that we can all participate further in making sure that what we do here is at the end of the day in the best interests of everybody and of communities out there, and I believe we will be going on the road—they should have done it earlier. This should have been done before. They should have had it before us two or three years ago, but at that time they were too busy not being government, too busy trying to present an image of not being government. Instead of bringing people into the equation and involving and including people, they were pointing to people and targeting people and cutting them out of the economic equation of the province.

Certainly the time has come for legislation that sets clear rules for governments and others and does so in a manner that is subject to scrutiny. We are pleased the government has followed the example of the NDP government of Saskatchewan and we wish this government was usually so forward-thinking.

The UN in 1996 drafted a law on electronic commerce to be used as an international model. The Uniform Law Conference of Canada used this model to develop a Canadian version, the Uniform Electronic Commerce Act, which it has encouraged all governments in this country to use and to adopt legislation based on it.

As I said before, Saskatchewan was the first province to propose legislation to regulate e-commerce. They introduced Bill 11 on December 16, 1999. Ottawa passed Bill C-6, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, in December 1999. Quebec has similar legislation.

We've all been wondering on this side of the House why the Harris government has not had the courage to bring forward a bill like this in a more open and democratic manner, with full public participation and scrutiny, to bring Ontario into the 21st century.

We have also wondered why the government has not itself taken advantage of the new technology; for example, to post on its environment Web site the most recent water quality data for all communities across Ontario. The government claims it has a drinking water surveillance program that is still operative. It has posted the results from this program for 1996 and 1997, but we ask, why haven't they posted the current data? What is it they're hiding?

The government was a bit nervous about bringing forward this kind of bill, so they let the member for

Etobicoke North—I'm actually surprised he's not here tonight, taking in this discussion, this debate—test the waters with his private member's bill so that the government would get some sense of where everybody else was on this before they had the courage to bring it in themselves as a government bill and table it and have this debate.

We agree with the principle: that we recognize the role of electronic transfer of information, that we allow for the electronic transfer of information, and that we do so in a way that ensures individual privacy and does not create a loophole for governments and institutions to evade their responsibilities to provide information to citizens. That is what we should be concerned about because it is exactly what this government has done in regard to making water quality test information available to the public.

If debating an e-commerce act allows a debate about the responsibilities of government to inform the public, especially where health matters are concerned, such as with the quality of drinking water, then we welcome this initiative; we welcome it with open arms.

Equally important is that such legislation in no way diminishes access to public records, which concerns us as well.

We will study the bill, and if second reading is passed here in the House, and we expect that it should, we are hearing from the government, and expect they will honour their commitment, that it will be sent to committee for full public hearings all across Ontario, to allow the many important public concerns that are out there to be addressed.

I suggest that this piece of legislation will have as much ramifications for jurisdictions far away from Toronto as it will for the people here. I know that much of the legislation this government brings in is driven primarily by Bay Street. Bay Street wants something, they come to the Premier's office, they have a quick chat with him and the next thing you know, a day or two later, legislation appears in this place and we see it work its way through, usually in a very quick and determined fashion.

Probably this bill was initiated there too, but it has some serious ramifications for jurisdictions outside of the greater Toronto area. I'll talk about that in a couple of minutes, because if places like Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, Timmins and Thunder Bay are going to be part of this new electronic age as they struggle with how they adapt and adjust to the new economy that we all have to deal with today, they need to have access in a way that is more readily available than what's there now.

For example, if you look at the cost of transportation for people doing business in the north, whether it's by road—there really is no rail passenger transportation service any more outside of the GTA. Air transport, where you can get it, mostly in the bigger centres in the north, is very expensive. It now costs you anywhere from \$700 to \$1,000 for a one-way trip from Sault Ste Marie or Sudbury—I think it's over \$1,000 from Thunder Bay.

It's very expensive. It gets in the way of a lot of people setting up shop in those areas, which are ready and open for business. They have tremendous infrastructure in place and people who want to participate and co-operate, but the cost of doing business is often prohibitive because of the very high transportation costs that are out there, particularly where air is concerned these days, and we need to do something about that.

This e-commerce bill, which will allow a lot of transactions that aren't allowed today to be done in this way, will certainly enhance the opportunity of people in places far away from Toronto to participate more actively in the new economy we all have to deal with in one way or another.

This issue must be addressed, but you can do it right and you can do it wrong. Hopefully the bill will give us a chance to address the issue. That is good. But we have some serious concerns and we are far from sure that the bill, in its present form, is as acceptable as it could be. So we're calling for these fuller public hearings, because there are people out there who have some very important and interesting information to present and they need to have their say.

For example, will public access to public records be guaranteed? Look at what happened under this government to court dockets. Before we consent to allow the government to replace paper record-keeping with electronic record-keeping, we must be certain that public access will not in any way be compromised.

What about a person's consent to accept a document in an electronic form? How is that going to be assured? How will we verify electronic signatures? How will we protect the security of electronic signatures? Does the bill require a person to use or accept information or a document in an electronic form?

We can allow governments to use electronic transfer, and we should, but we must be certain that the person who is entitled to receive information from, for example, the province, is not undermined if they cannot accept electronic information. For example, you don't want to leave anybody out. You don't want to set up a system that so totally takes over the way we share information and communicate with each other that we leave people out of the equation.

We have seen too much of that over the last six years in this province, where this government, in their rush to accept or adopt the latest and the greatest where whacking welfare people is concerned or where doing away with unions is concerned or changing the education system or the health care system is concerned, moved ahead holus-bolus without thinking out carefully step by step, having some strategic plan in place that will take us someplace we will all be satisfied with in the end, so we don't end up hurting a whole lot of people, end up leaving a lot of people behind.

#### 2020

I suggest that if we're going to have any kind of a good economy in this province over the next five, 10 or 15 years, it absolutely has to include everybody. This bill

presents some interesting, very creative and progressive opportunities for that to happen, but if we don't do it right, if we don't think it out, if we don't allow for some significant and fulsome conversation and debate with people out there about how it might be applied most correctly, we may end up doing more harm than good. We've seen a lot of that go on over the last six years in this province, and the most recent example of that of course is Walkerton.

I don't want to flog that horse any more than it needs to be, but there were people out there last year who said in all good conscience and very seriously that cutting the Ministry of the Environment in the way this government cut it, laying off the numbers of people who were laid off in that ministry, would result in a deterioration of the environment in this province, would result in a diminishing of the ability of government in this province to oversee, administer and pay attention to the air we breathe, the water we drink and so many other things we have to concern ourselves with where the environment is concerned.

You and I know that if we don't pay attention to the environment we could kill each other; we could wipe out the universe in a big hurry. Unfortunately and sadly, Walkerton is only one example of what can happen if we don't think out in a long-term way, in a strategic way, the plans we propose to put in place in the interests of the people we serve. If we're not careful, we can have other examples in this province. I suggest we probably will because of some of the initiatives and things this government has done over the last six years in its hurry to cut government, to diminish government, to get government out of the way.

Regulations were put in place over a number of years by very thoughtful and intelligent people in response to accidents that happened where people were maimed or killed. Suggestions were made and recommendations were made. After long periods of study, governments in their wisdom, all parties involved, would take those recommendations and turn them into legislation that applied to all of us in the province, overseen and administered by the government.

This government, in a matter of two or three months, took that regulation we all participated in putting in place—we know that today we live in a world that is more sophisticated, that is moving more rapidly, that is more complicated than ever before. We have more people living in Ontario than we've ever had in our history, doing business, living their lives, recreating. That causes a tremendous challenge to the environment and to the infrastructure we all depend on to give us a livelihood and take us places and allow us to live.

If we do not think very carefully about what we're doing and don't take seriously the role of government, we then take that regulation and turn it magically, with the wave of a wand, into red tape and we cut it. We cut it because now it's red tape, it's no longer regulation. Of course nobody likes red tape. We're all concerned where red tape is concerned. But when you do away with



regulation, when you do not take your responsibility as government seriously, when you do not take the mandate you've been given by the people when they elect you to oversee these very important instruments of government to make sure that our environment is healthy, that people are safe, that everybody can participate in the everyday life of communities and the economy, we end up with more Walkertons, and we will. There will be more of that rolled out as life goes on.

We will be here. Because we didn't win government in 1995 or 1999, we've been mandated, as opposition, to be critical and to point out and to challenge the government in many serious and significant ways around some of these questions.

Even though this bill is a progressive move, a move forward, a move that is necessary, a move that was initiated by the UN in 1996 and picked up very aggressively by a couple of provincial governments, most notably the government of Saskatchewan, a New Democrat government, and then the governments of Canada and Quebec, Ontario has to do all the due diligence required make sure that it includes everybody and does not leave some people out. That is why we raised that issue here this afternoon, to make sure that whatever we do is done in a way that includes everybody and will not be hurtful to anybody, and in fact will be helpful.

We can allow governments to use electronic transfer and we should, but we must be certain that the person who is entitled to receive information from, for example, the province, is not undermined if they cannot accept electronic information.

That got me off on the tangent I was just on.

How can the transmission of electronic information be verified? That's a major concern. It is not immediately obvious that this bill covers that. We have to watch that as well.

The time is right to address this issue. There are big concerns about privacy, about the protection of citizens' entitlement to information and access to information, about the verification of transfer and receipt of information, and finally about the integrity of public records and public access to public records.

Whether or not this bill meets the test remains to be seen. The rights of citizens and not the ease of business must be our first concern, and full public hearings are a must.

That comment about the rights of citizens and not the ease of business is what now takes me into what I consider the second part of my presentation here this evening, which is to talk a bit about the economy within which this e-commerce bill will move and operate and hopefully become helpful to more and more people.

I know that within our party we have some real, significant concerns about the direction of the new economy that's out there. We're not saying for a second that the new economy isn't happening, because it is. It's all around us. We can feel it, we can taste it, we can hear it and we hear about it, and many of us participate in it in some serious and significant ways. So we must discuss it.

We can't just participate by default. We can't just allow it to happen to us, can't just sit back and hope we will benefit from it.

As so many have discovered, particularly when you consider the lack of leadership that's been given by this government where the economy is concerned—not only did they cut the budget and the infrastructure of many of the more obvious and dramatically important ministries in this province where health and education and the environment are concerned, as I said a few minutes ago, but this government has almost halved the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. That is a ministry that was very important in many of the northern communities in the early 1990s as they struggled to restructure and right themselves in front of some of the new reality where the economy is concerned. This government has not shown a willingness or an ability to be the leader.

They're off rubbing shoulders with the major players. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade every other month is gone some place—if it's not Japan, it's Germany; if it's not Germany, it's Russia—talking with the major players and telling them about Ontario and Canada. That's one thing, but to actually roll up your sleeves and sit down with and work with community economic development organizations so that you might determine what is in the best interests of the many small communities across this province where the new economy is concerned and helping them get a handle on how they might benefit more directly and effectively by their participation—alas, they're nowhere to be seen.

#### 2030

You see, the new economy out there, for all intents and purposes, is driven by a small number of very large multinational corporations. It's like a Pac-Man effect. Many of you will be able to identify with that; if not yourselves, I'm sure your kids have played that game. They're all over the world, and every free trade agreement you see these days show up and get passed is usually driven by them.

If you look at those agreements—and I can tell you it's quite a daunting exercise: They're mammoth, huge in wordage and page and probably not something that the ordinary citizen out there would take the time to work their way through. But if you do work your way through it, you will find there are a few basic principles included there, and all of those principles accrue to power and more wealth for the bigger operators, these big multinational players out there—the big hitters, as some people might say.

Those are the folks who go on these trade missions with the leaders of government as they travel the world, wining and dining out there. It's not the homegrown, locally managed and locally owned operations that keep communities like Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury going that are on these trips. Those people are too busy protecting their interests back home to be participating in those ventures. That's unfortunate, because in my view, the economy that will serve us best in the long haul in this

province, in this country, however difficult and damaging to a whole lot of very good and committed and hard-working people, will be those small and medium-sized businesses who actually make something and sell it to somebody, who actually take an idea from their head or the head of their employee or a neighbour or a young person coming out of school and turn it into an opportunity to create a little work and some income for them and their employees and, in turn, the community in which they live.

But alas, what we have out there today running the economy is not those folks. As time goes on, the distance between the small and medium-sized enterprise in communities like Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury gets farther and farther apart. The interests of the big corporation as it strives for more and more profit year after year to feed the voracious appetite of the shareholder out there—who may in fact be you and I in here because of the pension funds we have; we need to think about that very clearly and effectively over the next while in this place—are not the same interests of the small and medium-sized business that is operating in the communities that make our province such a wonderful place to live.

In the long haul, if we don't turn this around and make them the focus, make them the drivers, give them the steering wheel, give them the power they need to fire up and make happen in a concrete and constructive way the local economies that we all depend on for our jobs and for the things we do in communities to assist each other, we will all pay, and we will pay big time.

I was, as I said a few minutes ago, for example, over in Ireland some six or seven weeks ago. I will leave again on Friday night with a group of small and medium-sized businesses from Sault Ste Marie. We're going, sort of a Volkswagen-type operation, over to that country to see what we can learn, to see what relationships we can develop and what opportunities we might be able to invite back to the community of Sault Ste Marie. We're looking for those locally owned, locally managed cultural industries that have grown over a number of years in Ireland that are now looking for an opportunity, without being totally controlled by the big multinational corporations, to come on their own and settle in a community that is manageable, like Sudbury or Sault Ste Marie, and set up shop and sell their product into the US or Canadian market, and vice-versa. We're hoping that we will take some of those small and medium-sized corporations that have grown up over a number of years now in our community, locally owned, locally managed and hiring local people, over to Ireland so that they might set up shop in a community of similar motivation, so that they might take advantage of the very interesting and exciting new economy that's happening over there, to sell their product into Ireland and into Europe.

There's some mutual benefit to this. It's not one player coming in, big and greedy and with this voracious appetite looking around to see where they might suck in the last dollar that's lying out there, and then, after they've taken advantage of the beneficial tax rate, after

taking advantage of the grants out there and the fact that people will work for a lower wage, when that's all gone, then they're gone too, to wherever they can get those kinds of advantages someplace else.

What we're trying to do and in fact what Ireland's trying to do—I've gone over there and talked with those folks—is quite different in many significant ways from the dominant economic culture that's happening out there, which is that the big guy eats up the little guy and leaves and there's no concern about the impact of that on communities or on people or on workers.

Start out from a different premise, which is first of all to concern yourself about how what you're going to do will affect the community in which you're going to set up and operate, how it will affect the employees you'll take on, how you will take advantage of what they have to offer, the work they do, the intelligence they bring, and how it is you might grow your industry based on that; as opposed to some e-commerce dot.com, invest in this entity today and make a million dollars and forget about the impact that will have on anybody else around you—a very selfish, myopic and, I think, destructive approach. They're two completely different approaches to the development of an economy.

I want to talk a little bit more about Ireland, because it was over there that I discovered for the first time that we needed to develop some regulation where e-commerce is concerned. I suggest to you that this is just the thin edge of the wedge in terms of where regulation is absolutely necessary where this e-commerce and the new economy are concerned. We need to, as a government, be concerned about that. We need to be willing to take leadership and some strong action to protect some of the players, particularly the smaller players and the smaller communities where this kind of activity is concerned.

You heard the member from Guelph-Wellington earlier tonight talk about Ireland and the wonderful economy. I heard her a couple of weeks ago in this place reference the very advantageous flat tax for industry that exists over there—and yes, it does. They do have that in place. But they have a whole lot more in place that you don't hear a lot about, particularly from some of the bigger players, the bigger hitters out there who are roaming around looking for those kinds of advantages. What Ireland has done, which I suggest this government could take a lesson from, is that not only have they looked at their tax system and their tax structure, but they've also invested very heavily in infrastructure, in making sure they had the kinds of telecommunications networks in place that would be necessary, building roads, building schools and putting in place a health care system that worked for everybody.

They, in complete juxtaposition to what this government has done, decided that education was absolutely essential. Back in the early 1970s, when Ireland decided it was going to be a participant in the new economy and take advantage of some of the opportunities that were being presented to them by themselves and others, particularly the European Community, they decided that,

number one, they had to make sure that their education system was the best and that everybody could participate. Do you know what they did? They did away completely with tuition fees for post-secondary education, because they knew that the key to their future was the intelligence of their young people and their workforce.

2040

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** And what do we do? We increase tuition fees.

**Mr Martin:** Absolutely. You see?

The other interesting thing you'll find out about Ireland—and again it's in contradiction to what this government wants to do—is that 50% of the labour force in Ireland is organized. Isn't that interesting? Recognizing that, they didn't turn around and say: "OK, 50% of the labour force is organized. Big business isn't going to like that. That creates a negative environment, an impediment, so what can we do to get rid of big labour?" or the big union bosses and all those kinds of things—the kind of rhetoric you hear from across the floor every day when you're in here. "How do we diminish the role and the power and the influence of organized labour in the economic life of communities in this province?" That's the mantra of this government.

Interestingly enough, in Ireland what they said was, "How can we take advantage of the fact that we have a very well organized labour pool in Ireland, who understand the contributions that organized labour can make to the economy, who understand that if we work together co-operatively we can do more for each other than if we're forever competing with each other for scarcer and scarcer resources, as that kind of world takes over?" So they brought the labour unions into the room, they brought community groups into the room, they brought the church into the room, and then they said, "Let's sit down here and see what we need to do to create some stability in this country as we move forward, where the economy is concerned." But they understood that you don't do an economy separate from the social life of the people who live in those communities. So they said, "How can we put together a fabric that recognizes that you've got to have healthy people, you've got to have educated people, you've got to have people who have a few bucks in their pockets, if you're going to grow a healthy economy that's good for both the local circumstance and, yes, the international circumstance that we're wanting to move into?" How progressive.

I suggest that you can't take one piece of that alone and decide that that's what's going to grow your economy and that, at the end of the day, is going to be in the best interests of everybody, because it isn't going to work that way. We're already beginning to see in Ontario how a very narrow, a very top-down economy is beginning to play out for people in Ontario. We see a growing gap between the rich and the poor, we see the poor getting ever more poor, we see the few at the top getting ever more rich, and we see the middle class, those in the middle class who are able to hang on, more and more anxious about their future, more and more con-

cerned about the reality that could happen to them, which is that they fall into that poverty category.

In today's economy, none of us, except for perhaps the very, very rich—and I suppose when they lose it they jump off tall buildings—are any more than a paycheque or two away from real poverty because of the cost of living and the way the economy is set up. We can no longer, as in past eras, simply turn around and say, "Well, I'll grow a few potatoes and some carrots and we'll trade with the neighbours for some things and we'll be OK." We can't do that any more. The economy and the world we live in is much too sophisticated for that, so we have to find new ways. Those new ways, I suggest to you, will serve us better if they are co-operative and if they're based on a concern for community and if they involve everybody, and I mean absolutely everybody, because to not involve everybody would be like having a sore foot and ignoring it until gangrene sets in; then it works its way up your leg and pretty soon it kills you.

So if there's any part of your community that's not involved in this new economy, this new world that must concern itself about the social life of families and individuals, if there's any part of that community that's hurting or struggling in any serious or significant way, you've got to do whatever it takes, you've got to be willing to invest whatever resource it takes to make sure that group gets well and is able to participate again, because if you don't, you diminish the opportunity of your community to be all that it can be.

Which brings me to the point of how you measure success. There are two or three ways to measure success. One way is to look at your bank account, count the shekels in your pocket at the end of the day: How many condominiums do you own? How many trips do you take in a year? Then there's another way of counting success, and that is: Are you happy? Are you secure? Do you have family? Do you have friends around you? Can you go to the local pub on a Friday night and have a couple of dollars in your pocket to buy yourself a beer and maybe even buy a round for the table? That's happiness for a lot of people. As a matter of fact, I'll suggest to you that the people who are happy with that kind of very simple life day to day—get together with their friends, celebrate the confirmation of your daughter or go to a wedding or get together with the community and mourn the death of somebody who has contributed in a very serious and significant and important way, in those very simple ways, to your community—that's really the true happiness that all of us are looking for.

For example, in northern Ontario today we have people who are suffering the malady of cancer. If they're going to get the care they need up in that part of this province—because health care is becoming a scarce commodity; every time we turn around we're losing a doctor or closing a room in a hospital. In Sault Ste Marie over the last two or three weeks we've heard from the hospital that, first of all, they're going to run a deficit. Then we heard from the doctor who has worked so hard over so many years to set up an oncology unit in the hospital in Sault Ste Marie, Dr David Wild—I think a

living saint in today's world—that for the first time in his 27 years—and he said this in tears to the press because he obviously felt so strongly about it—he's going to have to turn some people away or put them on a waiting list or wait-list them in a way that will see them having to go someplace else.

That brings me to the point—and the Minister of Health was here earlier and I hope she heard from my colleague from Timmins-James Bay and my colleague from Sudbury—that we have a problem in the north. We have people who have to more and more travel for health care and it's costing them more, and more and more they can't afford it, and no more so than for cancer care. We have a situation in the province today where if you're from southern Ontario you can access cancer care anywhere in this province and get all of your costs paid. If you're from northern Ontario and you have to go anywhere else for that kind of care, you get the very minimal northern health travel grant. Even at that, the struggle to get that grant is unbelievable. Anybody who's a member in this House, particularly from the north, who is taking their job seriously will tell you that one of the things they probably do more often than not when they go back to their constituency on a Friday or they listen to the stories that their constituency assistants tell them is to help people try to access the northern health travel grant. So you put on top of that the insult of watching a group of people from another part of the province get all of their costs covered, and I would suggest probably in a more timely and efficient fashion than those of us who live in the north get. There are a lot of really good people up there, particularly in the Sudbury area, organizing now in many significant ways, setting up Web sites and telephone numbers that you can call into so that we can all send a message to the minister that she needs to do something. That affects our economy in a major way.

All this talk of e-commerce and the very progressive move we're making here tonight to pass legislation that will ensure that everybody can participate in a clear and more accessible way will be for naught if we can't get those very basic services at a price that we can afford no matter where we live in this province. This new e-commerce bill will give people in Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury and Sioux Lookout and Fort Frances access to the new information highway and to commercial activity that they never thought possible before. But if they can't get, alongside of that, the access they need to all of these other things, like health care and education, and if their environment is going to be affected in a serious and significant way, what's the point? "Why bother?" is what I say. Our party, for example, has been grappling with many of the contradictions inherent in the new economy I've just been talking about, where you've got a few high-profile instances of teenage dot-com millionaires, contrasted by a growing number of people living at deeper levels of poverty than ever before in this province.

**2050**

For example, at the New Democratic Party convention held in Hamilton this past weekend, our party hosted a

panel discussion that I moderated which was named Unpacking the New Economy. That panel featured two pre-eminent economists, Jim Stanford and Armine Yalnizyan, as well as our party president, Gayle Broad. Gayle has done a lot of work over the last couple of years in the area of community economic development. As a matter of fact, she's just presented a thesis in order to get her doctorate in community economic development and new initiatives.

Mr Stanford talked about what he terms "e-hype," which is his way of describing the current frenzy over a paper economy, which has no basis in our everyday reality. On the one hand, you've got hyper-inflated Internet company stocks going through the roof and, on the other hand, you have a stagnating real economy that is characterized by lingering job and income insecurity, no more so than in northern Ontario, communities like the Soo that depend so much on steel, paper and wood. It's the same thing with Sudbury and Thunder Bay. Some may wish to think the paper economy is the embodiment of Nirvana, the new panacea, but the majority of our economic resources in the new millennium will continue to be the production of goods and services. We can't lose sight of that.

Tonight I'm saying yes, it's important that we pass this e-commerce bill and that we participate in the new economy. But be careful that we don't get blinded by the light, that we don't forget that the economies of Ontario and Canada have been based, for a long number of years now, on the resources we are so lucky to have access to, on the resources that we bring to those resources as we make them into things we sell. I suggest to you that when the blush is off the rose à la this new economy with e-commerce and the Net, dot-com and those kinds of things, we will fall back again and become very much dependent on that very basic resource-based economy where people make things and sell them, where people trade their goods and help each other out and work co-operatively to make sure we all have a decent standard of living.

That's what we'll fall back on. If we forget it, as this government is suggesting today by both the things they do and the lack of things they do, we will do a disservice to the future that we all deserve in this province. More and more people, as we go on, will be falling off the bus and not participating.

That's what Jim Stanford was saying in some very interesting and funny ways this weekend at the convention that we had in Hamilton, not to forget, not to lose sight of what the foundation is to the economy that we've all been the beneficiary of in this province over a number of years and will continue to be if we're smart in the way that we develop it and if we include everybody who calls Ontario home in that.

The real question about the new economy is this: Does it improve our quality of life, does it improve our standard of pay, does it improve our security for the future and does it include everybody?

The answer greatly depends on who you are. If you're John Roth, CEO of Nortel and Canada's leading advocate

of low taxes, especially on stock options, you'll get \$20 million in after-tax profits due to this year's federal and provincial tax cuts. If you're John Roth, you're a pretty happy camper with the new economy and you're pretty happy with governments' new tax rules within the new economy because the tax regime that's being introduced at both senior levels of government in Canada today is very much in line, very much in harmony with the interest and the priorities of the new economy. If you were among the top 20% of income earners in Canada in 1998, you had a much better year and decade than anyone else. After-tax incomes rose by 4.1% between 1997 and 1998.

But if you're poor, the depth of poverty is getting worse, not better, even amid growing prosperity. If you were a single mother with no employment income in 1998, your average income fell between 1997 and 1998. It fell from a measly \$7,456 in 1997 to a paltry \$6,513 in 1998. Imagine that. People in the bottom 20% of the income scale experienced a real income decline of 12.6% over the past decade. This is the fundamental contradiction inherent in the new economy and it's why we have to have hearings on this new e-commerce bill, because there are questions. We have to make sure that it works for all of us.

Amid the hype over the dot-com economy and *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* television programming, we have the stark reality of greater depths of poverty. Just walk around the city of Toronto and look at the number of people sleeping on the streets at night these days. As Armine Yalnizyan told our convention delegates on the weekend, there are a whole lot of people who are not sharing in the prosperity the way they did in previous decades when the economy was good and employment was on the rise.

The 1990s marked the era of the non-standard job, where self-employment was the single fastest-growing job niche, followed by temporary and contract work, and that's a shame. What we're seeing in the new economy is the rise of economic Darwinism, where only the financially fittest make it to the finish line and get to claim the prize. The new economy is about who gets included in this era of prosperity, and it's about who gets left out.

Our panelists and delegates got into a feisty and emotional discussion about how the new economy is affecting the people of Ontario. Some people made the link between violence against women and increasing poverty. I suggest that road rage might be a symptom. A delegate living with a disability pointed out that the majority of unemployed or underemployed workers in Ontario have disabilities. They are simply not being invited to share in the wealth of jobs that has suddenly been created. That's the reality.

Jim Stanford pointed to the role of monetary policy within the new economy, and governments' deliberate maintenance of high unemployment to keep productivity levels in check. Can you imagine using high unemployment to shore up the good fortune of that small number

of people who are doing so well in this economy? "God help us," Jim Stanford quipped, "if an outbreak in mass prosperity might occur and someone other than a CEO might get a raise."

Delegates pointed to the need to pressure governments and corporations to hire for real jobs in this new economy, rather than simply funnelling profits into the never-ending spiral of stock options and hyperinflated paper economies. As Stanford noted, a lot of people would prefer to have a full-time job with benefits than the insecurity of contract work or even self-employment. In the States, for example, economic prosperity quickly translated into real job growth, and self-employment numbers declined rapidly, but that hasn't happened here in Canada.

Whether you want to work at home or in a full-time job somewhere outside the home, the one thing we all share in this new economy is a desperate need for stability: for social stability, for stability in our communities and for economic stability within our families. We're surrounded by so much insecurity, we're telling twentysomethings to start squirreling away money into RRSPs so that they can have something when they're forced into early retirement and have no public pension to rely on.

Clearly, there is something very old and familiar about the new economy: It is still about the same power relationships that characterized the Canadian economy long before the great market crash of 1929. Clearly, the challenge is to start talking about redistributing power and minimizing the extent of misery and dislocation that has been growing in Ontario in recent years.

The key to economic justice lies in social justice, in a sustainable economy that protects and respects our environment while offering a greater level of security for everyone, not just for the John Roths of this world. Instead of talking solely about economic fundamentals and corporate profits, we need to shift the debate to fundamentals for people, so that the economic prosperity this province is currently enjoying is something that is shared by everyone. That, sadly, is not the case today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Bartolucci:** I would like to thank the member for Sault Ste Marie for an excellent speech, and I want to wish him well on his trade mission to Ireland. God knows that we need all the help we can get when it comes to the economies of northern Ontario. For example, in Sudbury we have a poverty rate of 21.2%—that's 21.2% of the population in Sudbury is living below the poverty line. I'll tell you, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines should be very concerned and should start doing something about that. As well, I appreciate the comments of the member for Sault Ste Marie with regard to Ontarians Seeing Equal Cancer Care. It is an organization that may have roots in northeastern Ontario, but it's quickly spreading all across Ontario. There's absolutely no question about that.

In line with Bill 88, I'd like to repeat the Web site address. It's [www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html](http://www.vianet.on.ca/~funding/travel.html). I

urge people to go into that Web site and sign up. Fight the government's health care apartheid. If you don't have a computer, this group has launched a toll-free phone number. It's 1-800-461-0159. I wish the member for Sault Ste Marie good health, a good trip, a productive trip, and I know his constituency is well served because of this trade mission.

**2100**

**Mr Ruprecht:** I listened very carefully to the remarks by the member for Sault Ste Marie. One message that all Ontarians should take close to their hearts—the message that he's trying to get across and that I wish government members would listen to very carefully—is that at the heart of economic justice lies social justice.

I think that's probably the essence of Mr Martin's whole presentation today. We not only agree with it, but it cannot be that this government shuts out a whole generation of Canadians because tuition fees are rising on a continual basis; it can't be that we're creating two classes of people, one that can afford the education system and another that is shut out and can't afford to pay the tuition fees this government has ratcheted up to the point where people are not able to go to school.

One way to solve it, apparently, has come down. You've come down from the mount and you've discovered that one way to do it is to supply students with enough money, even though they have to pay it back once they graduate. So today what do we have? We have thousands of students with a debt load of over \$40,000 by the time they graduate. This cannot be. Our new economy, as Mr Martin points out—let's not be blinded by the new paper economy. We've got to go back to our source. Another consideration is that we cannot be hewers of wood and drawers of water. We have to add some labour power—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I appreciated the speech by the member for Sault Ste Marie. I was wondering what he thought of this statement in this electronic age. I'm looking at a document that says "A Cleaner Ontario." It's a cabinet submission dated March 14, 2000, but it got deep-sixed or lost somewhere or ended up in the fireplace. It says the following:

"The current complement of environmental officers (174) in the ministry's district offices respond annually to 22,000 reports of spills and pollution complaints, and assist with the issuance of more than 16,000 certificates of approval, permits and licences. The same staff spend 20% of their time inspecting approximately 4,000 facilities per year, as per the work plan. The number of inspections completed represents less than 10% of what should be inspected if all existing and/or potential sources of pollution were inspected every year."

It goes on to say: "Existing MOE inspectors and investigators are fully committed to their current work plan activities. Through these activities (inspect/assess, respond) approximately 10% of current known sources of pollution are inspected annually. Taking staff away from

these activities would result in slippages which would negate the positive impacts of the new program. Therefore new staffing will be required for this new program."

I'm going to ask the member whether—and I know it has everything to do with this bill—he is concerned that the Ministry of the Environment is inspecting only 10% of the facilities and potential pollution problems it should because it's so understaffed. This, apparently, got lost somewhere. This proposal came forward for more staff; it will come forward now because of Walkerton, but it got deep-sixed in March. I wonder what the member thinks of that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions? The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Martin:** I thank the members from Davenport, Sudbury and of course St Catharines. I agree with him: If they had listened to whoever drew up that document and actually hired back the people they laid off, we might not have had Walkerton. I suggest to you, as I said at the end of my speech, that instead of talking solely about economic fundamentals and corporate profits, we should shift the debate to fundamentals for people so that the economic prosperity this province is currently enjoying—some people are enjoying—is something that is shared by everyone. That, sadly, is not the case today.

Some of you will know that I worked very hard for the last five or six years on getting a regulation in place in this province to protect franchisees. Small businesses across this province are struggling right now because of some of the distribution systems and other kinds of systems put in place by the big corporate world, who are about nothing other than sucking money out and killing, by way of that, the small entrepreneurs—very sincere, hard-working, people who invest their money—and putting them out of business, and killing, while doing that, the potential for local economies to do well and take part in the prosperity that's out there that is so obviously present if you drive around the suburbs of Toronto but certainly not if you went to Sault Ste Marie or Sudbury.

The corporate agenda is not the agenda of the working people of this province. The corporate agenda, in my experience from working with the small businesses that I've worked with over the last five or six years, is not the agenda of small business either, because it doesn't allow them to take advantage of the intelligence they bring to their job, the hard work they do and the investment they make.

Small businesses make the investment; they do all the work. The big corporate entities have all the money and have all the power at the end of the day. If this bill is passed today, I'm not sure what it's going to do in those instances.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

Mr Flaherty has moved second reading of Bill 88. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I would request that the bill be referred to the committee on justice and social policy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The bill is accordingly referred to the justice and social policy committee.

Orders of the day.

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House is adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 2109.*

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