

No. 83A



N° 83A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 3 October 2000

Mardi 3 octobre 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 October 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 octobre 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Martha House is a 28-bed women's shelter located in Hamilton, and it is swamped. They are far above their occupancy rate. There are entire families living in hotels waiting for rooms to become available in the shelter. Women and children do not want to be in shelters, but they need a safe and secure place to stay while they recover and readjust.

The staff of the shelter wrote to Minister Baird months ago about the poor staffing levels they experience and their inability to retain staff due to lack of proper funding. Often the 28-bed shelter will have one staff member on duty. It is becoming a question of safety of staff as well as burnout and stress.

Hamilton now is accepting the third-highest number of immigrants, following Toronto and Vancouver. Large numbers of women in the shelters don't speak English. They cannot communicate their experiences to the staff at the shelters. This is creating a two-tiered victimization. If women have placed a criminal charge against their abusive partner, they are eligible for funding for cultural interpreters. But if they are unwilling to place charges, they are ineligible for translators.

Lenore is the co-director of Mary's Place, Martha House and Somerville House. She is on call 24 hours, seven days a week for a two-week period. She shares this responsibility with only one other woman. She can receive 10 to 12 calls over Saturday and Sunday, often in the middle of the night and the early hours, for crises which arise for women who suffer not only from abuse but from their partner's addiction problems and mental health issues, women who are afraid for their lives and their children's.

It is only sad and unfortunate that it took the brutal deaths this past summer to bring this issue back on the political agenda.

VILLAGE OF ARTHUR

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): A couple of weeks ago, I had the honour of attending an

unveiling at the cenotaph of the village of Arthur in Wellington county. The Arthur Legion held a special ceremony to commemorate Arthur residents who served our country during the Second World War by inscribing their names on the cenotaph. I was moved by the sheer number of names that were included in this ceremony.

Members of this Legislature will find it interesting to note that near the end of the Second World War, the village of Arthur was believed to have the highest ratio of residents in uniform. More than one out of every seven Arthur residents was in uniform, giving it the designation of the most patriotic town.

Arthur's support for the war effort did not stop with enlisted members. Victory bonds, a popular way for the government of the day to raise money for the war effort, were highly subscribed to by Arthur residents. At the end of the third Victory loan, Arthur residents had subscribed to over \$250,000 in war bonds. With a population of only 900 residents, this amount equalled 64% of the assessed value of the village's taxable property at that time. It is a most patriotic town indeed.

I would like to congratulate the Arthur Legion for organizing this ceremony to honour residents of Arthur.

HIGHWAY 404

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Since the start of construction on Highway 404, residents in Don Valley East have expressed their concerns to me. Over the summer, I took the time to survey residents in the area, and I want to share the results with the House and with the Minister of Transportation today.

Some 91% of residents noted an increase in noise coming from the highway within the past year, and they clearly indicate an overall increase in the amount of noise at all times, both day and night. Many cannot sit outside their homes, in their own backyards, because the noise drives them back inside.

They are concerned about air quality and the amount of pollution from exhaust fumes. They are concerned about the increased level of dust due to the construction.

I'd certainly like to pay tribute to the many residents who suggested constructive solutions. Some of the ideas, and I just have a sample, include a restriction on the use of truck manifold brakes, greater use of berming, increasing the amount of shrubbery, reducing the speed limit in the area, and even larger noise barriers.

Overwhelmingly, the people who responded indicated their desire to meet with Ministry of Transportation offi-

cials to find a solution to a significant quality-of-life issue. To that end, I took the liberty of arranging such a meeting with the ministry and the residents. I expect to see hundreds of residents in attendance. This meeting will be held a week from today, Tuesday, October 10, at 7:30 pm at Seneca Hill Public School. In that spirit of co-operation, I trust that meaningful solutions will be found to address their concerns. I trust as well that the ministry and the minister share this optimism.

HAMILTON AIRPORT

Mr Brad Clark (Stoney Creek): It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to speak about an airport in my riding of Stoney Creek that is finally making its mark as an affordable and convenient alternative to Pearson International.

In 1969, the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport, as it was recently renamed, obtained authority for a Hamilton-to-Montreal and a Hamilton-to-Pittsburgh service. Since then, the airport has been growing, especially in recent years, where the number of passengers who are making the choice to use Hamilton International over Toronto International are increasing not by the hundreds but by the thousands. The month of August alone has shown an increase in passengers from 17,086 to a whopping 32,825 passengers. That's in one month alone. That's an increase of nearly double the number of passengers.

These facts lead to excellent growth potential and employment-generating ability. I'm very happy to say that Hamilton's airport has grown so much in so little time, especially in the past few years. Passengers now know that Ontario's Golden Horseshoe has more than one choice for an airport. I encourage others to take the opportunity to use John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): Today I rise and call on the government to pass my private member's legislation with regard to intercountry adoption. My bill would revoke the \$925 head tax. I call on those members who didn't support it in passing second reading to pass it in its final reading.

There is no justification for this head tax. There is no additional paperwork involved for the government. After all, these adoptions are finalized in a foreign country. Agencies that facilitate these adoptions pay annual licensing fees to the government and cover all additional costs. It just doesn't add up; it makes no sense.

Worst of all, it is discriminatory. Other jurisdictions support intercountry adoptions. The US offers tax credits of up to \$5,000, while Quebec offers non-refundable tax credits. In Ontario, we should be encouraging family formations, not discouraging them with a \$925 head tax.

Today we mourn the loss of the greatest Prime Minister this country has ever known, Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Why not honour his passing by recognizing his legacy of welcoming people from around the world to live in this country? Why not do the right thing today? Stand up and pass my bill. Revoke the awful head tax that we've imposed and welcome orphans to this country that we all love and believe is the greatest in the world.

1340

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My statement is on the matter of school playgrounds. I happen to be one who believes that children ought to have the right to safe playgrounds. I also happen to believe that the minister thinks so too; she certainly speaks that way. You know that the school board last week made a commitment of \$3 million to construct the playgrounds and they need \$9 million more. Parents are talking about fundraising to build these playgrounds. They only need \$9 million more, and I am looking to you, the government and the Minister of Education, to help the Toronto board out.

You also know, Minister and government, that you were the ones who brought in upgraded safety standards for daycare centres, so if you want to blame the Toronto board for having brought down these playgrounds, you ought to take some responsibility yourselves for having brought in upgraded safety standards, which I support. While you think that \$9 million may be a lot of money, compared to the \$180 million you spend on propaganda, it's a crumb. Compared to the five billion bucks you're going to give away to the corporate sector over the next five years, \$9 million for safe playgrounds is a crumb.

So Minister, don't blame anybody. If you believe in safe playgrounds, put in the money to make it happen.

REENA ELDERHOME

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): It's an honour for me to rise today in this House to tell you about the Al and Faye Mintz Reena ElderHome that is located in my riding of Thornhill. I had the privilege to participate in their official opening on Tuesday, September 26.

The Reena ElderHome is named in honour of Al and Faye Mintz, who are long-time generous supporters of Reena. Together with members of their family the Mintzes have an ongoing commitment to support Reena's efforts to enhance the lives of people who have a developmental disability.

This elder home is the first of its kind in Canada and is home to 16 Reena clients, aged 55 and older, who are developmentally disabled. This elder home will fill an immediate and increasingly important void in our community. It will allow the clients to relate to and socialize with their contemporaries, as well as helping older Reena clients to full integrate into the community. Every Ontarian with a development disability should have the opportunity to be part of his or her community and to be able to live near his or her friends and family.

A project such as this cannot get off the ground without the total dedication of those involved. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all of those involved in the Reena ElderHome project. On behalf of the people of Thornhill, I would like to congratulate the Reena ElderHome clients and volunteers and ask that all the members join me in recognizing three of the people responsible for this project who are with us today in the members' gallery: Sandy Keshen, the executive director of Reena; Alex Eisen, chair of the Reena ElderHome project; and Harold Seidel, chair of the building committee.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): "My name is Fred, I'm 86 years old. I was born on a farm outside Webbwood. As a young man I worked in the bush and on the farm.

"I met and married Mary about 60 years ago. I was lucky. I got a job at the paper mill. I worked hard. We bought a home in Espanola. We raised a family in Espanola.

"But now my health is failing. Mary can't look after me any more. I have to go to a nursing home, but there are no beds in Espanola; there is a long, long waiting list. The hospital applied for 24 beds; the Minister of Health rejected them.

"They want to send me to Sudbury but Mary doesn't drive. My son is in British Columbia; my daughter is in New Brunswick; the youngest is in Windsor. I don't know anybody in Sudbury; I want to stay in Espanola. My wife can't even visit me in Sudbury."

Minister, Fred is not a real person, but he represents many of my constituents. I know of these situations. There are real people in this real situation. The Ministry of Health has to provide long-term-care beds for Espanola and they have to approve them now.

PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I'd like to thank CFRB Radio for broadcasting the funeral of Pierre Elliott Trudeau this morning. I decided this morning, after getting home very late last night, to stay home with my kids and miss caucus. I don't like to do that because you don't like to let your caucus colleagues down. But I left at 11 o'clock and I began the drive to Queen's Park and listened to CFRB's broadcast of Mr Trudeau's funeral.

I don't share a lot of Mr Trudeau's politics over the years, but I remember as a kid respecting him very much in watching him as a father as he spent a lot of time with his kids. As I drove along listening to his son Justin's eulogy, I admit that I cried like a baby, but it confirmed to me my decision to stay home this morning with my kids.

I want to congratulate his son, Justin Trudeau, for his beautiful eulogy today. I want to congratulate Pierre Elliott Trudeau for many of the contributions he made to

Canada, not all of which I share. I want to congratulate him most of all for finding a balance. Those of us in public life strive very hard and it's a great difficulty for us to find a balance between family and work. I think, listening to his son today, he was a man who achieved that balance very well. For that I thank him, and I thank CFRB.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

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 Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise to seek unanimous consent from this House to declare Thursday, October 5, World Teachers Day in Ontario and for this day to be declared annually.

I would ask for your indulgence, Speaker, to just say that teachers play a vital role in the lives of our children, which I'm assuming everybody agrees with. Every day they are faced with more challenges, and I think people agree with that as well. I ask that all members of this House recognize that teachers help to shape the future and deserve to be commended for their efforts, and for that I hope I get unanimous consent.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Over the past few days most members of this Legislature have been visited by members of the agricultural community. Yesterday I tabled a motion in the House regarding the extremely urgent matter of the agricultural crisis facing the farmers of Ontario.

This afternoon I seek unanimous support of this House to debate that motion.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In addition to the absence of the Premier, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Labour, we have been told that the Minister of Northern Development would be here, whom we'd hoped to question, and I wonder if it is in fact the case that that minister will be here. We have not been advised otherwise.

The Speaker: As you know, I do not control who's here and who's not. I would look for some guidance from maybe the chief whip. There is no chief whip here. It is now time for oral questions. As you know, the Speaker does not decide who is and who is not here.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The minister is coming in. We'll give him a moment to get settled.

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development. Your government is continuing to privatize health care in any way that you think you can quietly get away with. We've seen it happen in home care and in long-term care and in laboratory services, and now it's air ambulances. You've decided that the contracts of air ambulance paramedics are going to be turned over to the private sector. You're going to set up another chaotic process to see who's going to make you the best offer, meaning who will run this service cheaper for you.

The air ambulance service is vitally important for people who live in northern Ontario and for anyone who travels in our more remote communities. The service is working well. It's providing high-quality, dependable access to emergency care.

Minister, surely your government is not trying to do more with less when it comes to a vital service like air ambulance. Why are you so determined to take risks with people's lives by privatizing the air ambulance service?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'm pleased to respond to the member opposite. In fact, what this government strives for, in northern Ontario in particular and throughout the province of Ontario, is to ensure that patients have access to the best quality care, at the right place and the right time, as quickly as possible.

With respect to emergency services, with respect to doctors and equipment, for example, with respect to technologies in northern Ontario, I'm very pleased to work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to make sure that northern patients have access to quality health care closer to home, to make sure that emergency services are responsive.

That's why, as the member from Thunder Bay well knows, we're building a new hospital in the Thunder Bay area; we've increased programs to train doctors in northern Ontario, to attract more physicians to the north; and through my own ministry's heritage fund, we've made investments in technology and telecommunications to make sure that patients get high-quality access to health care.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, it's parliamentary procedure that supplementary questions have to follow the lead of the initial question. It's too bad the answers to the initial question don't have to be relevant to the question asked.

Minister, I asked you about air ambulance service. It becomes apparent that the Minister of Health has not even told you that she is about to privatize the air ambulance service with four of the five air ambulance spaces in northern Ontario communities. This is an appalling lack of understanding on the part of the Minister of Northern Development about what this will mean for access to vital air ambulance service for northern Ontario residents.

There is no question, let me be the first to inform you, that your government, although it has made no public announcements about it, is going ahead with it. The fact that there have been no public announcements is a sure sign that the minister doesn't want anybody, including you apparently, to know anything about this. But the paramedics have been sent notices that they have to choose whether to be part of this new process for awarding their contracts. They're being asked to do this without any information about what your government is planning to do when it comes to standards of care.

You should know that right now the flight paramedics have critical care training. They are the most highly trained paramedics in the ambulance service. This is training that your government provides. In fact, your Ministry of Health takes pride in the successful partnership of the public and private sectors in providing for air ambulance paramedics. There is no guarantee coming from your government that that standard of care is going to be maintained, and there is every reason to believe that private operators will be willing to lower the standard of care to pay lower wages.

Will you tell us how you can guarantee that the standard of care will be maintained if you privatize the service and let the for-profit—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The time is up. Minister.

Hon Mr Hudak: As I mentioned, I'm very pleased to work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to ensure that issues that come from northern Ontario are addressed in the health care system with respect to air ambulance services, land ambulance services and, as I've said, improving emergency care services for northern Ontario.

In fact, this is a government that is not willing to leave the status quo in northern Ontario. We're intent on im-

proving the quality of health care in northern Ontario, to bring better quality services across northern Ontario.

I remind the member opposite, when she was leader and had her red book, or the one subsequent, she had not even contemplated anything near the kind of reinvestments that we're putting into northern Ontario, whether it's better quality in emergency rooms, more equipment or higher technology. We're looking at services in dialysis; increasing cardiac care in northern Ontario. We don't want to leave the north behind like this party wanted to leave the north behind. We're making the proper reinvestments in the health care system to ensure that northern patients have quality access to care and timely access to care. It's a task that we will not shirk on.

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. Final supplementary?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Like so many other things your government does, you are destroying the old house before building the new one. You are supposed to be the champion of northerners around the cabinet table, not a cheerleader for Mike Harris across the north.

In the air ambulance sector, minutes and seconds can make the difference between life and death. Experienced air ambulance staff, all these critical-care flight paramedics who are telling you that this is a ludicrous plan, these professionals possess over 300 years of experience. In your madness to privatize this health care service, you are throwing away this valuable experience where their judgment saves lives. People like Darryl Taylor from Sudbury, Ron Laverty from Sioux Lookout and Mark Bechard from Timmins are testament to the fact that experience saves lives.

Will you stand in your place today, throw the blue and white pompoms away, take off your Mike Harris cheerleading outfit and tell these critical-care flight paramedics and the broader public in Ontario, especially northerners, that you, as the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, are opposed to the privatization of the critical-care flight paramedic service? Will you stand and say that today?

Hon Mr Hudak: What the member well knows but won't inform the House is that the province retains responsibility for province-wide coordinated air ambulance services and no decisions have been made with respect to the air ambulance service in the future. But it's interesting to hear the member talk about tearing down the house. In fact, the member here is part of the opposition that would build a straw house in northern Ontario.

I wonder where he was when they were developing the policy last election to put a mere \$50 million in reinvestments into northern Ontario. There is by far in the heritage fund alone that kind of increase in northern Ontario; similarly, an \$850-million investment in northern Ontario highways. And I wonder where the member was when we were on the leading edge to build a brand new hospital in the Sudbury region. The member was nowhere to be seen; in fact, I think he was trying to stop a new hospital in Sudbury.

We want to build the best possible care in Sudbury: a vets' hospital, cancer care. It's the Mike Harris government that's doing it, and I'm glad to be a cheerleader for that. He was nowhere to be seen when these ideas came forward in the Liberal Party.

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. The minister will remember that in May of this year in answer to a question from Dalton McGuinty, the Leader of the Opposition, when he was pressing, the Premier, to the astonishment of everyone in this House, said the following, and you will remember this, Minister: "There will be no sale of the Lakeview plant as a coal-burning facility." That's very clear. That's very straightforward.

Given that Ontario Power Generation has announced that it will, at some considerable expense, install low-NOx burners on two of its four units at the Lakeview Generating Station, do you expect anyone to believe the Premier's promise is now going to be kept? Will you assure the House and the people of Ontario today that you will not try to weasel out of the Premier's commitment? Will you state clearly and without any weasel words, without any ifs and buts, that the Lakeview Generating Station will be converted to natural gas? Will you state that clearly?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I want to say to the member opposite that this government is committed to ensuring that strong environmental protection measures are in place as we move forward in a competitive electricity market. Our commitment to the environment has been a mainstay throughout the electricity restructuring initiative. That's why we implemented a moratorium on the sale of coal-fired plants until a thorough review could be completed of the options that would protect the air we breathe. We remain committed to this review, and in the meantime applaud the effort made by those participating within the electricity market to decrease harmful emissions into the air that we breathe.

1400

Mr Bradley: Much to the chagrin of the members around the minister—when I used the term "weasel words," they were all hollering, and yet I ask everyone in the House to conclude: what did they just hear from the minister?

Minister, the Ontario Medical Association stated this year that there would be 1,900 premature deaths as a result of air pollution in this province. It would cost \$1 billion a year in health costs and people not being able to go to work. Will you admit that the half measures—and I say at best half measures—announced by Ontario Power Generation, which deal with only one contaminant and ignore 29 other toxic substances, are completely inadequate, or is it your intention to try to defend this pathetic approach by your friends at Ontario Power Generation? Is your government going to take its marching orders

from OPG or are you going to compel them to convert all plants to gas-fired fuel?

Hon Mr Newman: The moratorium that we placed on the sale of the coal-fired facilities within this province is one important step to improving air quality in our province. It's amongst many measures that we're taking as a government to be proactive in protecting the air that we all breathe because we are dedicated to ensuring that Ontarians have clean air in this province.

Our government is a leader in reducing smog. We are aggressively tackling air quality issues, including climate change, smog and transboundary air pollution. I think it's important to note that 50% of Ontario's smog arises from United States sources. We have made commitments to reduce smog in Ontario that would be matched by US efforts. In fact, under our anti-smog action plan, Ontario has committed to reducing smog-causing emissions by 45% by 2015 and has committed to an interim target to reduce these emissions by 25% of 1990 levels by the year 2005.

Mr Bradley: This exercise is like trying to nail Jell-O to a wall, because the minister is simply not giving a clear answer to a very clear question. Now, as negotiations on a potential transboundary air pollution agreement between Canada and the United States reach a very critical stage, Ontario, rather than being an asset as it has in years gone by, is proving to be an embarrassing liability, an impediment to such a trans-boundary agreement. If the minister believes that the announcement made by OPG two weeks ago to tinker with Ontario's power generating plants will be greeted with anything less than deep disappointment and derision, he is sadly mistaken.

Ontario has a chance to play a lead role, a positive role in these important and critical negotiations. But it will take a bold step, not a feeble trial balloon by OPG, to do so. Minister, will you take that bold step? Will you commit in this House today to convert all of Ontario's coal-fired electric generating stations to natural gas fuel and thereby provide the leading role, the positive role and the constructive role in the critical negotiations taking place between Canada and the United States?

Hon Mr Newman: We have taken a bold step with respect to improving air quality in our province and with respect to the negotiations on the ozone annex with the United States. I would challenge him to challenge the federal government to take the bold action that we're taking here in Ontario, because we challenged the federal government to negotiate equivalent reductions with the United States through the Canada-US ozone annex talks this fall. The United States has committed only to narrow, industry-focused reductions during the smog season. They must go beyond that. I would encourage him to talk to his federal cousins in Ottawa to ask them to take some real action with the United States.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. On Sunday, along with over 1,000 other people, I attended a rally in opposition to the Adams mine project just outside of Kirkland Lake. What was clear to see at this rally was the diversity of individuals, people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, all opposed to the Adams mine project. Minister, they are single-minded in their view of this project. They believe strongly that this project will in time contaminate the groundwater, in turn putting the environment and people at risk.

Those in attendance wanted me to ask you, is it going to take another Walkerton, another disaster like Walkerton, one which you created, before you come to your senses and say no to the Adams mine project?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I want to say to the member opposite that waste management is a growing global problem. It's a very emotional issue, as we have seen. But I want to assure you that this government takes very seriously its responsibility to preserve and protect the environment. In fact, the Adams mine project has undergone extensive and thorough technical analysis to ensure that the environment has indeed been protected over the long term.

As part of our commitment to protecting the environment, the Ministry of the Environment ensured that a full environmental assessment was completed in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act, and the Minister of the Environment requested that the Environmental Assessment Board review the leachate collection and containment system to ensure that groundwater contamination would be prevented. There were hearings with the Environmental Assessment Board that lasted six months. The board actually attached 26 conditions to the plan. A certificate of approval was issued after further technical analysis, and the certificate—

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

Mr Bisson: What a sham. Everybody knows your government did everything it could to get this project on line and approved. You truncated the Environmental Assessment Act in order to truncate the process so that there wouldn't be a full-blown EA to take a look at all the issues. You gave the Environmental Assessment Board 15 days to look at this project—15 measly days—and at the end of it they were in a split decision.

My question to you is simply, are you the Minister of the Environment or against the environment?

Hon Mr Newman: I take very seriously my responsibilities as Minister of the Environment for Ontario. Again, on this project a full environmental assessment took place and Environmental Assessment Board hearings took place. There was a judicial review of the decision. As well, an appeal of the judicial review was filed. This project has undergone the reviews that are necessary. Any question that the opposition has raised in this House or outside the Legislative Assembly has been

answered. In fact, all the concerns they raised were addressed in that full environmental assessment.

Mr Bisson: You haven't answered anything. We've asked questions in this House, along with the citizens around Kirkland Lake and all the other people across northeastern Ontario and, I would add, Metro, which is opposed to this project not only based on environmental issues but also on socio-economic issues. I asked you a while ago, are you the Minister of the Environment or against the environment? You gave no answer. My question to you now is, are you Mike Harris's lackey on this project?

Hon Mr Newman: I don't think this government needs to be lectured by the NDP when it comes to protection of the environment. We all know about the NDP's lack of commitment to the environment. Their waste management included such environmentally responsible projects as Whitevale, Britannia and the expansion of Keele Valley. Need I remind the member opposite that Whitevale is only nine kilometres from the highly sensitive Rouge River area, that Britannia is only one mile from the Credit River and that the Keele Valley site is on the Oak Ridges moraine?

The Speaker: New question, the member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr Bisson: Obviously the lackey of the Premier. We can see that in that answer.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) : J'ai une question ici pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines. Comme le sait le ministre, l'été passé, le 4 juillet pour être exact, j'ai écrit une lettre au ministre, lui expliquant que le ministère est en train d'engager des chefs d'équipe régionaux dans le développement économique à travers le ministère du Développement du Nord et des Mines. Dans ce temps-là j'ai démontré que, quand vous avez affiché la position, vous n'avez pas demandé qu'un postulant qui vient dans cette région, désignée sous la Loi 8, parle le français. Vous m'avez réécrit une lettre, monsieur le ministre, puis votre réponse une journée en 2000 dans la province de l'Ontario dit—il faut la lire en anglais parce que c'est en anglais. Donc quand je vous avais demandé, vous avez écrit :

“With respect to the area team manager position, supervisory positions are not necessarily designated because the language of administration in the Ontario public service is English.”

Monsieur le Président, il y a la Loi 8, et la Loi 8 est très claire. Elle dit que vous avez une responsabilité dans votre ministère à travers cette loi pour assurer que les services soient faits en français. Allez-vous, à cette heure que cette position n'a pas encore été remplie, faire la bonne affaire de vous assurer que quelqu'un de bilingue soit mis en place dans cette position dans une région désignée sous la Loi 8 à travers Timmins-James Bay ?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I thank the member opposite for the question, and I appreciate his correspondence and our conversations through my office on this issue. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines makes every effort to ensure we can provide high-quality services in both French and English, especially, as the member brings across the point, where there are high francophone populations. We make every effort to ensure that our staff can provide those services, and designate positions where appropriate.

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At the end of the day, we want to ensure that the questions of northerners are answered, that we can help advance issues like job creation in northern Ontario and that we can help address issues like health care and education and refer them to this. We don't want to leave a position vacant. We want to ensure that those questions in northern Ontario get answered in this House, but we want to make sure we can provide the best-quality francophone services possible throughout northern Ontario.

M. Bisson : On peut s'assurer que ce qui est vacant dans ce cabinet, c'est quelqu'un qui parle pour les francophones de la province de l'Ontario. Monsieur le ministre, ce n'est pas acceptable. Dans ma région seulement à Timmins-Baie James, 70 % de ceux qui vont être desservis par ce gérant parlent le français et un gros pourcentage d'entre eux ne parlent pas l'anglais. Ce gérant va être responsable non seulement de gérer ce qui est dans son ministère mais de faire l'interaction avec la communauté de Hearst, de Kapuskasing, de Smooth Rock Falls, de Val Rita, d'Opasatika, de Timmins et d'autres communautés où les personnes parlent le français.

Vous n'avez pas encore rempli ce poste, et je vous demande très sérieusement : allez-vous intervenir et assurer que la personne qui rentre dans cette position soit quelqu'un qui parle l'anglais comme le français ? Répondez.

Hon Mr Hudak: Again, I appreciate the member's point. In fact, as Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I've enjoyed getting input from not only this member but AFMO as well on how to deliver francophone services across northern Ontario, whether it's in the member's riding or in other parts of the north. We make every effort to ensure that the staff at northern development and mines can provide francophone services where appropriate. We make every effort to ensure that services are provided so that issues can be addressed, whether they're in Timmins-James Bay or other parts of northern Ontario. I appreciate the member's points on it, and we'll make every effort to respond to the issue of providing proper francophone services in the Timmins-James Bay area.

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is for the Minister of Culture. The chair of the Trillium Foundation, Robert Power, wrote to 3,200 members of Trillium's local grant review team asking them to donate money to the provincial Conservatives. This same Mr Power, by the way, has woven a tangled web with his involvement in the Adams mine proposal. He acted as legal counsel for the company and also rewrote the Environmental Assessment Act for the MOE. So he acted for the government and the private development.

Mr Power, as head of the Trillium Foundation, used the private contact list to solicit donations for the Conservative Party. You must agree that is unethical and a blatant abuse of his position.

Minister, what action have you taken in regard to Mr Power for his inappropriate action, and what steps are you going to take to return the political contributions solicited so inappropriately?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): Let me just correct the record: it was 320, not 3,200; and let me say that Mr Power wrote a letter on his own personal letterhead in his capacity as a private member. There is no question that this was certainly not appropriately done. It was an error in judgment, I think, and from that point I talked to the board; I asked the board to look at that policy. The governing committee of the Trillium board reviewed the policy, and they have made changes to their government relations policy. It has completely satisfied the board, and I'm confident this will never happen again.

Ms Di Cocco: The point is, it did happen. This is about someone's behaviour. You can write all the policy you want and it could be circumvented by whoever wishes to behave in that fashion. You have the head of the Trillium Foundation soliciting political funds—and I don't care if it's from two people, 320 or 3,200—from a list of names on the Trillium review team. This begs the question, do the donations give weight to their recommendations to Trillium on behalf of the charities and non-profit groups?

I believe you should ask Mr Power to resign over this. What have you done with respect to Mr Power? The political funds that have been inappropriately solicited should be returned. What have you done with regard to Mr Power?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say that I reacted quickly. This event happened in May last year, and I reacted quickly to it. We asked the government policy committee at Trillium to review the policy. As everyone in this House knows, Trillium is a new organization in the province. It's there to make sure we have invested money.

When I had people go out this summer and speak to MPPs to ensure the foundation was doing a good job, I heard many wonderful things about the foundation, obviously from the opposition as well as from our own

members. They heard that it had returned many great projects. They were glad to see the extent of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grants. They heard positive things about it.

This may have been an error in judgment. It's resolved. The Trillium Foundation has policies in place so that it will never happen again. I have contacted every organization that is an agency of mine to make sure this will never happen in any agency.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. As a former businessman, the husband of a successful businesswoman and the father and brother of a number of business people, I understand what a vital role the provincial government plays in the life of an entrepreneur. I also recognize the significant contribution that small business makes to our province, not only in the contribution they make to our economy but also in the number of jobs they create, which I believe is most of the 745,000 jobs we have seen created in this province since 1995.

My question to you is, what is your ministry doing to recognize the importance of small business people in our province?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): I could not agree more that small business operators make a tremendous contribution to job creation and to the success of Ontario's economy. We want to give credit where credit is due, which is why I'm pleased to say that October is Salute to Small Business Month.

This morning my colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and I attended Level 5 fitness centre to launch Salute to Small Business Month. It's small business operators like Sandra Ricciutto and George Shaker who are the unsung heroes of Ontario's economy. I'm very pleased to publicly acknowledge their success, because small business is big business in Ontario.

Mr Dunlop: I understand how challenging it can be to make the dream of owning your own business a reality: working 18 to 20 hours a day, giving up valuable holidays, taking risks, worry, stress, barriers of bureaucratic red tape—

Interjection: What about farmers?

Mr Dunlop: Yes, we do include farmers as small business people in this province.

There are so many steps one must take in transforming an idea into a valuable business. What is our government doing to help our small businesses succeed in this province?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Palladini: It was very nice to see the members of the opposition applaud so gallantly. It was really good to see, because that was a great question.

I can tell the honourable member that our government has done many things to help small business succeed. If there is one thing I could say, and share with honourable members, it's the fact we have created a positive economic environment so businesses can prosper. Since our government took office in 1995, we have reduced red tape, cut personal income tax and payroll tax, but also very important, eliminated barriers to growth, contrary to the previous two regimes.

We have also expanded the small business help offices and small business enterprise centres across Ontario. I can tell from my experience that it doesn't just take government help to succeed. Hard work and smart work will ensure successes.

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HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Over the past year and a half there has been an over 1,500% increase in fatalities on the treacherous highway between London and Windsor that includes Carnage Alley. Almost 35 deaths have occurred, yet your government has consistently taken the low road. Since the tragedy began, it has always been too little too late. On September 22, you announced a centre medium barrier only as far as Tilbury. Carnage Alley, which is located on the other side of Tilbury, has been the focus of North American notoriety for the past year as the highway of death.

Minister, public safety is far less important to you than public opinion. Don't insult this House by saying you are responding to the jury recommendations. Mike Harris refused to even consider the number one recommendation, photo radar. It would be an immediate solution. Most of the fatalities and crossovers have occurred beyond Tilbury. If it is necessary there, it is essential all the way to London. Is human life worth so little to you and your government?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): That sounded a lot more like a rant than a question. This is a politician who wants to make politics out of human tragedy. Our government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The minister take his seat. Stop the clock.

Mr Hoy: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The minister is imputing motive and I'm talking about safety on our highways.

The Speaker: No, he's not. Minister, continue.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Our government is spending record amounts of money on upgrading our highways and making them safer highways. Since we became the government, our highways in Ontario have become safer than under your watch—let's be very clear about this—significantly safer.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The minister take his seat. We're not going to continue if I can't hear. The member who asked

the question, the member for Chatham-Kent Essex, come to order, please. Minister of Transportation.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Our government considered the recommendations of the coroner's jury and concluded that we would move forward in our plans the median barrier on that section of the road. It is a narrower median strip than the portion of road that you were speaking about; let's be very clear about this. There is no evidence that it would —

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

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): My question is to the same minister and it's about public safety on our roads. In my riding there are currently six overpasses that need repairs. These overpasses are in terrible shape and the municipality has no choice but to limit loads on these overpasses. In their current condition, the bridges are significant road hazards, with one lane of traffic at a time. An accident will happen. At a meeting of the South Dundas Chamber of Commerce a few weeks ago, the business community said that this is devastating. The load limits also force vehicles to take alternative routes. The alternative routes cost precious time and could be the difference between life or death.

Minister, this isn't just about bridges, it's about people's lives. What are you going to do on the down-loading that you did in the province and fixing these overpasses and agreeing to financial assistance immediately?

Hon Mr Turnbull: We have clearly signalled to the municipalities, with the announcement for the OSTAR initiative, that in fact our priority is to ensure that OSTAR funds will be available for issues of health and safety. Our government has acted. Let's be very clear. We are spending more money on our highways than your government ever did; let's be just absolutely abundantly clear.

With respect to the changes in municipal responsibility, I have responded that the OSTAR initiative recognizes the importance of funding bridges, and to date we have moved forward with initiatives which will significantly improve all of our infrastructure in this province, something that your government failed to do. Even though you raised taxes, you did not spend money on the—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. Minister, take a seat. Time is up.

New question.

NIAGARA FALLS

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Tourism. Niagara Falls is one of the world's greatest tourism destinations, attracting more than 12 million visitors annually. It is often reported, however, that the average stay in Niagara Falls is only four hours.

As member of provincial Parliament, I have worked hard with the minister and local tourism operators to support jobs in Niagara Falls in tourism and try to move the stay from four hours to four days. There has been tremendous marketing support for events such as the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival, just completed, the Niagara Classic and the Winter Festival of Lights.

What is the minister doing to ensure that Niagara Falls can benefit from more visitors who will stay longer, and will there be new investments made by him in Niagara?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): I'd like to thank the member for his important question and thank him publicly for the kind of work he has been doing to promote tourism development in the Niagara Peninsula.

It's true that one of the problems is the length of stay of tourists in some parts of the province. In fact, three quarters of the 12 million people who visit Niagara Falls every year spend less than half a day in Niagara Falls. In response to that, the government has developed a new program, a tourism investment and development office, which is working closely with municipalities and economic development offices across the province to look at ways of strengthening their programs and encouraging people to stay longer.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Jackson: I realize the members opposite aren't really interested in economic development in their communities, but I can assure the member from Windsor that we'll be there to support his community even though you are not interested in these tourism matters.

We are doing new vineyard programs, new—

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

Mr Maves: I'm encouraged that the government is continuing to take action on this problem and is helping the tourism industry to reach its potential in Niagara. As you know, tourism is essential in Niagara Falls, accounting for thousands and thousands of jobs.

However, Minister, I want you to realize that my constituents want to know that this industry is on solid ground. Can the minister ensure that the partnership that has been underway between government and the private sector will continue into the future?

Hon Mr Jackson: I can assure the member, because the recent budget clearly indicated increased dollars for marketing and for product development for tourism. This is the fastest-growing industry in the world and there are currently about 120,000 businesses and half a million Ontarians who rely on tourism for their jobs. That's why with our approach to cutting taxes and increasing jobs in this province, we've created a climate for greater investment.

In Niagara in particular, we're seeing the largest concentration of tourism investment in Ontario's history. Just recently we've seen new winery expansions and have engaged Frank Gehry, a world-class architect, to do his first major building in Ontario. Senator Eyton is developing a corporate approach to bringing in the first

NASCAR oval track in Canada. We're looking at lots of new investments that are going to strengthen our economy.

I want to thank publicly the member for Niagara Falls, who has been working closely with our ministry on these expansion plans.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, with responsibility for seniors and women. Minister, why won't you table, this session, an Ontarians with Disabilities Act?

There are pay phones in this building that the disabled cannot access. There are heavy doors that slam in their faces almost every time they turn around. Now we find that the Ontario Human Rights Commission has slammed Famous Players theatres and told them to remove the barriers that deny people with disabilities the simple right to watch a movie. But your government's no better.

Why don't you introduce the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and let people with disabilities have it guaranteed in law that they will have access to the services and opportunities they deserve in this province?

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Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): This government is working to make Ontario the best place to work, live and raise their families, and that's no exception when we talk about people with disabilities.

The government promised they would bring forward an action plan within the first session of the Legislature. We intend to do that. We've promised in an opposition day that we would have legislation forward by November 2001. That legislation will be fair and it will be reasonable, not only for people with disabilities but also for people who need to accommodate those people, who want to accommodate those people, so that we can make sure that people with disabilities are able to be accommodated in the province of Ontario.

As everyone in the House will know, we have moved forward with people with disabilities, but there's a lot of work that needs to be done. We intend to move the benchmark forward to make sure that people with disabilities have opportunities—

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

Mr Martin: Minister, if you're really serious about what you just said, if you really meant what you just said, you just simply table that legislation this session and give some comfort to the people with disabilities out there that you actually are going to do something. If you brought that bill in before the House now, people living with disabilities would be able to attend a movie at a Famous Players theatre by Christmas, just like everyone else; people would be able to use pay phones, just like every-

one else. One single piece of legislation could literally open doors to thousands of people living with disabilities.

Will you stop making excuses and commit to table an Ontarians with Disabilities Act this session?

Hon Mrs Johns: There are a number of things I'm doing to move the legislation and the action plan forward. All of this of course takes time because this is a complex area. Of course, everyone in the House would know that the legislation in America is a federal statute, the Americans with Disabilities Act. Certainly the federal government in Canada hasn't looked yet to say that they'd be moving forward with that. We've looked at the legislation in many of the states across America because, as everyone in this House knows, there's no legislation at all across any of the provinces. Ontario will be the leader when it comes forward with its first piece of legislation and its action plan.

Let me remind you that in Ontario we spend \$6 billion annually on services for people with disabilities. That's an increase of over \$800 million since this government was elected in 1995: \$6 billion—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. New question.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Lately you've had a lot to say both in the press and in correspondence to municipalities about the social housing the province currently owns. You've been quite clear in your views that you believe the housing stock is in perhaps better shape than privately managed rental properties.

What I'd like to know is how you know that. You cite a 1998 sampling of 10% of the housing stock as proof that your owned housing group is in good shape. But what's interesting to me is that in a submission to cabinet, your own staff have said that this process could have easily missed hidden problems and liabilities.

My question to you is simple. If your own staff in their own documents confirmed that you don't know the real condition, how can municipalities and, more importantly, municipal ratepayers feel assured that you are not transferring a bundle of hidden costs, hidden problems and explosive future costs?

Just be honest, Minister, and say you don't know. And while you're at it, why don't you admit to the municipalities that the reason you don't want to find out is that you don't want to spend—

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

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for the question, and I'm sure he doesn't want to leave the impression that there's a problem that doesn't exist. I'm sure that was not his intention.

In fact, we have looked at this issue quite extensively. There have been not one but two studies done by outside

parties, third parties, to look at the stock of public housing that the municipalities are already paying for. We are merely transferring the authority to look after these and administer these in a more efficient and safe way than is possible when things are divided between municipalities and the province in the way that has been done in the past. So from our perspective, we have done the studies.

The problem with his allegation of hidden problems is that it's difficult to know what a problem is if it's hidden. If the honourable member has any information that he'd like to share with me rather than allegations, I'd be happy to research it and get back to him, but in terms of hidden problems, I know of no such hidden problems.

Mr Caplan: It is frankly amazing that the minister doesn't read the reports from his own ministry. Let me read to you the cabinet submission. Here it says, "There could be hidden problems and liabilities that exist on individual properties that were not identified." It went on to say, "The province may be exposed to greater liability risk if the building condition for the remaining 90% of the portfolio is not assessed." They finally add that to do no further study would be "the least costly in the short term but the most costly in the long term."

Minister, get your head out of the sand. It is absolutely incredible. Stand in your place today and tell municipalities and ratepayers that you're going to do a complete assessment of all the housing stock. If you won't do that, tell them that you're going to pay the bills for the mess created by the ticking time bomb that you're passing on to municipalities. Will you stand in your place and do that today?

Hon Mr Clement: Again, let me reiterate that this is a situation where we have done exhaustive studies, third party studies, independent studies. You don't have to take my word for it; you don't have to take my ministry's word for it. Independent studies have been done, and they have concluded that the shape the housing stock is in is as good as or better than the typical private housing stock that one finds in the province of Ontario.

If the honourable member has other facts—I don't know what you're talking about. You're holding up a piece of paper.

Mr Speaker, I don't know what he's talking about. If the honourable member has real facts rather than baseless allegations, real instances rather than figments of his imagination, he should share them with me and I'll get to the bottom of it. But until he does that, he's talking out of both sides of his mouth.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Transportation. As you know, we in Cambridge, North Dumfries and South Kitchener have a number of successful businesses, including the Toyota manufacturing plant, and they all depend upon trade corridors, being the 401. In addition, many of my constituents have indicated their concern

with the increasing congestion on the 401 adjacent to Cambridge. I would like to ask the minister what upgrades are taking place or will be taking place to the 401 adjacent to Cambridge.

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation):

The Harris government continues to invest massively in our highway structure. We are investing in safe roads to support jobs and growth in this economy. I'm very pleased to tell the member that MTO recently awarded an \$11.2-million project to widen the 4.5-kilometre stretch of Highway 401 to six lanes from Homer Watson Boulevard easterly to Regional Road 8. This work will include paved highway shoulders, tall wall median barriers, structural repairs to the King Street overpass, and interchange ramp realignment at Homer Watson Boulevard and King Street. This is, in fact, part of the five-year, \$20-billion SuperBuild initiative.

We are determined that in order to continue to do well in the global economy, we will continue to build good roads, which are roads to prosperity.

Mr Martiniuk: As you know, trade corridors are important not only to Cambridge but to all communities in Ontario. Our economy relies upon these trade corridors between Ontario jurisdictions and the United States. What are you doing to ensure our trade corridors are viable now and in future?

Hon Mr Turnbull: We are committed to ensuring that future infrastructure needs are met. We have announced recently quite a few planning initiatives: the Niagara needs assessment, which will potentially include the widening of the QEW or the new mid-peninsula corridor and other alternatives; the Simcoe needs assessment, which will address the needs of the Barrie-Simcoe area and connecting to southern Georgian Bay; and the Highway 427 needs assessment. We're working with our municipal partners with respect to southern Georgian Bay and additional capacity to the Collingwood area.

This is all part of our billion-dollar budget, the highest highway capital budget in provincial history. We are determined to continue through the SuperBuild initiative to build these roads to prosperity.

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CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

INDUSTRIE DE LA CONSTRUCTION

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): My question was to be to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, but since he's not in the House today, I will ask the question to the Acting Premier and Chair of Management Board. On May 4, 1999, your government passed Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry. During the last election campaign, your government said to the Ontario construction industry that it had had enough of the unfair practices. You said you wanted a level playing field with Quebec.

Your government spent over \$1 million in billboard advertising, radio, television and newspaper ads. Bill 17, a follow-up of my Bill 60, was very clear: Quebec construction workers and contractors had to register with the Ontario job protection office. If not, they would be subject to a fine of \$5,000 to \$25,000 a day.

Can you tell me what you are doing today to rectify this situation? Again, is this another promise made, another promise kept?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As he's aware, this has been a long-standing grievance between the province of Quebec and the province of Ontario. It's an issue that all governments of all parties have talked about. Finally we've had a government and a Premier with the courage to stand up and say that this has to stop. If you have specific examples of where this agreement is not being lived up to, by all means share it with us in writing and we'll take action, unlike what your party did in the past.

Mr Lalonde: This is caca de taureau. On November 12 last year, your government decided to shelve Bill 17 and sign a new agreement with Quebec. You now allow Quebec construction workers and contractors to work anywhere in Ontario without having to register with the Ontario job protection office, without paying any fee, and we Ontarians have to continue paying thousands of dollars to work in Quebec.

On November 12, the Minister of Labour said that the Hull casino site would be open to Ontario contractors. But not one Ontario contractor has been accepted, even though at times they were the lowest bidders. During the negotiations, your Minister of Labour called me several times. I asked him to insist during the negotiations with Quebec that since your government has not enforced Bill 17, all fines received by our Ontario contractors be cancelled. On November 11, your Minister of Labour called me back and he said, "Jean-Marc, we have a deal."

Monsieur le ministre, je ne sais pas quel genre d'entente votre gouvernement a conclue et a signée le 12 novembre dernier. Depuis cette signature, 164 contraventions ont été émises par la CCQ à nos travailleurs ontariens. Votre gouvernement a induit le public dans l'erreur. Votre gouvernement a menti aux travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario.

Minister, your government has misled—

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

Stop the clock. I would ask the member to withdraw that.

Mr Lalonde: I think this government should apologize to Ontario construction workers. I will stand by my construction workers. I am not going to withdraw my words.

The Speaker: I have no alternative than to name the member and ask Mr Lalonde to please withdraw from the chamber.

Mr Lalonde: I cannot withdraw it. I am standing by my words.

The Speaker: I've already named you.
Mr Lalonde was escorted from the chamber.

VIOLENCE IN FILMS

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. In the past few days we have seen quite a lot of coverage out of the United States regarding the level of explicit violence in movies. Movie executives have openly admitted that they focus-test violent movies before children as young as nine years of age. I share the concern that our young people are being exposed to unnecessary excessive violence in movie theatres and through home videos. Minister, could you explain to the House how our government addresses these problems here at home?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I thank the member for the question. I too share his concern that violence in today's movies is becoming more graphic and more frequent. The problems that United States senators are discussing centre around the lack of any official standards when it comes to film advertising. In the US there's no power of law to enforce rules and regulations on the entertainment industry. The American industry peddles—I think it's fair to say “peddles”—violent films to young people, and there's nobody to stop them from doing so. Movie industry executives are even admitting that they deliberately show movie trailers advertising violent films when children as young as nine will be in the theatre audience.

In Ontario, the Ontario Film Review Board is addressing these concerns through the review, classification and approval of films and film advertising intended for public exhibition and distribution, and the board decides which films can be viewed by which audience and where advertising is aimed.

Mr Gill: I'm pleased to hear that the OFRB, the Ontario Film Review Board, is in place to view and classify all films and advertising materials that are to be shown publicly in Ontario.

Minister, could you also explain to the House how the OFRB informs consumers about the level of violence in films and the impact it may have on our young people?

Hon Mr Runciman: The film review board has many mechanisms in place to ensure that Ontarians are aware of the content of any given film before viewing it. We have a classification system that has four levels ranging from “family” to “restricted.” In Ontario, “restricted” means restricted. In the United States, anyone can go to a restricted movie as long as they are accompanied by an adult. In Ontario, a restricted film is only for those 18 and over. As well, information pieces on movie ratings and classifications have been available in movie theatre lobbies in all Ontario theatres for the last six months. The board is also working with other provincial film boards to develop a country-wide warning and advisory system on videos.

The board and the Ontario government take the issue of violence in films very seriously. We're committed to giving consumers the tools they need to make informed choices about the films and videos they view.

McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I've got a question for the Minister of Culture. I was reading your Bill 112 and I was looking at section 8. It says the following: “The board shall ensure that the collection reflects the cultural heritage of Canada and is comprised of artworks and objects and related documentary material created by or about,” and it lists the Group of Seven, essentially. The next section, (b), says, “other artists who have been designated by the art advisory committee” comprising M. McMichael and spouse and a couple of other friends. There are no professionals on that board. I'm worried; a whole lot of other people are worried as well. M. McMichael is gearing up to dump 3,000 works of art, which may include the selling off of aboriginal works of art and other Canadian contemporaries—3,000.

Minister, don't you feel perhaps a twinge, a little bad that maybe you are making a serious mistake in defending the Premier's position on this?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): Let me say that the actual piece of legislation says that the art advisory committee will be comprised of five individuals, two being the McMichaels, one being the chair, one being the vice-chair and the fifth being a representative elected by the board. I have complete confidence in all of my boards and I know that the McMichaels, the chair, the vice-chair and the delegate from the board will do a good job in choosing the kind of art that will represent what the McMichael gallery has represented throughout its lifetime. Let me also say I have confidence that as we move through this process—and as Mr Braley, the chair, has said—of course we wouldn't flood the market with works of art. We're looking for ways to find the right artists who will reflect the temperament of Ontario and give us an art gallery we can have for future generations—

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

1450

Mr Marchese: The problem is, there are no assurances in this regard. “Comprised of” means just the Group of Seven. The rest—aboriginal works and other contemporaries—have to go somewhere. The minister gives us no assurances about what will happen to those works of art. Will they be dumped on the market, bringing down prices for all artists? We don't know. She doesn't give assurances about what will happen.

There are other problems. Deaccessioning gifts certified by the Ottawa cultural properties review board has tax consequences. If institutions have not held a work for at least 10 years, the original tax break disappears. Has

she though of that? Have they thought of this? This advisory committee is comprised of five people and has powers beyond the 1965 agreement.

Minister, will you tell the Premier—because I think you ought to—that his obsession should be brought to an end and that Bill 112 should be withdrawn for the benefit of all the contemporary artists who will be affected, for board members you will lose and for those who have donated that you will lose, endangering the McMichael cultural heritage that we have.

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say that the member opposite has not read the legislation clearly. Nowhere in Bill 112 does it say that only Group of Seven pictures and art will be collected. It says “the Group of Seven plus other designated artists who have made a contribution to the province of Ontario and to Canadian art.”

I certainly can believe there are many aboriginals and natives who have made a contribution to art, and certainly I know the art advisory committee will make the right judgments when it decides on artists for the future.

Let me say that all this came about because this unique situation, this art gallery, is in trouble. It is financially in trouble. Controversy has surrounded this gallery for many years, since 1965. It's time that someone took action to set it on a sound financial footing.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel

grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities.”

This is signed by several dozen Toronto-area residents who share the concern about this government's discrimination against northern Ontario residents when it comes to health care. I have affixed my own signature in full agreement.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to rise in the Legislature today. I have a petition directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“We are suggesting that all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan.

“Diabetes costs Canadian taxpayers a bundle. It is the leading cause of hospitalization in Canada. Some people with diabetes simply cannot afford the ongoing expense of managing diabetes. They cut corners to save money. They rip test strips in half, cut down on the number of times they test their blood and even reuse lancets and needles. These budget-saving measures can often have disastrous health care consequences;

“Persons with diabetes need and deserve financial assistance to cope with the escalating cost of managing diabetes. We think it is in all Ontarians' and the government's best interest to support diabetics with the supplies that each individual needs to obtain the best glucose control possible. As you all know, good control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50%, blindness by 76%, nerve damage by 60%, cardiac disease by 35% and even amputations. Just think how many dollars can be saved by the Ministry of Health if diabetics had a chance to gain optimum glucose control.”

I support this petition and affix my signature.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition to the Ontario Legislature is submitted on behalf of the many hard-working volunteers at the northeastern cancer treatment centre, like Bob Roberti and Gary Orasi, and it says:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

“Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

“Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario."

I proudly affix my signature to this petition.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition signed by a number of constituents from my riding and from Sudbury with respect to this government's discrimination against northern cancer patients, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario."

I agree with the petitioners, and I'd like to thank Gerry Loughheed Jr and all his volunteers for all their work to gather these petitions.

CARMEN ROAD OVERPASS

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the community of south Dundas has a major concern regarding the closure of the Carmen Road overpass. The impact on the business community is devastat-

ing. Our children are at risk by crossing the busy railway at level crossing (14 buses a day). The cost for the closure alone is astronomical and we appeal to the government to find the funding and repair this bridge immediately.

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

"Repair the bridge immediately."

I have affixed my signature and wholeheartedly agree.

1500

CHILD POVERTY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have further petitions forwarded to me by the West Hamilton Interfaith Committee on Child Poverty. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the federal government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and passed a resolution to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000; and

"Whereas at the first ministers' meeting in June 1996 the Prime Minister and Premiers made tackling child poverty a collective priority; and

"Whereas Campaign 2000 records the province of Ontario as having the highest increase—116%—in child poverty since Canada's House of Commons vowed unanimously in November 1989 to eliminate child poverty;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario:

"(1) To take immediate steps to eradicate the hunger of poor children by working vigorously with the federal government to reduce the poverty rate among Ontario's children, and

"(2) To follow and implement the recommendations of the Early Years Study, commissioned by the Ontario government in the spring of 1998."

I add my name to those of these petitioners.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have more of the thousands of signatures we have collected in Algoma-Manitoulin.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

These particular ones are mostly from the north shore of Lake Huron.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

I add my name to this petition also.

PHOTO RADAR

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): “Whereas Mike Harris made the decision in 1995 to cancel the Ontario government’s photo radar pilot project before it could properly be completed;

“Whereas two Ontario juries in the last year, including the jury investigating traffic fatalities on Highway 401 between Windsor and London in September 1999, have called for the reintroduction of photo radar on that stretch of Carnage Alley; and

“Whereas studies show that the use of photo radar in many jurisdictions, including British Columbia, Alberta, Australia, many European countries and several American states, does have a marked impact in preventing speeding and improving road and highway safety, from a 16% decrease in fatalities in British Columbia to a 49% decrease in Victoria, Australia; and

“Whereas photo radar is supported by the RCMP, the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs, police departments, including many local Ontario Provincial Police constables, and the Canadian Automobile Association

and the Ontario Trucking Association and many road safety groups;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Ministry of Transportation reinstate photo radar on dangerous stretches of provincial and municipal highways and streets, as identified by police. The top priority should be Carnage Alley, the section of 401 between Windsor and London, and all revenues from photo radar should be directed to putting more police on our roads and highways to combat aggressive driving.”

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have another petition regarding the Harris government’s discrimination against northern cancer patients. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for meals, travel and accommodation;

“Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

“Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

“Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which presently exists in the province of Ontario.”

I agree with the petitioners. I hope the government does something soon about this issue.

McMICHAEL

CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

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

“Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced Bill 112, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act;

“Whereas the McMichael Canadian Art Collection has grown and evolved into one of Canada’s best-loved and most important art gallery collections of 20th-century Canadian art;

“Whereas the passage of Bill 112 would constitute a breach of trust made with hundreds of other donors to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection;

“Whereas the passage of Bill 112 would vest too much power in the hands of the founders, who have been more than compensated for their generosity;

“Whereas the passage of Bill 112 would diminish the authority and responsibility of the board of trustees;

“Whereas the passage of Bill 112 would limit the focus of the art collection and hamper the gallery to raise private funds, thereby increasing its dependency on the taxpayers; and

“Whereas the passage of Bill 112 would significantly reduce its capacity and strength as an educational resource;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to withdraw Bill 112.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have further petitions forwarded to me by Buzz Hargrove, the national president of the CAW. The petitions were put together by CAW local 222 members Cecil Mackasey and Rick Roberts. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals everyday for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer causing substances known as carcinogens;

“Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that 1 million globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens;

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

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

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

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

Again, my NDP colleagues and I continue to support these petitioners.

1510

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA PROTECTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

Mr Martiniuk, on behalf of Mr Flaherty, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to better protect victims of domestic violence / Projet de loi 117, Loi visant à mieux protéger les victimes de violence familiale.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): Today, on behalf of the Attorney General, the Honourable James Flaherty, I proceed with second reading of Bill 117, the Domestic Violence Protection Act, an Act to better protect victims of domestic violence. I will be sharing my available time with my colleagues Joe Tascona, the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, and my colleague Doug Galt, the member for Northumberland.

Last week Minister Flaherty introduced the Domestic Violence Protection Act. This act is in response to one of the most disturbing and insidious crimes: domestic violence. It is a crime that all of us, as legislators, neighbours, fathers, mothers, and citizens of Ontario, cannot ignore. It is a serious crime that has serious repercussions for our society. Not only is domestic violence a crime against the person abused, it deeply affects children who witness violence in the family. It destabilizes families. In the broadest sense, then, domestic violence is a crime against the foundation of an orderly society: strong families.

When people think about safe communities, they think of being and feeling safe on our streets, in their neighbourhoods and, above all, in their homes. We think, and rightfully so, of our home as a sanctuary where we can sit protected and where we feel safe and secure, yet the disturbing reality is that for some the home can be the unsafest place of all.

As legislators we have the responsibility to help ensure that the residents of this province are as safe as reasonably possible. This is a responsibility this government takes seriously. During the past five years, we have taken a leadership role in taking action to protect and support victims of domestic violence. Some of this work has focused, appropriately, in the justice system. As the minister has stated, and as this government believes, domestic violence is a crime.

We created and expanded the domestic violence court program. It is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Canada. We allocated an additional \$8 million annually to ensure that crown attorneys have sufficient time to meet with victims in preparing their case for prosecution. This gives victims a voice in the justice system. To support more victims of domestic violence,

we expanded the victim/witness assistance program and plan to do more. To get victims in touch with the services they need, we expanded the victim crisis assistance and referral program and the SupportLink program. To support families in crisis, we expanded the supervised access program.

I am proud of the actions our government has taken to make our justice system more responsive to the needs of victims of domestic violence. They are very important components that support victims and hold abusers accountable for their actions.

A brief comment on the second part of my sentence: holding abusers accountable. This is a most important goal. That is why we established a partner assault response program, formerly the male batterers' program. Domestic violence is a crime. That is why we prosecute. To minimize the role of the justice system in protecting and supporting victims is irresponsible. While these are important steps, we know that there is more work to be done.

Victims of domestic violence sometimes seek protection through restraining orders. These court orders prescribe and/or prohibit the contact that an alleged abuser can have with the victim. However, we know that restraining orders can be made more effective. Victims of domestic violence need to know they can obtain restraining orders and get them quickly. Victims need to know that restraining orders will be enforced and that charges will be laid appropriately when the order has been breached. Offenders need to know that violation of a restraining order has a serious consequence. Yet, this has not always been the case with the current system.

People representing victims of domestic violence, police and family lawyers, have told us that changes to restraining orders are needed to better protect victims of domestic violence. They've told us there is a delay in getting restraining orders because victims must apply during normal court hours. They've told us that a lot of people can't apply for a restraining order because the current eligibility criteria are too limited. For example, people who have been living together for less than three years cannot get a restraining order unless they're also the parents of a child.

But the most urgent call for changes revolve around the need for better enforcement of restraining orders. Enforcement of violations of restraining orders falls under the Provincial Offences Act. This means that alleged abusers can only be held for 24 hours after violating an order, unless there is a concern that he or she would not appear in court. This may be fine for a minor offence; it is not acceptable for the serious crime of domestic violence.

That is why the Domestic Violence Protection Act, An Act to better protect victims of domestic violence, was introduced. This bill is one more step we are taking to protect victims of domestic violence and hold offenders accountable. We have made that promise in the Blueprint and again in the throne speech, and we are keeping those promises.

The proposed legislation is intended to reform and improve the effectiveness of restraining orders to better protect victims of domestic violence. If passed, this will replace restraining orders with new intervention orders. It would ensure that victims could obtain intervention orders faster and that they would be enforced in an effective, consistent and timely way across this great province.

To underscore the importance of these proposed reforms, this bill would treat the violation of an intervention order as a criminal offence under the Criminal Code rather than a provincial offence. This would mean that those convicted of a violation would have a criminal record. Making the violation of an intervention order a criminal offence sends a strong statement that domestic violence will not be tolerated in Ontario.

The Domestic Violence Protection Act would go a long way to keeping victims of domestic violence and their children safer, and it would help to better protect more victims and their children from that crime.

As I've already indicated, the current eligibility criteria are limited. We propose to broaden coverage and include those who have been excluded from seeking the protection of restraining orders. This means people in dating relationships, current or past; people who have been living together for less than three years; and relatives, such as elderly parents living with an adult child, would be able to obtain an intervention order. We think this is equitable and fair.

The opposition has claimed that this bill is insignificant and provides for small changes. I do not agree. How can any action that protects victims be insignificant? On the contrary, our proposed changes address the limitations of the existing law and would make major changes across the justice system to better serve victims of domestic violence.

1520

Because of the nature of the violence, victims of domestic violence need faster access to intervention orders. This bill would do just that. A Domestic Violence Protection Act would provide clear standards to simplify and speed up the process of getting an intervention order. If the bill passes, victims across the province would be able to obtain an intervention order in all urgent situations any time of the day or night.

During court hours, victims would apply to a court, as they do now. But for emergencies, when the court is not sitting, orders would be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Victims could apply through a designated justice of the peace or judge. If the matter is urgent, police could assist victims to communicate with these designated judicial offices.

At the same time, the alleged abuser would be served with the intervention order faster and the police would be alerted about the order sooner. The order would be prepared and signed at the same time the judge granted the order. If the abuser is in the court, the order could be served at the same time. This would make the informa-

tion needed for enforcement available much more quickly on the Canada-wide police information system, or CPIC.

When the police are called to a domestic violence incident, they need all the tools they can get to help protect the victim. Currently, police have signalled a need for changes in two key areas. One is the current content of restraining orders that prohibit the alleged abuser from harassing, molesting or annoying their current or former partner or spouse. At times, interpreting these terms can be subjective. For example, what actions constitute knowing?

Second, the police are sometimes confronted with contradictory court orders. For example, a victim's restraining order may prohibit contact with the alleged abuser, but the same order may also include an exception for child access arrangements. When called to an incident, police are faced with two possible explanations for contact. Lack of clarity in restraining orders makes it more difficult for police to enforce the law.

We have listened to the police, and this bill would provide the clarity they need to better protect victims. If there is a conflict between an emergency order and an existing custody or access order, the emergency order would have priority. It would be clear to the police which order to enforce.

Under the act, intervention orders would ensure that conditions for the alleged abuser would be clear and enforceable. Intervention orders would specifically list prohibited activities for the alleged abuser. This would help victims and the police to readily know if an order has been breached. For example, the order could specify that the alleged abuser should not communicate directly or indirectly with the victim or other specified people and the specific distance an alleged abuser can be from the victim or from particular places such as the victim's workplace or the children's school. Other terms of the order might include:

Requiring the alleged abuser to vacate the residence. Currently this occurs only if there has been an arrest or if there is an order of the court for exclusive possession of the matrimonial home;

Requiring that police are present while the alleged abuser removes personal possessions;

Requiring that the alleged abuser give up possession of firearms and weapons that have been used, or threatened to be used, to commit domestic violence;

Ordering counselling for the abusive partner to help prevent further violence;

Ordering counselling for the children, at the alleged abuser's expense, to help them overcome the effects of exposure to the violence;

Granting exclusive possession of the residence to the victim or exclusive use of certain property such as credit cards and bank accounts;

Ordering compensation for damage or losses suffered.

These conditions contain a wider range of remedies for victims than is found under the present system. Intervention orders would be tailor-made by courts,

based on each individual situation. Clear and enforceable intervention orders to better protect the victims is one of the key objectives of this bill.

We fully understand and support the wish of victims of domestic violence to be able to stay safely in their homes. After all, why should the victim, not the alleged abuser, be the one to leave? In fact, one of the goals of this bill is to provide further protection for women and their children so they can remain in the family home. Under this bill, if passed, the court would be able to include a condition in the intervention order specifically requiring the alleged abuser to vacate the residence. If he or she does not leave, the police could make an arrest for breaching the order. Charges could be laid under the Criminal Code. By contrast, currently the police can remove an alleged abuser from the residence only if he or she has been arrested or has breached an order for exclusive possession of the matrimonial home. To further protect victims at risk, police could also have the right to seize weapons and guns if they have been used, or threatened to be used, to commit domestic violence.

This bill helps victims achieve more financial independence by allowing the court to include conditions in intervention orders such as, as I previously mentioned, the granting of exclusive possession or exclusive use of certain property and ordering compensation for damages or losses suffered.

Again, we wish to make it clear that under this bill, breaches of an intervention order would be a criminal offence. If passed, this would make enforcement easier because, if convicted, the abuser would not just have a provincial record but in fact a criminal record. We believe this is a significant deterrent to committing the crime. Stronger provisions for detention and release would also be available under the Criminal Code. Currently, under the Provincial Offences Act, an alleged abuser can only be held for 24 hours, whereas under the Criminal Code the accused can be held for trial if he or she is deemed a risk. Ultimately the accused could be released on condition that he or she not possess weapons, not consume alcohol, not contact the victim, adhere to a curfew or report regularly, in person, to the police. If any of these conditions are breached, the person could be held for trial.

Penalties depend upon the circumstances in each case. However, under the Children's Law Reform Act and the Family Law Act, the maximum penalty for the first breach of a restraining order is three months in jail and/or up to a \$5,000 fine. On a second or subsequent offence this penalty increases to up to two years in jail and/or a \$10,000 maximum fine. Under the Criminal Code, jail terms up to two years can be imposed with the significant social stigma of a criminal record.

The members opposite have claimed that this government has focused exclusively on solutions that improve the justice system. I guess they are referring to the tripling of the number of our innovative domestic violence court programs. These specialized courts provide support to victims and fast-track cases to ensure effective pro-

secution. They can also provide counselling for abusers to help stop the violence; the doubling of the victim crisis assistance and referral service—VCARS—which links victims directly to the police and community-based services; and of course the doubling of the victim/witness assistance program, with more to come.

1530

This government makes no apologies for improving the justice system to better serve victims of crime and to hold those who commit the crimes accountable for their deeds. Domestic violence is a crime, a most repugnant crime, and must be treated as such by the justice system.

The restraining order reform proposed by this government is also a response to the recommendations made by the joint committee on domestic violence comprised of individuals from our community. We have never claimed that the Domestic Violence Protection Act is the only solution to help victims of domestic violence. But it is one more important step in a multi-pronged strategy to improve the system to meet victims' needs.

While minimizing our achievements, the members of the opposition maintained we had not supported victims through community-based programs. This is just not so. The facts speak for themselves: \$10 million in annualized funding has been allocated to help children who have witnessed domestic violence and to establish a transitional support program. This will help victims to establish new lives for their families, free from domestic violence.

Fifty-one million dollars has been allocated to support 98 emergency shelters and related services in the year 2000-01; \$21 million has been allocated to over 100 counselling programs for women and their children in 2000 and 2001; approximately \$50 million has been committed to support innovative community-based projects that focus on vulnerable children and adults as part of the victims' justice action plan; \$10 million annually has been allocated for the expansion of community-based programs, including the victims assistance and crisis referral services, SupportLink and making services more flexible to meet the needs of northern communities. SupportLink provides safety planning that can involve cellphones pre-programmed to dial 911. This would help ensure that the emergency response teams are alerted immediately if there is a danger.

Fifty million dollars has been committed to rent supplements to help house up to 10,000 families and individuals; an additional \$500,000 was provided to cover streamlined applications for emergency legal aid advice and the number of hours was doubled to assist abused women seeking restraining orders. The number of supervised access sites will be expanded from 36 to 54, providing for safe visits between non-custodial parents and their children.

There are more than 40 projects and initiatives in the areas of safety, justice and prevention to help meet the needs of abused and assaulted women in Ontario. In fact, this government is spending more to prevent domestic violence than it ever has in the past. In 2000-01 we will spend almost \$135 million, an increase of \$37 million

since 1995. An additional \$5 million will be allocated next year, bringing the total to approximately \$140 million. And much of this funding supports community-based programs and services.

Keeping the people of this province safe is a battle no one level of government can win on its own. Ontario is playing its part to ensure the safety of our communities, our families and our children. It is time for the federal government to live up to its responsibilities to keep our homes, streets and neighbourhoods safe. Earlier this month, Minister Flaherty called on the federal government to provide additional help to protect victims of domestic violence. He asked them to do this by making two important changes to the Criminal Code.

First, while breaches of intervention orders would be enforced under the Criminal Code, we asked that the federal government amend the code to make breaching an intervention order a separate offence. This would provide victims with additional protection by allowing for more timely prosecution of cases and would send a clear and strong message that domestic violence is a serious offence. Second, Minister Flaherty asked Ottawa to reverse the onus of proof in bail proceedings in domestic violence cases so that accused individuals would have to show that their release would not endanger the victim. These are changes that Ottawa can make easily and they are changes that would go a long way to protect the victims of domestic violence. I'm sad to say that as of this date we have received no firm commitment from the federal government to make these changes.

We have promised to better protect victims of domestic violence and hold abusers accountable. We believe that the proposed changes are important new additions to our government's continued efforts to do just that. If passed, the Domestic Violence Protection Act would cover more victims, provide faster access to intervention orders 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and give the police the tools they need to better enforce intervention orders. Faster access to intervention orders and better enforcement—that's the bottom line of this bill. This is an effective bill because it addresses the limitations in the existing laws.

Members opposite, including Frances Lankin and Michael Bryant, have indicated their support for this bill.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): Is he waiting for me to say something?

Mr Martiniuk: I was just providing the opportunity in case that was incorrect.

Ms Lankin: I'll speak later. I appreciate that.

Mr Martiniuk: I urge its speedy passage so that the people of Ontario can be safe and feel safe on our streets, in their neighbourhoods and, above all, in the sanctity of their own homes.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to follow my colleague from Cambridge, the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, with respect to second reading of An Act to better protect victims of domestic violence. I'd like to make a few comments with respect to this piece of legislation.

As we know, domestic violence is an issue that affects all of us as legislators, neighbours, fathers, mothers and finally as citizens of Ontario. It's a serious crime, and whether we have been the victims of domestic violence, know someone who has been or have lived in a neighbourhood where domestic violence has occurred, we are all affected. We are affected because our communities and neighbourhoods cannot prosper, cannot attract families, investment or business if we allow violence in our homes.

That is why during the past five years our government has taken a leadership role in the area of domestic violence. We have created and expanded the domestic violence court program and made it the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Canada. We have expanded the victim/witness assistance program, the victim crisis assistance and referral service, the supervised access program and the SupportLink program. I'm proud to say, as the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, that my riding has been targeted for these initiatives. I can tell you, having walked through the courts in the city of Barrie, it certainly has demonstrated our government's commitment to this issue in terms of being there to help the people who need to be helped.

I'm proud of our achievement of making our justice system more responsive to the needs of victims of domestic violence.

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The justice system is a critical component in our battle against domestic violence because it holds abusers accountable for their actions. While these are important steps, we know there is more work to be done, so An Act to better protect victims of domestic violence, the proposed legislation, is intended to reform and improve the effectiveness of restraining orders to better protect victims of domestic violence.

I say that there is a need for change. Today victims of domestic violence obtain restraining orders that prescribe and/or prohibit the contact that an alleged abuser can have with the victim. These restraining orders have kept many women safe, but our government has heard from organizations representing victims, from family lawyers and from the police that restraining orders must be obtained more quickly and must be better enforced. They've told us that there is a delay in getting restraining orders because victims must apply during normal court hours. This is a real problem for victims confronted by violence after business hours and on the weekend. They've told us that a lot of people can't apply for a restraining order because the current eligibility criteria are too limited. For example, people who have been living together for less than three years can't get a restraining order.

But the most urgent call for change revolves around the need for better enforcement of restraining orders. Enforcement of violations of restraining orders falls under the Provincial Offences Act. This means that alleged abusers can only be held for 24 hours after violating an order, unless there is concern that he or she

would not appear in court. This may be fine for a minor offence. However, it is not acceptable for the serious crime of domestic violence.

We have listened to victims and community organizations, and that is why we are proposing to make important changes to better meet the needs of victims of domestic violence.

The proposed new law would create new domestic violence intervention orders. First, the legislation would help victims of domestic violence get intervention orders any time, day or night, across the province. These orders would be available during court hours, as they are now, but for emergencies, when the court is not sitting, orders would be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At the same time, the alleged abuser would be served with the intervention order faster and police would be alerted about the order sooner.

Second, our proposed new law would help to protect more victims of domestic crime. We propose to include people in dating relationships, making Ontario the first province to provide this coverage. We also want to include those who have lived together for less than three years, as well as family members such as parents living with their adult children.

Third, we plan to specifically list a clear set of prohibited activities that the alleged abuser would have to comply with. I'm going to refer to the legislation with respect to those areas that would be covered, as defined with respect to domestic violence under the act. Those include:

"1. An assault that consists of the intentional application of force that causes the applicant to fear for his or her safety, but does not include any act committed in self-defence.

"2. An intentional or reckless act or omission that causes bodily harm or damage to property.

"3. An act or omission or threatened act or omission that causes the applicant to fear for his or her safety.

"4. Forced physical confinement, without lawful authority.

"5. Sexual assault, sexual exploitation or sexual molestation, or the threat of sexual assault, sexual exploitation or sexual molestation.

"6. A series of acts which collectively causes the applicant to fear for his or her safety, including following, contacting, communicating with, observing or recording any person."

It also states in the act:

"Domestic violence may be found to have occurred for the purposes of this act whether or not, in respect of any act or omission described in subsection (2), a charge has been laid or dismissed or withdrawn or a conviction has been or could be obtained."

When we're dealing with this very serious situation, people have to know who is eligible to apply for an intervention order, which is very clearly set out in the act:

"1. A spouse or former spouse....

"2. A same-sex partner or former same-sex partner....

“3. A person who is cohabiting with the respondent or has cohabited with the respondent for any period of time, whether or not they are cohabiting at the time of the application.

“4. A person who is or was in a dating relationship with the respondent.

“5. A relative of the respondent who resides with the respondent.”

There is an age restriction with respect to who can apply: “A person must be at least 16 years old to apply for, or be the respondent to an application for, an intervention order or an emergency intervention order.”

The situations that are covered by an intervention order are very clearly set out and the persons that can apply for the intervention order are very clearly set out. These tougher conditions would be tailored to each situation. For example, communication with the victim would be prohibited; being too close to the victim, as specifically set out in the order or being in certain places such as at the victim’s workplace would constitute a breach of the order.

A wider range of other relief for victims would also be available. For example, the alleged abuser might have to leave the home, and firearms and guns could be seized by the police. There are also provisions for the court to order counselling for the abusive partner or to grant exclusive possession of the residence to the victim so that the victim can stay in the home. These important changes would make intervention orders easier for police to enforce. That is a fundamental focus of this legislation in terms of enforcement to protect the victim of this type of violence.

Intervention orders would be enforced according to the provisions of the Criminal Code. This would result in alleged abusers being detained or released on a wider range of conditions. For example, an accused could be held for trial if he or she is judged to be a safety risk, not released after 24 hours, which is the current situation.

Those convicted of violating an intervention order would have a criminal record. This would send a clear signal that domestic violence is not tolerated in the province of Ontario.

The bottom line of these reforms is faster access and better protection for victims of domestic violence. These reforms will complement the initiatives we have taken to date to help victims of domestic violence and hold abusers accountable, because to keep Ontario as the best place to live, work and raise a family, we must work together to assist victims of domestic violence and help keep their children safe.

When we throw around the terminology of a “restraining order,” we must understand what we’re talking about. Restraining orders are non-criminal court orders that prescribe and/or prohibit contact between alleged abusers and victims of domestic violence. The proposed changes would replace current restraining orders with domestic violence intervention orders that would prohibit contact and would be more enforceable according to the provisions of the Criminal Code, which

would mean stronger terms and conditions for the release of alleged abusers. We certainly saw that on a number of occasions this past summer: unfortunate circumstances, terrible circumstances, something that we have to redress.

The Ontario government’s reform consists of proposed new legislation—the Domestic Violence Protection Act—and changes to current practice to ensure that intervention orders are issued and enforced in an effective, consistent and timely a manner across the province.

The reform is consistent with the recommendations of the joint committee on domestic violence and with the government’s Blueprint and throne speech commitment to protect victims and hold offenders accountable. We are keeping our word with respect to this important issue.

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The act, if passed, would provide clarity and make administration and enforcement easier for police, the courts and the judiciary. We’ve heard from the police, in particular the Durham Regional Police force, in terms of what they felt about this piece of legislation. They were in favour of it, because it was much more clear and certainly they understood more clearly what their responsibilities were.

Ontario would be the first Canadian jurisdiction with such expansive coverage, and the availability of the intervention orders covers a broader range of relationships, which I indicated earlier. The focus, easier and faster access to intervention orders, is the mandate of the day.

But better enforcement is the key, and stronger terms, in terms of dealing with the alleged abuser, and prosecution of a breach of an intervention order would occur in criminal courts, including domestic violence courts, and fall under the provisions of the Criminal Code instead of under the Provincial Offences Act. This would provide stronger terms and conditions for detention and release of the alleged abuser, increasing the ability to detain the alleged abuser where there is concern for the victim’s safety. After all, the victim’s safety is of paramount importance when you’re dealing with something as serious as domestic violence and when you’re dealing with a restraining order which is supposed to be respected. It clearly sets out what is going on in terms of contact that is not permitted. Yet, as we’ve seen on too many occasions this past summer, that wasn’t the case; the restraining orders weren’t respected. We need to make them tougher in terms of protection for the victim, and we have to make access easier and more efficient.

Now the federal government has responsibilities in this. While breaches of intervention orders would be enforced under the Criminal Code, the Ontario government will continue to demand that the federal government amend the Criminal Code to make breaching an intervention order a separate offence. If Ontario’s proposed law is passed, violations of intervention orders would be enforced under the broad category of breaching court orders. A separate provision would allow for more timely prosecution of breaches and would make a clear statement that domestic violence is a serious crime.

I have no explanation of why the federal government hasn't acted in this area. They talk a lot and do a lot of review, and yet time goes by, society changes and nothing happens. That's what we're talking about, Mr Speaker, about the federal government. They do nothing with respect to dealing with serious issues. They just talk and talk, and they use their little puppets on the other side of the floor here to basically say that the provincial government should be doing something. Well, the provincial government is doing something. But the fact of the matter is that the federal government is responsible for the Criminal Code and the changes that should be put in place there to protect victims of violence.

They across the floor laugh, because frankly they have no alternatives. They have nothing to say, because frankly they're just puppets. I don't know what they're here for, other than basically to mimic the government with respect to a serious issue of domestic violence, and they laugh. But this is a serious issue and something about which I'm not going to be laughed at across the floor. I'm very serious about this issue. Other jurisdictions—for example, Manitoba, Alberta, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Yukon, as well as many American states, New Zealand and Australia—have legislation similar to that being proposed in Ontario. So where is the federal government? They're not there.

I'm now going to give up my time to the member for Northumberland. I know he'll carry on the fight to protect victims of domestic violence.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I was just starting to enjoy his discussion about the federal government and the Liberals here not doing anything to support the government of Ontario. I know that once upon a time—I think it was on August 16—Dalton McGuinty did say that as of that date he was going to start. But I haven't seen any results at this point in time.

I am certainly pleased to join in the debate for the remaining 14 minutes on Bill 117, a bill to protect the victims of domestic violence. As I am sure you will recall, this was really part of our commitment in the Blueprint, our campaign platform back in 1999, and this is part of our fall action plan. We're delivering on those promises, just as we said we would. We're taking a leadership role, a role we've actually been taking since June 8, 1995. We're going to make a justice system that's more responsive, as has been mentioned here on several occasions. As the previous member mentioned, the opposition just doesn't seem to get it. I guess they're just not up to the job, as the old saying goes.

It's so important that people feel safe in their own homes. If they don't feel safe in their own homes, where else can they possibly feel safe in our culture and our society? We as a government are certainly not about to tolerate domestic violence. It will be turned around. It's been evolving, and it's just not right that there has been an evolution and development in this area. There is no question that this government stands for public safety. As you look to the federal government, obviously it's soft on

crime, feels sorry for the victims—the perpetrators, rather; a slight slip.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): A Freudian slip.

Mr Galt: Yes, a little Freudian slip.

You know, let them out after they've served two thirds of their sentence and let them go scot-free. It's very obvious that they are soft on crime, and locally the Liberals in Ontario kind of support the federal government in that.

We've been very supportive of public safety throughout our first term and into the second term. I'm sure you remember the truck wheel incident that was going on back around 1996 or 1997 or thereabouts. Certainly we got very tough on the rigs and what was on our highways—a tremendous turnaround there. Improvement of highway safety is another example—the construction of centre barriers on our 400-series highways—and the significant steps our government has been taking with water. When that came to our attention, we moved very quickly, even though, if the regulations and rules as laid out by the province had been followed, that incident would not have happened.

The government has also expanded domestic courts. We've improved the victim crisis referral sites, and we've expanded the victim/witness assistance programs. Our government is sending a very clear message that domestic violence is wrong and we're not about to tolerate it in Ontario. Again, the federal government is soft on crime. We as a government are committed to public safety through tough sentencing and by introducing measures that work to protect victims of crime.

There is mounting evidence that there is a direct connection between animal abuse and human abuse. As a veterinarian making observations, I long thought there was a connection. But when I introduced a resolution a year ago this November, a tremendous amount of information came forward at that time. The resolution was about asking the federal government to increase the penalties in the Criminal Code as it relates to animal abuse.

I'm sure you'll remember the story that went across not only Ontario but Canada and North America in July 1999 about a dog called Nikita that was dragged for a long distance behind a truck. The owner stopped, got out, stood the dog on its feet, got back in the truck and again dragged the dog down the road—a very interesting experience in the response in my community in Northumberland, particularly Hamilton township, the Cobourg area, and the outpouring of empathy and concern for this animal. A tremendous amount of money was raised, more than enough money to treat this particular animal. It was interesting visiting and chatting with the veterinarian, when I was being recognized for bringing this resolution forward, that she was commenting on some of the new therapies that were being used in that particular treatment to get skin growth back on that animal. But here was an unofficial campaign that got the message out that dragging animals was not something

that would be accepted in our society, accepted in our culture. You observed that in the media this past summer there was no more dog dragging. There may have been some other animal abuse that was in the press, but certainly the dog draggings—it's a subjective view on my part, but I'm very sure I did not see any, and therefore I think it was rather successful, what happened at the time with that particular unofficial campaign.

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But we have heard of all kinds of acts of torture of animals, from being doused with gasoline and set on fire to having heads pulled off, and saying to their spouse, "This is what will happen to you if you don't do as I say." These are terrible things that go on in our society, but there is a relationship and it's being proven all the time.

One of the interesting ones, I find, is that the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals did a survey of women who were in abusive situations who had left the situations and were in shelters. They found out from this group of women that 61% had pets abused or killed by their partners, that 43% had pets threatened by partners, that 48% reported a family history of abuse, and that 48% reported that concerns over the safety of their pets prevented them from leaving sooner. I have to take my hat off to a person who would stay in an abusive situation for the protection of the animal, the pet. Certainly it goes beyond the call of duty, but this is happening on a regular basis.

The survey that was carried out included the shelter in Northumberland county, in the town of Cobourg. I might add that this was a shelter that the previous government kept being asked for between 1990 and 1995, and they didn't come through. They were asked in the late 1980s and the Liberal government didn't come through, but as soon as we took office, our government came through and a shelter for women was built in the town of Cobourg.

I'm sidetracking a little bit. There's no question that animal abuse is a clear indicator that either family abuse, human abuse, is going on or it's probably going to happen down the road.

I was very pleased to be part of the launch that the OSPCA had for Violence Prevention Week. This was the third one they had this year. That was just a couple of weeks ago, and that was at the Toronto police headquarters right here in Toronto.

It goes back to the fact that for people who have animals, who are responsible for animals, whether they be pets or whether they be commercial animals, it's really a privilege for them to own and to have these animals, and they should treat them as such. That was really why I introduced that resolution back in November.

I'm rather disappointed to see that although the federal government did introduce a bill for amendments to the Criminal Code, it looks like it's going to die on the order paper as we move into a federal election. It looks like Chrétien wants to jump ahead of having it next spring

when the four years would be up. I don't know why he'd want to go early, but it would appear that he is. Also going to die on the order paper is the endangered species bill. That was introduced by their previous government and died on the order paper back in 1997, and it looks again like that one is going to die. So I don't think they are very serious about things like upgrading the Criminal Code or very serious about the endangered species bill. What they're more concerned about, of course, is winning elections. We can understand that, but governing the country really should come first. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to.

I'm currently sitting on a task force that is examining possible changes to the OSPCA act here in Ontario. This consists of representatives from the Solicitor General's office, the PA from there, the OSPCA representatives, and the Toronto SPCA. We're looking at ways of strengthening the provincial legislation in this whole area.

We seem to be living in an environment where violence is increasing. There are a lot of things in our environment that can change and influence our thinking, our minds, how we look at things. Having lived in Indonesia for a year, I can see how different values for something like human life are viewed in a different culture. Certainly in that culture, human life has a much lower value than it does here in a country like Canada.

I was interested also in the question that was asked earlier this afternoon about films and what's going on here in Ontario. I have long believed that the observation of violent films hardens or toughens individuals, and down the road there is more violence. I was quite interested in the response we heard that in the United States there are really no laws that control this kind of thing. As a matter of fact, some of the movie executives are now sort of testing it on younger children to see how they enjoy it or appreciate it or whatever.

At least here in Ontario we have an Ontario Film Review Board that does set standards for films and recognizes different levels of what people of different ages should be seeing. We have a classification system of some four levels, ranging from "family" to "restricted." Here in Ontario, "restricted" really means restricted. In the US, anyone can go to a restricted movie as long as they are accompanied by an adult. Here in Ontario, a restricted film is only for those 18 years and over. As well, information pieces on movie ratings and classifications have been available in movie theatre lobbies in Ontario theatres for the last six months.

The Ontario Film Review Board is also working with other provincial film boards to develop a countrywide warning and advisory system on videos. We know how difficult it is to control that kind of thing moving across our border. Some of the stuff that's moving on the Internet certainly needs to be addressed.

Finally, by the end of this year, the Ontario Film Review Board is hoping to have a searchable database of films on their Web site that a consumer can access to get

more information about any movie he or she wishes to view.

You can see that the Ontario Film Review Board and the Ontario government take the issue of violence in films very seriously and that we are indeed committed to giving consumers the tools they need to make informed choices about the films they may want to see or may be going to.

We also have perpetrators of this abuse growing up in violent homes where might is right. They get exposed to it there, and also out in the play yard. Whether it's the bully in the play yard or the bully in the workplace or road rage on our highways, these are all forms of toughening up and ending up looking at violence in a more acceptable way, which is not acceptable to our society.

I don't think there is any question that we have to support—and I enthusiastically support—a bill like this. It will send a strong message to the perpetrators of this kind of abuse. We heard just a few minutes ago that the police will have more tools to work with and will be able to make a real difference, and they're pleased that it's coming. We want to make sure people in Ontario do indeed feel safe in their homes and that domestic violence is not going to be tolerated in Ontario.

If Bill 117 is passed, it will indeed help victims of domestic abuse get a court order at any time, day or night. They don't have to wait until the period of time when the courts are sitting. It will also make intervention orders faster to obtain and easier to enforce.

For these many reasons, I can enthusiastically support Bill 117 and look forward to its speedy passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Questions or comments?

1610

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I must confess that for only a few moments my attention wandered when the member for Northumberland was speaking. I wasn't sure, as I tuned back in, how he got on to the subject of abuse of pets when we're talking about the serious issue of domestic violence. I trust the government is not making light of its own legislation on this most important matter. Our frustration is that this is such a serious issue and one which needs to be addressed in so many ways.

The legislation which the government has brought before us now speaks to such a small part of what is needed—commendable insofar as it goes, but not nearly enough. The focus of this government, over and over again—maybe I should only say “over” twice, because I think we've had two major focuses that the Attorney General has referenced, and one was the establishment of domestic violence courts, which we applauded. We regret the fact that there isn't one in northwestern Ontario—that's an ongoing issue; there should be access for people in northern Ontario as well as in southern Ontario to the domestic violence courts—but nevertheless a laudable initiative.

As I say, this initiative is commendable insofar as it addresses one part of what's needed, but the government's focus has been on providing support to women who are already victims. It has been on the establishment of legislation that gives access, supposedly, to legal courts, although some very real questions get raised as to whether or not, when women don't have access to legal aid, even access to the court system is the kind of benefit they need. But anybody who's involved with those who are experiencing domestic abuse knows that 75% of women who are abused never report their abuse to the police, let alone get involved in the courts and the formal justice system. Yet this government has consistently failed to respond to the needs of women who are in abusive situations and who need to have the support to be able to leave those abusive situations before they in fact become victims.

I'm sure that as we continue this debate we will be able to say over and over again what this government needs to be doing if they want to prevent victimization of women.

Ms Lankin: I'll have an opportunity later to provide a fuller response, but let me say to the government members who led off the debate on this that this bill, in and of itself, has a couple of things to recommend it to the public of Ontario, but the way in which the government members have described the far-reaching impact and effects they expect from this I really find sadly amusing.

Let me say first of all that in order to make legislation like this meaningful you have to have the education and outreach in place in communities to inform women about this possibility, you have to have the legal aid supports to allow women to get the access and the supports. But most importantly the government members talked about how making the violation of this, a civil restraining order, a Criminal Code offence would be a significant deterrent. I suppose in a way it remains to be seen whether the police and the courts take this more seriously; without extensive education that won't happen. But I say to you that the deaths of the women this summer—and the Gillian Hadley case is a very good example—occurred with abusers, violent men who had already violated restraining orders, who had already violated bail orders. The violations of bail orders are already a Criminal Code offence. If someone is determined to kill a woman, a piece of paper, a restraining order, and the fact that a violation of it is now a Criminal Code offence is not going to deter that. It will keep honest guys honest, yes—and that's OK; I don't object to it—but please understand that this will not have far-reaching impacts.

There's much we need to discuss and we will have an opportunity through the course of the debates, and I hope public hearings, on this bill.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's an honour to stand here this afternoon to comment on the second reading of Bill 117, the Domestic Violence Protection Act. I'm not going to speak about the federal government or about the link with animal abuse, but I would like to

just go back a little bit in time, because quite often everything I react to around here I react to because of my history on municipal government for the last 18 years before I was elected a year ago. I remember distinctly being at the Simcoe county council—I think it was in 1983—when the chairman of the social services committee—and I remember her; she’s passed on now. Her name was Anne Monkman and she was chairman of the committee. She was reeve of the little village called Cookstown. She was a very thoughtful person and had a lot of concerns about social services in our county. I remember her coming to the county council, asking for a subsidy because it was a new program put out—I think it was just in 1983—on the abuse of women and on building shelters, that type of thing. Anne came and asked for just a little bit of money at that time—I think it was maybe only \$20,000 or \$10,000—to build a shelter in the town of Alliston.

It shows you how far we’ve come, because back then it was actually funny. She actually brought a story up. Anne was almost in tears that day and I’ll never forget it. A person from her community had spent the night before in a henhouse because she had been beaten up quite badly. As I say, she was almost in tears when she was asking for this subsidy. That’s when I first realized, as a fairly young person at that time, how important the issue of domestic violence was. It’s stayed with me ever since. I’ve had a strong concern about it. I would like to speak more on this later on, but it was my initiation into what domestic violence was all about.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I am certainly going to follow up on the comments of the member for Simcoe North, but first I would like to express my bewilderment and shock that the Attorney General would not come to the leadoff hour to speak in favour of his own legislation. It is the tradition of this House that the minister does that. I would think that the Attorney General, given his stance that this is very important to him personally, would want to do that here in the House. I’m quite surprised that he wouldn’t do that. I do want to point out that it has always been the tradition and that I fully expected to be here to hear the Attorney General speak to Bill 117.

I would like to say, in follow-up to the comments from the member for Simcoe North, that women’s shelter funding has been cut by the Harris government over the course of the last five years. We all agree that they’re the kind of community-based interventions that are real key to making a real difference in the lives of women and children. This bill, while everyone is going to support it—and that’s a wonderful step—is not in place of, it’s not an alternative to, it’s in addition to the community-based interventions that we really need to make a dent in the horrible tragedy that is domestic violence.

In addition to the cuts to shelters, we’ve had an elimination of funding to second-stage housing. That’s transitional housing for women and children to get out of the shelters, to be able to get back into a community, to get back on their feet. It’s shocking that a government

which is going to bring in this measure, is going to say that they care so much, on the one hand, and hypocritically, on the other hand, cut and eliminate those kinds of services.

I am really very disappointed for those two aspects: the lack of a response and speech from the Attorney General, and the actions of this government.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Galt: I thoroughly enjoyed the response from the member for Simcoe North in discussing his experience, and its being abruptly brought to his attention. I am really surprised at the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan commenting about not recognizing the connection with animal abuse. Certainly, those behind her in her caucus smiled and nodded their heads; they understand. Also, the act includes “an act or omission or threatened act or omission that causes the applicant to fear for his or her safety,” such as injuring family pets. In fact, in the survey many of these women wouldn’t leave these abusive situations because of pet abuse. I’m really disappointed that they’re not getting it on the other side of the House, particularly that member.

To respond also to the comments made by the member for Beaches-East York about how there should be more education and prevention, I fully agree. That’s a very important part. In this bill, there is the opportunity to order counselling for perpetrators. I think turning the perpetrator around is a very important aspect of whatever we do in connection with abuse and family violence. It’s one thing to lock people up, but it’s another thing to ensure that people don’t do this in the future. That was also why I was talking about animal abuse. I was talking about the hardening that perpetrators get from seeing films etc. I think that kind of thing is very important.

Also, I think the member for Beaches-East York was missing the fact that there will be significant education and training dollars set aside, that training will happen for the police, court staff and crown attorneys as well as for the lawyers. I think I’ve covered the concerns expressed by those two members.

1620

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bryant: I’ll be sharing my time with the member for Hamilton Mountain.

I rise today to speak on this bill on behalf of the official opposition. Let me say again—it’s been mentioned in the debate already—that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals support any step, however minuscule, in the direction of trying to tackle the cancer of domestic violence. Therefore, we support the bill.

The comment was made by the parliamentary secretary to the Attorney General that the official opposition saw the bill as insignificant. It’s that its effect is insignificant. You see this response from the government and ask yourself what they have done after being in power for five years plus, when faced with a rise in domestic violence over the last five years, in addition to the domestic violence that was in existence already. The answer we heard from the government was that this bill

is one response. The second response, which is not addressed in this bill, but I don't mind making reference to it, is the domestic violence courts.

I have to ask the government, is this it? After the Arlene May inquest and the recommendations therefrom, after the Baldwin committee report, which I'll be speaking to in a moment, handed down over a dozen strategies, the government comes up with a very tiny piece of the puzzle. Nobody doubts for a moment that this is an incredibly difficult social issue to tackle. But you try to tackle it with a dozen or so strategies, not with this. If this were the last piece of the puzzle, then I would not be rising and saying it is insignificant and has no effect. But it would appear that this is it.

The problem with that, in my respectful view, is that the government is missing an entire part of the problem. An entire part of the picture for domestic violence is not just in responding; it's in preventing. It would seem, when you look at this bill and at this response, that this is it. We had a spring and a summer of horrors: deaths reported in the newspapers, 11 women killed over five months, many maimed and many abused. Many, of course, we don't even know of because they had no contact with the media or the criminal justice system.

After that summer of horrors of domestic violence, the government, armed with one of the nation's best studies on the topic, came up with this. Is this it? I was at the press conference and saw the charts, and I waited for more charts to come out. I saw the bill, and I was waiting for more bills to come out. I thought maybe there would be at least a pre-announcement, which would of course precede the other pre-announcement, which would then be followed by an announcement and a re-announcement of the bigger picture. But instead, we're getting a small piece of the puzzle.

What it does, from a political perspective, is create a vast difference between the approach of Mike Harris to domestic violence and the approach of Dalton McGuinty. I can sum it up in a sentence: Mike Harris's approach to domestic violence is to react at every stage; the McGuinty Ontario Liberal approach is both to deal with the serious issue of retribution and reaction via the criminal justice system and through our civil justice system, but also—and here's the difference—put emphasis on prevention. Because if we are preventing domestic violence, then we have less occasion to respond to it. But more importantly we are preventing domestic violence. Retribution is an important component of our criminal justice system, obviously supported by the official opposition, it goes without saying. Contributions have been made along those lines over the years, either through amendment or through our days in government. We debate these very issues in the House. Private members' bills are introduced by members of the official opposition—Mr Bartolucci's bills on child prostitution. We've had a number of bills that try to address the issue broadly. But let's be clear: our focus is on prevention, not just retribution. That's not enough.

So, of course we support this bill, because it is to some extent about responding. But this is important. I've heard the government say that this bill sends a strong signal to abusers. I've heard this before. I've heard this with respect to the Safe Streets Act. I've heard this with respect to the Parental Responsibility Act. I've heard this with respect to just about all their justice initiatives. I suppose the idea is that the Harris government's approach to safe streets is by way of the bully pulpit only, without more. In other words, they'll use their station to hold press conferences and speak in the Legislature—rarely in the Legislature, often in the media—to try to send a message. Yes, they're going to do that. But are they going to follow up with a legislative agenda which puts that signal into action? The answer would appear to be in the negative. This is not governance; it's public relations. And when it comes to issues as serious as domestic violence—obviously we have a number of very serious issues debated in this Legislature all the time, and nobody is discounting the member for Northumberland's issues and the importance there too. But we're here to talk about domestic violence, not about puppets and pet abuse. The day may come when you may want to debate that, but we have an important debate to undertake right now.

I don't understand why the government would not implement the Baldwin committee report. I don't understand why the government is only responding through the criminal justice system and is not doing anything about the 75% of victims who don't go to the criminal justice system.

I will say this over and over again: the vast majority of victims of domestic violence in Ontario have been abandoned by this government, because this bill doesn't do a thing for them. It doesn't do a thing for them. What they need is funding for second-stage housing. What they need is the cuts to women's shelters to be restored and then some. What they need is expanded helpline services.

What they need is support for initiatives such as the initiative introduced the Ontario Liberals to test for date-rape drugs. Incredibly, when we proposed the initiative, the Solicitor General's response was, "Well, no. Those victims should go to the police." All of us who are familiar with the issue could not believe the minister didn't understand that the vast majority of those victims didn't go to the police. We in this House may not like it that victims of domestic violence don't go to the police, but the statistics don't lie. Perhaps if we do improve prevention measures, then we'll have more people turning to the criminal justice system.

The problem with the approach of the government is that they undertake crackdowns without more. What we need is an enormous investment in prevention at the same time as we keep in tune with matters of retribution.

Speaking specifically to this act, let me say that this act permits the seizure of weapons. This provision is already available to judges when setting conditions for bail under the Criminal Code. It's redundant.

1630

The new act permits removal of the alleged abuser from the home. That's already available to the police under the Criminal Code.

I cannot emphasize enough how this so-called signal is going to have no effect. Abusers are flouting the criminal justice system at every turn. There are orders ad infinitum out there telling them not to do what they're doing. That is a far stronger signal, frankly, than a press conference and this piece of legislation. They're ignoring it. It's not enough.

I'm just going to wind up by saying I've met with a number of people providing the services in sexual assault centres across this province: the Three Oaks Foundation; the domestic violence project in Belleville; the Sexual Assault Centre in Belleville; the Sexual Assault Centre of Brant; Haldimand-Norfolk Women's Services; Women's Place in St Catharines. They all told me the same thing: there is no investment or commitment from this government that to them is sufficient to deal with their needs in any way. They just sort of survive hand to mouth. They don't know at the end of each quarter whether or not they're going to be able to, for example, keep their crisis line running.

I would just wind up by stating the obvious. We don't need another symposium. We don't need any more press conferences. We just need to implement this report, Working Towards a Seamless Community and Justice Response to Domestic Violence, a five-year plan for Ontario, submitted in August 1999 by the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence, chaired by Judge Baldwin, who had to write a letter last summer to the minister to remind him that this report has been gathering dust for the last year.

Implement the report. Let's pass this bill, let's have some hearings, and let's implement the report.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'm pleased to join in this debate. A few months ago, a poll was done and a lot of things were on the minds of Ontarians: health care; violence in general; education, of course. But domestic violence wasn't on the minds of Ontarians despite the fact that 44 women were killed in one year alone in Ontario. One wonders, is it because we don't care, or are there other reasons?

Of course Ontarians care. But if they are not affected directly themselves, the problem doesn't exist; it's easier to believe that the problem doesn't exist. "It happens to someone else's family, not to mine. It won't be my sister; it won't be my daughter. It will be someone else's. I feel bad, but I don't have to worry about it. There are so many other things to worry about."

That's a normal human reaction. It's called denial. Unfortunately, that denial can be very dangerous, because there but by the grace of God go I. It could be any of our daughters, any of our sisters. It could be any woman. It cuts across socio-economic status, although certainly if you are in the lower socio-economic status, you have a significantly higher probability of also suffering abuse.

Another reason that I believe it's not on the radar screen even though it should be is ignorance, lack of knowledge. People simply believe it's another form of injury or assault. It's a lot more than that. Woman abuse is about power. It's not simply aggression or injury. The bigger the difference between the power of the abuser and the abusee, the bigger the abuse and the more the danger and the more the probability of death.

A great deal of research has been done about that. In families where a woman has less power by virtue of either not being in the labour market or not having adequate education, she has a greater probability and a greater risk of being abused. Once again, abuse gravitates toward the greatest power differential.

Abusers also abuse when they are feeling powerless. Sometimes the fact that their partners attempt to gain some independence makes them feel even more powerless and increases the probability of abuse. By the way, the same sorts of feelings of insecurity and powerlessness, particularly in times of unemployment or economic hardship, also lead to probability of sexual abuse of children.

It's amazing—not quite amazing to me because I've worked with women and children in these situations, but it is amazing to the general public—why women in these situations don't just leave. Well, it's not that easy. In fact, it is one of the most difficult decisions that a woman makes.

First of all, abused women often believe they deserve their abuse. Their self-esteem has been battered to the point where they think they must have done something incompetent. They begin to believe that they deserve the abuse, and they blame themselves.

I have counselled young girls in high school who have been abused by their teenaged partners, their dates. Statements I can remember briefly are, "Well, he only does that when he feels insecure," and, "I know he really loves me." Quite often when interviewing these girls for a deeper assessment, of course, we find that there was abuse in their family, and the cycle is just continuing.

Another piece of information that a lot of the general public find amazing is the fact that abusers often are defended by the very people they abuse. Again, if you think about it for a moment, it's very difficult for a child and, yes, even a female to admit that he or she has been abused by the male in the family. I've also heard from children, "If only I was good, Daddy wouldn't have done that to me. If only I was good, Daddy wouldn't have done that to Mommy. It's got to be something I did." That often leads to depression, suicidal ideation and an increase in mental health problems in our society.

The member opposite talked about animal abuse. When we look at kids who abuse animals, we tend to dig in to see why they are doing it, because it is a huge indicator of future aggression against humans, and a lot of that history is also a history of family violence. And yet these kids as well, even after we've taken them into children's aid and made them safe, will often want to go

right back to the family that used to beat them and do worse things to them.

The family is strong. The sense of family is strong. So this is a much more complex task than simply—although welcome—changing a law. What is needed, and my colleague talked about it very well and Ms Lankin talked about it wonderfully the other day in the House, is for women to be economically viable, to be able to provide for their family and their children so that they are able to leave. That is what is required.

I'll just talk for children for a few minutes, because it is indeed a cycle that gets reinvented and reinforced. Children in abusive homes suffer emotional abuse and sometimes neglect because parents can't supply the energy, the calm and the sensitivity that are needed. Children who witness violence are more likely to be in violent relationships when they grow up. We pay for this dearly. We pay very dearly for not stopping this violence. When we tolerate this violence—and make no mistake about it, we have been tolerating this violence in our society—we pay dearly. Health costs for injuries and chronic health problems caused by abuse amount to about \$1 billion every year in this country. Abused women are more prone to accidents and reduced concentration and productivity at work. That is why the co-alition of women's recommendations on the workplace are so important, and I'll get to those later in the debate.

We also pay a social cost in the form of children too traumatized to learn or develop normally, taking up more teacher time, more police time with youth crime, and so forth.

One of the budgets that were cut by this government was the budget to the Ontario Women's Directorate for counselling in the schools. These counsellors would go into the schools and warn females about these signs. I'm sure a lot of members opposite have daughters. I have a daughter. I'm going to warn her about these signs, but as you know, children often respect, especially in the teenage years, hearing the same things from other adults rather than their parents.

1640

For example, does your partner continually criticize what you wear and how you look? Does your partner tell you how to dress? Does your partner call you insulting and degrading names in front of other people or when you're alone? Do you feel like you need to ask permission to see your friends, your girlfriends? Do you feel that no matter what you do, everything is always your fault? By the way, that's a very common theme when you're in therapy, listening to kids saying, "It's got to be my fault. It's got to be my fault." Do you feel like you're always walking on eggshells, trying to avoid an argument? And when you're late getting home, does your partner harass you about where you've been and who you were with? Is your partner so jealous that you're always being accused of having other relationships?

These are simple criteria, but they sometimes need to be reinforced over and over and over again, because it's very hard for young people to actually believe that the

person they've chosen to date or to love actually is an abusive person. We've heard, these past few days, about the sexual assaults on York University campus, and that is one form of assault, but the other form of sexual assault is date rape. We've gotten a lot better at warning young women about date rape and what it is. It was only 10 years ago when the majority of young women who were date-raped didn't even know they were date-raped. They felt it was something that they did, that they deserved. Certainly they didn't report it to the police.

With respect to reporting to the police, it has to be the woman's decision. Family dynamics and personal dynamics are too complex to have a black and white solution for everything. In some families, whether it's cultural or personal, going to the police is not the first step, for various reasons.

In 1996, 8,450 women and their children turned to a Toronto hostel or shelter because of spousal abuse and/or family breakdown. Research by Stats Canada showed that 29% of Canadian women who have ever been married or in a common-law relationship have been subjected to sexual or physical violence from a current or former partner. Now, I know we've come a long way, provincially and federally. It wasn't that long ago when what I just said provided an opportunity for laughter from male legislators, a couple of decades ago. It wasn't that long ago; we have come a long way, but we need to do more.

It does remain largely a hidden problem. It is still a shame to a woman to admit this. I mean, think about it; just get in this woman's head for a moment. It's admitting a failed relationship. It's admitting that perhaps, at least in her mind, "You're not good enough for a good relationship." Counselling is very, very important. Employment opportunities are very, very important.

Seventy-five percent of women who come to a shelter arrive with their children, more than half of whom have witnessed violence in the home. A high percentage of these children have also experienced direct physical or sexual abuse. In fact, when you counsel these women and you ask, "Why did you leave now and not last week or last year?" they'll say, "Up until now, he didn't touch my children. Now that he's touching my children, I knew I had to leave." Again, it's that instinct.

While most children in shelters are relieved to finally be in a safe place, they don't really want to be in a shelter. They don't want to be crammed in with other kids and other families with similar situations. They want to see their friends; they want to be in a normal apartment or home. These shelters are necessary, but they should only be a short-term wait for social housing, and that's why second-stage housing was so very important. It was a reprieve between the emergency and the emotional roller coaster of being in a shelter and finding permanent housing. So when second-stage housing budgets were cut, a lot of women lost that sanctuary, and a lot of children lost that safety.

Again, I have to say it's not a black and white issue. I remember counselling kids who had been abused and felt much safer in the shelter, but they still wanted to go back home. Even though there was an abusive person there, that tie, that pull back home was very strong. It's not black and white.

Women remain with their abusive partners for many reasons, including the fear of violent retaliation by their partners. In fact, the probability that they will get hurt or killed increases if they leave. Think about this: you're trapped. If you stay you get beat up and possibly killed; if you leave you increase your probability of being killed.

This shouldn't occur at all in Ontario and in Canada, never mind 44 times in this great province of ours in one year. In fact, the statistic is quite clear: women who leave are six times more likely to be murdered by their partners than if they had stayed. It can take several years for women to become stable and regain control of their lives after leaving an abusive relationship.

I did a tour of the north and I was in Thunder Bay with Lyn McLeod about a month ago and we visited shelters. One shelter which deals a great deal with aboriginal women said to us, "Our numbers on our waiting list are actually down this year but our crisis phone calls are up." Women are still abused, they're still afraid, but they're not leaving and they still require help.

Women with disabilities are 34% more likely to be physically or sexually abused by their partner. Imagine that horror. Imagine that sense of helplessness. These same women are often economically disadvantaged and depend on their partners for caregiving as well. Social assistance can be an important transitional support for these women. The 21.6% reduction in welfare in 1995 made it more difficult for those women to escape violence.

I'll never forget in 1995, just after that election, I had a seven-year-old patient whose mother had just left. Here he was, seven years old, and he was telling me, "That 20% Mike Harris cut has really hurt us." I thought, why should a seven-year-old even be thinking about these things when my seven-year-old—who at that time was seven years old—was arguing with me about what kind of running shoes I should buy him? It's just not fair. Yet by the grace of God go I. I have a daughter; I have friends.

Even though the probability of a woman in a lower socio-economic bracket is higher for abuse, this cuts across every socio-economic status, and sometimes it is even more difficult for women in middle- and upper-class families to leave, because the shame is too great, the embarrassment, and the loss of financial status is too much.

Abused women and their children are staying longer in women's shelters due to the lack of affordable housing in Toronto. Because of this, there's a shortage of shelter beds for new arrivals. More women are being referred to the general hostel system, where they now represent 10% of all users. That's up from 6.5% in 1993. In my area, in Hamilton, there are a number of families living in hotels

that the municipality is paying for because of the waiting list in shelters.

Abused women now typically wait three to six months to see an individual counsellor. The majority of all funding is currently directed to emergency responses, but only 2% is directed to transitional services. The cutbacks have hurt.

A province-wide steering committee has already been established to work toward a seamless domestic violence program across Ontario based upon the recommendations of a coroner's inquest into the death of Arlene May. As my colleagues Michael Bryant and Ms Lankin have said, these are the recommendations that we could be following to prevent more abuse.

You hear a lot of numbers bantered back and forth as to how much this government spent, how much the Liberals spent, how much the NDP spent. What I've got here is some information from the Ontario legislative library—non-partisan information: payments to social service agencies funded by Comsoc were reduced by 2.5% effective October 1, 1995. A further reduction, the equivalent of another 2.5%, came into effect on April 1, 1996. Counselling funding to second-stage shelters has been cut by 100%. However, their mortgages continue to be funded through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Comsoc funding to the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Housing has been cut as well but the organization has received money from other ministries for specific projects. I look forward to questioning the minister in estimates as to exactly how much money is being spent. I know that the same \$10 million has been announced a few times since I've received this portfolio, which isn't that long ago.

Hamilton shelters are swamped. The region is picking up the cost of hotel bills. When the hotels in Hamilton were recently fully booked, the shelters grew concerned about where the families would go for those nights—homeless and on the move again.

1650

Women and children do not want to be in shelters but they need a safe and secure place to stay while they recover and readjust. This further insecurity is detrimental to the recovery process. Women are nervous about accessing shelters. They need counselling programs, support lines and crisis lines to assist them. Most shelters in Hamilton have crisis lines to assist women escape their abusers, but only one in four calls go through. There are a lot of busy signals.

It should be the victims' right whether they choose to report their abuse to the police. As I said earlier, the chance of abuse increases when they leave.

A native women's centre in Hamilton, which is the only centre that services native women, is badly in need of renovations. This centre has serviced over 927 people—591 women and 236 children—for the last three years. The centre provides ongoing support to native women and their families. The staff respond to more than 1,000 crises a year. The occupancy rate of the centre has increased more than 30% over the last year and the total

number of referrals reached 747 for the year 1998-99. Yet this centre and its occupancy is severely limited by the physical configuration of the sleeping area and by the program space.

Within the shelter itself, there are huge challenges. It is not handicapped-accessible. We heard earlier about the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Here we add insult to injury, literally. They are abused, they are handicapped, and yet this shelter, such as it is, is not handicapped-accessible.

Within the shelter itself, the quality of life is threatened as the shelter cannot provide adequate space for its residents and staff. The shelter is actually turning away women and their children due to a lack of space. There are minimal sanitary facilities and these bathrooms do not function properly. The existing mechanical system—heating and cooling—does not function adequately at all and it's been problematic for some years.

It's critical that the shelter establish a supportive, non-threatening and safe environment, a place where healing can commence and ultimately one which encourages reconnection of the clients with ordinary life.

The municipality is supportive and in favour of renovation of this existing facility. A federal grant was given and a proposal was made out of this federal grant about the need. The board and staff have successfully provided these quality professional services and are willing to guide the planning of this new renovation, and they're still waiting for a response.

It's been two weeks now since the women's coalition came to Queen's Park and asked for and received Mr Hampton's signature and Mr McGuinty's signature on emergency measures to at least try and prevent more deaths after this awful, shameful and unforgivable summer. What did they ask for?

Emergency services: community-based services for women and children, \$50 million. In comparison to the \$200 tax rebate, which is \$1 billion, and in comparison to the government advertising—and I know all governments do it—of \$180 million, when \$50 million of that could have gone to these community-based services, it's a shame.

Shelter funding: making the assaulted women's helpline a province-wide service as per its circulated proposal, not just a Toronto line which is only able to handle one quarter of the calls. The women want a further \$15 million in annualized funds to independent community-based shelters, including those not currently funded by Comsoc. In communities where there is a documented urgent need for additional shelter beds, those should be granted, and immediately implement the shelter funding review as recommended in the Arlene May inquest report.

Second-stage housing programs: the women believe this is an essential protection. Many women who have found the courage to leave find themselves returning to abusive situations because they no longer have housing options. Second-stage housing is a critical safety bridge; it's not a duplication of service as the minister thought.

The sector is currently dangerously underfunded and understaffed.

Sexual assault and rape crisis centres: community outreach workers at rape crisis centres are struggling to keep pace with the demand. Women who cannot or do not want to contact police rely heavily on these rape crisis centres as their point of contact. The centres are crucial in linking women to appropriate social services.

Then we ask for community and neighbourhood supports. Province-wide anti-violence advocacy groups need to be funded. Basically, what these advocacy groups are, to clarify, is education. We need to educate the public, much like the way we educated them about smoking, about seatbelts, about much less important things, and yet we spent the time and money to do it. We need to educate the public about this hidden crime.

Ensure sufficient and stable funding to French-language services in community-based agencies throughout Ontario and provide stable funding to support women's centres, so they know year to year what they are getting.

Changes to legal aid: with the legal aid system in a funding crisis, the very bill that you're passing and that we're all going to support will be inaccessible to many women. Increase the hours for private representation of abused women in family court matters. Abandon the plans to increase the use of duty counsel.

Provide funds for interpretation in family court, as per the current provisions for criminal and immigration court. Imagine going through this stress and this danger and not being able to communicate in your language or be understood in your language.

The women came and asked for some very reasonable funds. It was a compromise. It's not what's needed, but it was a compromise. A minister was not even present. The Premier couldn't be present, but he didn't even send a minister. He sent a parliamentary assistant, who admitted she didn't have the authority to sign. This was an insult to the women. Eighty-one groups were represented there. It's not easy to get that many groups together in one day, that many different groups from all over Ontario together in one voice in one day. It's not that easy to get the two opposition parties together, united in such a strong fashion, in such a quick amount of time; it was a couple of weeks I believe. But there was such an obvious need, how could you say no?

Our leader, Dalton McGuinty, signed the emergency measures. The leader of the NDP, Mr Howard Hampton, signed. All we had on your side was a parliamentary assistant, who very sweetly said, "I don't have the authority," with a smile.

All of the female caucus members, both across and on this side, received a letter from, and I have permission to use her name now: Shelly McKay. I would like to end by quoting from Ms McKay, who was a world-class athlete, by the way, and is afraid for her life when her abusive partner is going to make probation within a few months:

"Currently, Canadian citizens believe that when victims of domestic violence seek help from the law they get it. In fact, the law contributes to the abuse. Similarly,

as in violent relationships, it seems that our society has made a silent agreement to pretend that violence is not a problem. Now is the time to challenge men's violence against women."

She continues: "I knew when I saw the look of terror in my four-year-old daughter's eyes as she watched her father assault me that I had to break the silence about our suffering. It is time to identify the cause of this suffering and through collective community action recognize the seriousness of domestic violence."

She ends her letter with the quote: "It doesn't matter to me where you live or how much money you have, I want to know if you can get up after a night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for your family."

These are unimaginable events to me. I've been fortunate to not ever witness violence in my family or in my present relationship. I cannot even begin to pretend to imagine what it must feel like for women and children in that situation. I implore the government members on the other side. It's a good start, this bill, but it's not nearly enough. It's a good investment. It'll stop crime, it'll stop mental health problems. Join with us. Let's work together on this one. Let's stop abuse.

1700

Mrs McLeod: I'm appreciative of the fact that my colleague ended her remarks by quoting from a letter which she has drafted for our signatures to ask the Attorney General to look in more depth at the needs of women who are experiencing violence, who are victims of domestic violence. She has quoted the letter from Shelly McKay, which was the trigger for the letter my colleague drafted, but I want to quote what my colleague and all of us who have signed this letter, the female members of our caucus, are asking from the minister.

"The introduction of Bill 117"—the bill that's before us this afternoon—"An Act to better protect victims of domestic violence, although laudable, does nothing to really change or benefit women who suffer from domestic violence. It is not enough. It does not address the most pressing and urgent issues for women and children who suffer from domestic abuse.

"Many victims of domestic violence do not have access to the court system. Women are unable to access legal services and press charges if they're still living with their children in the same house as their abuser. They are often unable to seek legal representation if they are financially dependent upon their abuser."

One of the reasons that triggered Shelly McKay's letter and that triggered this letter from my colleague and co-signed by the female members of our caucus is the fact that there were a number of women representing women across this province who came to Queen's Park to rally against domestic violence. Some 40 women came here on September 20. They represented over 80 women's groups. There was a consensus among these women representing their respective groups as to what government needed to do if it was serious about decreasing domestic violence.

Quite clearly, the reason for the coalition coming together was in their response to the horror of the deaths we saw this summer. This summer was not unusual in the sense that the deaths occurred, because year after year we have seen the numbers of women who are the victims of domestic abuse. But I think this coalition of women has decided that surely this was the time, after the horrors of this summer, to approach a government that claimed it was interested in dealing with violence and to make a very clear case for what needed to be done to try not just to deal with victims once they are victims, because too often that's too late, but in fact to prevent women being the victims of domestic violence.

I understand that our leader, Dalton McGuinty, and the leader of the New Democrats or this representative of the New Democrats were very quick to endorse the recommendations that were brought forward by this coalition of women because it might be seen as somewhat unusual to bring about a coalition, let alone to find a consensus among them. For our party, and I believe for the New Democratic Party, endorsement of those recommendations was consistent with our belief that much more had to be done.

The response was not as enthusiastic. In fact, if we were to look at the response we've seen since then, I would have to point to the fact that women's centres were cut this week. Four more women's centres experienced cuts. The women's centres in my community at least, the women's centres that are able to reach out in a truly preventive way to provide women with the information and the awareness and the support they need, won't be able to keep going with the cuts. We've spoken to them. As my colleague indicated, we visited with the women's centre, as well as the women's shelter, in my community just a few weeks ago, and the women's centre said to us, "We don't know whether or not we're going to get renewed funding from government, and if we don't get renewed funding from government, we don't think we can keep our doors open."

The minister responsible for women's issues talked about the fact that the women's directorate had increased funding. Why would you shut down something which is working effectively in order to put more money into something where we haven't even seen—this isn't my critic area, but I haven't seen any indication of how this increased funding for the women's directorate is to be spent. All I know for sure is that the women's centre in Thunder Bay made it very clear to us they would not be able to continue providing support, information and awareness-building for women if they didn't get renewed funding. Indeed, the response of the government this week to the message that came from that coalition of women's groups was to cut the funding for the women's centre in Thunder Bay and in three other communities.

Michele Landsberg noted in her column recently that on the very day of the women's lobby action, the city of Toronto's homelessness report noted that there has been no increase in the 320 beds in assaulted women's shelters in Toronto since 1992. The spillover of a further 300

assaulted women and children is crammed into the city's homeless shelters.

One of the things my colleague just spoke about that struck me as well on the visit to Thunder Bay was when we were told that the number of people waiting to get into the women's shelter in my community is actually down. In fact, they weren't full the day that we visited. That's very unusual.

But the shocking thing they told us was that the number of women calling in crisis and asking for help had increased exponentially. The message is very clear: women are less able now than they were even a few years ago—this has been an ongoing crisis for women, but it's even worse now than it was a few years ago. They are afraid to leave the abusive situation.

We were concerned a few years ago, just a handful of years ago, with the cuts to women's shelters and the 5% cut to rape crisis centres. We were concerned that with the kinds of cuts that were taking place, there wouldn't be the front-line services there for women who were able to leave abusive situations and seek that support and help. We continue to have that concern. One of the requests from the coalition of women was to restore the 5% that was cut from rape crisis centres.

We are certainly concerned about the fact that the funding for counselling programs for women in second-stage housing was completely eliminated by this government a few years ago, because we know how much more difficult that makes it for women to establish independent lives if they're successful in leaving an abusive situation.

But it is shocking to think that an emergency shelter might not be fully occupied—even though women are clearly in crisis, because they're calling the shelters—because women don't feel they've got the support in the community to allow them to safely leave that abusive situation.

What we're starting to see now, after these last five years of expressing concerns about what would happen to women with the Conservative government's cuts to those front-line services, is that we're starting to see the impact.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): We increased funding.

Mrs McLeod: The minister opposite wants to interject and say that they've increased funding. If the minister would like to become part of the debate, I would love to have a one-to-one debate.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mrs McLeod: I'm happy to debate him, sir.

The Acting Speaker: It's much better if it's one at a time.

Mrs McLeod: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think the member opposite is very anxious to talk about the increase in funding that government has made to help women who are in abusive situations. I would suggest that the government's initiatives are clearly outlined in the statement that the Attorney General made when he introduced this bill, because the Attorney General quite

clearly said, "We have taken a leadership role in the area of domestic violence."

Am I paying him tribute? Not really, because the minister went on to say, "We've created and expanded the domestic violence courts program and made it the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Canada." Earlier this afternoon, I said that we had acknowledged at the time that that was a commendable action, although I continue to regret the fact that there is not a domestic violence court in northwestern Ontario. I believe if there is going to be access for women who are victims of violence, it should be equitable access across the province. That's certainly not the case for women in my part of the province right now. Nevertheless, it's a laudable program and we'll continue to press to have it extended to northwestern Ontario.

We've also said that we can support the direction of this legislation insofar as it goes. When I was campaigning as leader of our party in 1995, one of the things we had called for was the requirement that there would be no bail granted to perpetrators of violence who had broken a peace bond or a restraining order. I understand that may require some changes in the Criminal Code of Canada and I would second the actions of the government in looking for those kinds of changes.

I have a different view about the willingness of the federal government to provide support for those changes. I happen to know that the government is looking very seriously at the kinds of requests for Criminal Code changes that this government has requested of the federal government. I'm actually looking forward to seeing the symposium that I understand the federal government is holding on domestic violence—or planning to hold—later on this year. I don't have the exact date, but I trust that when that particular symposium is set up, the Ontario government will be well-represented and participating in the kinds of changes we all want to see in legislation federally as well as provincially that would provide some greater protection for women who are the victims of domestic abuse.

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I have no quarrel with changes in the justice system. Where I have a quarrel with this government, and it is a serious quarrel, is that the cuts they have made that have a direct effect on women who are in abusive situations are to the very services and community supports that would allow women to leave abusive situations so they are not victims on a continuing basis. How do we prevent women and their children from being the victims of abuse?

If I can return to my concern about the impact of the Harris government cuts on front-line services and what we're seeing happen five years after those cuts, and return to the fact that we learned in Thunder Bay that the crisis calls to emergency shelters have significantly increased while the number of people actually waiting for an opportunity to go into a shelter is down, there can be no conclusion other than the fact that women are afraid to leave abusive situations because they don't know

whether or not they can get that support in the community.

My colleague made reference to one of the first actions of the Harris government when they cut the welfare support by over 21%. If you're a woman in a situation where you're abused but you've got a small family, you know that leaving that abusive situation means that you've got to provide for your family—and I'm not going to take time in this debate to get into the incredible challenges that women face in getting child support once they have left a situation. Women know that they are going to have to find ways of supporting themselves and their family if they have the courage to leave that abusive situation. They know that even if they can get into a shelter and get that emergency support, it's going to be almost impossible for them to find housing. If they do find the second-stage housing as a transition to fully independent lives in the community, they know they're not going to have the counselling support that would help them take those next steps to independence. They know that when they're out on their own, if they're not in an economically independent situation, they're not going to have enough support from the social security system here, from the welfare system, from family benefits, with a 21% cut; they're not going to have the kind of support they need in order to provide adequately for their children or for themselves. So of course they're hesitant to leave even the most abusive situations.

My colleague has spoken very eloquently, as somebody who has been in the practice of psychology for some time, about how difficult it is for anyone to leave an abusive situation. It was many years ago when I worked in a children's aid setting where I saw the kinds of impact on children continuing to live in a house where there was spousal abuse. My experience is so much less and so much more distant than that of my colleague, but I remember going and sitting down in the living room with a woman who was clearly in an abusive situation and asking her why she wouldn't leave. She said, "I just can't. I don't know how." As my colleague has said, the family bond is very strong. The commitments, the psychological ties are very difficult to step away from. Women in those situations have so often, because they are the victims of a power imbalance, come to see themselves as somehow at fault. It's not just children who think that they've been bad and that's why they're being punished; women have those same kinds of feelings. They need a tremendous amount of support if they are going to step out of an abusive situation and yet that support is not being provided in the way in which it should be.

One of the other groups that we visited in Thunder Bay is working with women to help them establish independent businesses. That's certainly something which deserves support, because the more economic independence women can have, the more they'll be enabled to step away from situations in which they are being physically or mentally abused.

I want to return to the request that the coalition made just a couple of weeks ago that this legislation simply is no answer to. The kinds of things that the coalition was looking for were money for a multilingual, province-wide assaulted women's helpline; second-stage supportive housing for women moving on from homeless shelters; restoration of the 5% cuts to rape crisis centres with additional funds for community outreach; more cultural and sign language interpreters for assaulted women in family courts; more legal aid for family law and victim witnesses, because if we are going to have improvements to the justice system women need to have access to the legal aid so they can avail themselves of the justice system; a cost-of-living adjustment for welfare rates; an end to provincial clawbacks of federal child tax credits; money for community-based shelters and anti-violence advocacy work; stronger measures to protect women who are sexually harassed at work.

It's sad really, when you realize how many of those requests relate directly back to programs that were in place five years ago and that have been cut by this government. Maybe that's why they were so reluctant to respond to what seemed to be such important requests from this coalition of women's groups.

Michele Landsberg notes that the Tories not only refused to respond positively but they did re-announce the \$10 million that they'd promised in the last budget to fight domestic violence. If I can quote her, she says, "The Tories are nothing if not environmentally canny. They reduce, reuse and recycle every promise until it's worn as thin as the paper it's written on."

Eileen Morrow of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses told the crowd at the rally that women were desperately disappointed after all the killing of women that we've seen.

On September 8, Mike Harris said he would make the prevention of domestic violence a priority for the fall session. If this is an example of his commitment, the women of Ontario have much to fear.

I want to quote further from the women who were at that rally. A Mrs Khosia, in recognizing that only about 10% of women in abusive relationships actually turn to the police and the courts, said, "What is the point of putting into place all kinds of legislation that women cannot access because their access to legal aid supports and to advocates, who would help them actually even get these restraining orders in the first place, is so greatly reduced since this government has come into power?"

Eileen Morrow, again recognizing that the vast majority of victims of domestic violence don't touch the criminal justice system and that this legislation is doing nothing for that balance of 98% of the women who are not accessing the court system, complained that the government is failing to help women in abusive relationships because it's not providing the money needed for shelters and crisis hotlines. If I can quote her, she said:

"When women were being murdered this summer, crisis lines at shelters and beds at shelters were overwhelmed. The crisis lines couldn't take all the calls. The

assaulted women's helpline in Toronto was overwhelmed with calls. To me, that's an indication of what women are asking for."

I want to believe that the government is seriously concerned about helping women who are victims of domestic abuse, women who are victims of violence. I want to believe the words they put forward in bringing forward their legislation in saying that dealing with domestic violence is a priority for the government. I want to be able to support this legislation even though it deals with such a small part of what's needed. I want to be able to support it in the knowledge that this is but one small part of what the Ontario government is committed to do to prevent more women from fatally being the victims of domestic violence. But I know that unless we see some significant responses from the government to all of the issues that have not been addressed and cannot be addressed in legislation—cannot be addressed by a change in either provincial law or in federal Criminal Code law, changes to the front-line services that provide the support that women need to allow them to leave abusive situation—unless we see that, it's going to be hard for me to believe that this is a government which is serious about making domestic violence a priority.

I would be—saddened is not a strong enough word—on behalf of the women who were represented through the coalition, on behalf of the women who have found the courage to leave abusive situations and sought shelter only to find themselves unable to establish independent lives and have had to return to abusive situations. I would be horrified, distraught, to think that the government feels they have addressed the issue of domestic violence with these two small steps to change legislation.

I would hope that, accompanying this legislation as the debate goes on, we'll hear significant announcements from the government to address the real issues that will prevent the victimization of women who are victims of domestic violence.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Questions and comments?

Ms Lankin: I am in complete agreement with the comments that have been made by my colleagues in the official opposition. I believe that the essential nature of this bill is such that it affects such a small segment of activity in the criminal justice system with respect to domestic violence, and the criminal justice system is of help to such a small segment of abused women, that its impact will be negligible.

I wish that we were having a debate about restraining orders—now we're calling them intervention orders—versus bail orders, versus peace bonds, and understanding—and I wish I had faith that the government members understood—that this is at the lowest end of the list of priorities for the criminal justice system. I wish we were having a discussion about the May-Iles recommendation that the Attorney General actually initiate education programs for judges and justices of the peace so that they don't release on bail people who pose a safety

risk. The Attorney General says, "They're independent. We can't do that." But as pointed out in the coroner's inquest jury recommendations, the Attorney General has done that with respect to aboriginal justice issues. Why can't we have the debate and hear from the Attorney General why he won't enact that recommendation?

I wish we were talking about the Solicitor General sending out standards of practice to municipal police forces to direct that it should be the rare circumstance in which an accused abuser would ever be released under an order from the officer in charge, yet that was the very first instance of Gillian Hadley's killer. What happened? Released by the officer in charge, with conditions which he violated; released again on bail, with conditions which he violated; and he went and killed Gillian Hadley.

I wish we were talking about directions from the Attorney General to crown attorneys that they insist on a risk assessment being done before a show-cause bail hearing, that they adjourn the bail hearing until the risk assessment is done and that the person be detained in detention until the risk assessment is done. I wish we were hearing that there were more than two risk assessment units in this province, that that was being expanded so that we can actually have information—good, solid information—being presented to the judiciary as to whether this individual constitutes a risk or not. Instead, we have a commitment to ask the federal government to change the onus of burden with respect to safety risks at a show-cause hearing.

That's OK. There's stuff you could be doing. You're not. I'd like answers to that.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Most of the members from the Liberal caucus have talked about violence against women, and indeed in domestic violence that is a large percentage of the violence in today's society, although I was telling some of my colleagues in an aside that I was in a shopping plaza the other day and I saw this woman beating her child—not beating her child but striking her child.

So there's all kinds of domestic violence in our society today, and a lot of it's unexplained. A lot of it can be predicted; we hear of repeat types of offences and how those things should be dealt with. There are a number of situations where there is no sign of mental illness, there's no sign of violence, and families are killed. They're just wiped out, which is just horrifying.

We had an instance in my riding just outside of Orangeville a few years ago where some man killed his wife, killed his children, killed his dog, set the place on fire and killed himself. There really wasn't too much sign of mental illness or violence. So clearly we have a problem. I don't think the Attorney General thinks that this bill is perfect. There may be room for improvements, but it is a start and it's a good start. I'm pleased that members of the opposition, at least those who have spoken thus far, have indicated that they're going to support this bill. We've got a long way to go. I guess the only comment I could have to the various members who have spoken is that it's not just violence by men against women; it's all

domestic violence. That's what we have to attend to and that's what this bill is dealing with.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I want to compliment and indeed thank the three members of my caucus who just spoke—the members for St Paul, Hamilton Mountain and Thunder Bay-Atikokan—for their insightful and very sensitive remarks because what is incredibly clear is that so much more needs to be done. This government needs to be persuaded, obviously, that while this legislation—yes, we are inclined to support it, because the law-and-order measures that are in it I think are necessary, but they need to clearly understand that they need to be in addition to, rather than an alternative to, the community investments that we know are needed in terms of emergency shelters, in terms of rape counselling lines, in terms of second-stage housing.

That's what probably frustrates us the most on this side of the House: we've watched over the last five years the government essentially eliminating so much support for those women who most desperately need it. As my colleagues pointed out—certainly the members for Hamilton Mountain and Thunder Bay-Atikokan—the vast majority of women in this situation do not even report the abuse because they are terribly conscious of the fact that they don't have a real alternative in terms of their own future. They don't have the real belief that they can actually develop an independent life, and that's because the support system is not in place. That is absolutely something that this government has some responsibility to try and deal with.

It did begin with the cut of 21.6% from the social assistance payments back in 1995, the first decision this government took, and it continued with the cutting of funding to women's shelters and the elimination of support for second-stage housing.

There is absolutely no question that we need to make this government understand that while we are inclined to support this bill, there is so much more that needs to be done and so much more understanding that needs to be there, and we are going to continue to call on them to bring that stuff forward.

Mr Martiniuk: I've listened intently to the excellent comments made by all in regard to this debate. One thing this bill does—I've already given a number of things it does but one important thing it does is educate. I think it shows the intent of not just the government but of this House that the crime of domestic violence is repugnant and will not be tolerated by our society.

It comes to mind because a little while ago I was having a discussion, not in regard to this bill but about domestic violence, with a lawyer, not a member of the public. This person said something that was a little strange. He said that domestic violence was of a different character than an ordinary assault. He meant that it was somewhat diminished and that it was somehow excused or that it somehow was to be understood, whereas violence on the street was not. That made me think that if a lawyer with some experience can have that type of train

of thought, then we do have a long way to go in educating the public so they can understand that domestic violence is repugnant. It is worse, in my opinion, than a criminal assault. It should be treated seriously and perhaps has not been treated as seriously in the past as it should be.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Bryant: I was hoping to hear from the government side something to the effect of, "No, of course not, this isn't our only response. We're not just going to announce, pre-announce and reannounce about domestic violence courts. We're not just going to pass an act which addresses a few due process issues for the small minority of victims of domestic violence who actually turn to our criminal justice system. We're not going to abandon the victims of domestic violence." But I didn't hear that. Instead I heard that domestic violence is repugnant. I would hope we all agree on that. We don't need to have a bill to present an occasion to say that. What we need, and what we in the official opposition are calling for, is simply that the government stop devoting all its efforts on this topic to dealing with the matter of retribution and instead start trying to prevent domestic violence.

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Again, there's no real magic to trying to figure out how we do that. We have a report that was specifically commissioned by the Attorney General to deal with all the recommendations from the Arlene May inquest. Let me read the words of the chairman as I wind up. Madam Justice Lesley Baldwin said, in the Baldwin report that's been gathering dust on the Attorney General's desk for a year now, "In presenting our implementation plan, we are calling upon the public, partners in the justice system, government ministries, social service agencies who provide services to victims and perpetrators, educators and health care professionals to recognize and provide protection to victims of domestic violence."

This bill doesn't do that. This bill, again, responds to a problem. I'm sorry to say it's another Band-Aid. I look forward to and hope that the government will revisit this issue in a serious and substantive way. Stop talking about blaming other levels of government. Stop talking only about response. Start doing what the committee recommended.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Lankin: Just moments ago in this Legislature, the member for Dufferin-Peel said that domestic violence is not just about male violence towards women. Those words chilled my heart. What's behind that statement? What does that mean? Why is that a focus to bring to this discussion? If there is not, among the members of this Legislative Assembly, an understanding of the unique and heinous nature of domestic assault and of intimate femicide, how can the women of this province have any hope or any faith that the legislators of this province, the people who enact the laws of good governance, understand the root causes or the measures that need to be taken to prevent further such actions?

Is it because we allow this group of abused women to be nameless and faceless? I have a number of remarks I want to make to the legislation, but that remark said to me that we cannot allow them to be nameless and faceless women.

On March 8, 1996, Arlene May was murdered by Randy Iles. There was a coroner's inquest into that. On July 2, 1998, the recommendations of that jury came forward. I've often heard claims of huge percentages—80% and 90%—of those recommendations having been implemented by this government. That's debatable. It's truly debatable. But if it were the case, what has been the result in Ontario?

Let's remember. Let's not allow them to be nameless and faceless.

Leslie Williams, 32, Niagara Falls, July 1998: Leslie was found in her home, dead of head injuries. Her husband's body was later pulled from the Niagara River. He had jumped from the Horseshoe Falls.

Beverly Gillett, Scarborough, July 1998: Beverly died from stab wounds to the neck. Her husband has been charged with second-degree murder. A neighbour rescued their 2-year-old granddaughter and carried her out of the house to safety.

Linda Vickery, 38, Toronto, August 1998: Linda died of multiple stab wounds. Her body was found in the kitchen of her apartment. Police issued a warrant for her boyfriend's arrest.

Elizabeth Bodnar, 61, Mississauga, August 1998: Elizabeth was found dead in her townhouse. She died of massive head injuries. Her 75-year-old male companion, Steven Orban, was charged with second-degree murder.

Jennifer Copithorn, 24, Bowmanville, August 1998: Jennifer was ambushed and stabbed to death in front of her co-workers on her way to work. Her former boyfriend, Robert Appleton, was charged with first-degree murder.

Anna Pietras, 38, mother of one, Etobicoke, September 1998: Anna disappeared after leaving for work. Her body has not been found. Her estranged husband was later found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Barbara Teske, 38, mother of two, Hawkesbury, September 1998: The remains of Barbara's body were found in a ditch on a rural road not far from her home. Her husband, Peter Teske, was charged with second-degree murder.

Mitzi MacDougall, 27, Red Lake, September 1998: Mitzi was drowned in the bathtub of her home. Her husband, Kenneth J. MacDougall, was charged with first-degree murder.

Micheline Cuerrier, 25, Wakefield, October 1998: Micheline was slashed to death as she was on her way to work. Her ex-boyfriend is charged with first-degree murder.

Kathleen Hart, 35, mother of one, Toronto, November 1998: Kathleen was beaten to death in an alley in the financial district of Toronto. Her companion, Martin Blackwind, was charged with second-degree murder. The couple was homeless.

Mandana Rastan, 43, mother of two, Richmond Hill, December 1998: Mandana was strangled in her home, where police also found her husband with a self-inflicted stab wound to the chest. Medhi Merkhandan was charged with first-degree murder.

Janet Anita Reynolds, 31, Scarborough, January 1999: Janet was found shot to death in her apartment. Her boyfriend, Steven Morrison, was charged with second-degree murder.

Brenda Chillingworth, 38, mother of two, Lucan, January 1999: Brenda was found shot to death outside a home north of London. A man found nearby was not identified. Police believe the deaths were a murder-suicide.

Betty Higgins, 69, Niagara Falls, January 1999: Betty was severely beaten and died later in hospital. Her partner, Govril Durciul, was charged with second degree murder.

Elena Nusca, 50, Hamilton, February 1999: Elena was stabbed to death in her home. Her husband, Mario Nusca, was charged with second-degree murder.

Shirley Taylor, 36, Sudbury, February 1999: Shirley died from loss of blood as a result of a cut artery in her neck. Her common-law partner, David John Saunders, was charged with second-degree murder.

Renate Marie Steinhoefer, 66, Manitoulin Island, February 1999: Renate was shot to death. Her husband, Mathias Steinhoefer, was charged with first-degree murder.

Maria Wong, 44, Markham, February 1999: Maria was found stabbed to death in the garage of her home. Her husband, Shu Kwan Wong, was charged with the crime in August 1999. Police allege he hired several people to carry out the murder.

Heather Burton, 43, Bond Head, March 1999: Heather was shot to death. Her husband, Bill Burton, then killed himself.

Sandra Quigley, 32, Scarborough, March 1999: Sandra was found dead of asphyxia in her apartment. Anton Franz Lorenz was recently convicted of second-degree murder.

Melissa Pajkowski, 21, Thornhill, April 1999: Melissa's body was found in a van after a traffic accident. She had been shot to death. Her ex-boyfriend, Peter Morrisey, was found in the van with self-inflicted wounds.

Sabrina and Nassima Benkartoussa, 34 and 37, Toronto, April 1999: Sabrina and her sister were slashed to death in their high-rise apartment. Sabrina's estranged husband then jumped to his death. Sabrina was the mother of a seven-month-old baby. Her husband had recently been arrested for assault against Sabrina and was under a court order not to contact her.

Halina Deborah Abraham, 30, mother of one, Scarborough, April 1999: Halina was found dead in a parking lot in a van with her ex-partner, Anthony Alfred Williams, who had committed suicide. Williams was on parole at the time.

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Katherine Wellwood, 54, Cookstown, April 1999: Katherine died of a gunshot wound. Her husband of 31 years, Geoffrey Allan Wellwood, was charged.

Abigail Manu-Acheampong, 31, Mississauga, May 1999: Abigail was found dead in an apartment but police could not identify the cause of death. Her husband, Charles "Stanley" Gray, was charged with second-degree murder.

Donna Theresa Young, 32, Hamilton, June 1999: Donna was strangled to death in the dining room of her home. Her husband, Rodney James Young, was charged with first-degree murder.

Cindy Stevens, 35, mother of two, Niagara Falls, June 1999: Cindy was found dead in an apartment by her teenaged son. Her common-law partner, James Anthony Hannah, was charged with first-degree murder.

Marjorie (Marg) Ellis-Byerly, 58, Pinewood, August 1999: Marg was found dead of a gunshot wound. Her husband, Norman Byerly, was also found dead of a gunshot wound, along with another man. Police believe it was a double murder-suicide.

Jenny Figueroa, 32, Toronto, August 1999: Jenny's body was found stuffed in a suitcase and dumped off Highway 401 near Kingston. Her boyfriend, John Errol McLeod, has been charged with second-degree murder.

Christine Norcia, 22, Toronto, October 1999: Christine was stabbed to death. Her boyfriend, Nicola Capparelli, was charged with first-degree murder.

Dori-Lynne Caroll, 30, mother of two, Thunder Bay, October 1999: Dori-Lynne was found strangled in her home. Her two children were asleep in their bedroom at the time. Her estranged husband, Bryan Caroll, was later found in his truck, dead of a self-inflicted shotgun wound.

Robin Pope, early 50s, St Catharines, October 1999: Robin was stabbed to death on the front step of her home after a man tried to break in. Her ex-boyfriend, Michael Juanetty, was charged with first-degree murder.

Valerie Lucas, 23, mother of two, Oshawa, December 1999: Valerie was shot point-blank three times in a parking lot where she had gone to provide child access to her ex-partner. Robert Richard Bateman was charged with first-degree murder. He fled the scene with the children and later turned himself in. The children were found later in a hotel room and turned over to child welfare.

Shirley Liu, 28, Toronto, January 2000: The body of Shirley was found slashed and stuffed into a suitcase. A warrant was issued for the arrest of her boyfriend, Charley Cai, who disappeared after the murder.

LaMura Meere, 75, Sarnia, January 2000: LaMura was beaten to death. Her husband, Arthur Meere, was charged with second-degree murder.

Colleen Richardson Luciano, 33, Woodbridge, January 2000: Colleen was stabbed to death and her body dumped in a dumpster. Her husband, Michael Luciano, was charged with second-degree murder.

Fengzhi Huang, 36, mother of one daughter, seven, Kanata, February 2000: Fengzhi was strangled to death. Her husband, Yonsheng Liu, was charged with first-degree murder and then released on bail. Her daughter was placed in the care of child welfare.

Hemoutie Raghunauth, 28, Pickering, mother of one, May 2000: Hemoutie was poisoned on Mother's Day. An autopsy showed that she was pregnant with her second child at the time. Her husband, Ganeshram Raghunauth, was charged with first-degree murder two months later.

Harjaap (Jay) Bolla, 29, Mississauga, June 2000: Harjaap was stabbed to death and then moved to a van, which was then set on fire. Balbir (Bobby) Singh, her ex-boyfriend, then killed himself in the van by fire. Singh had been charged with criminal harassment and was under a peace bond not to go near Harjaap or her family.

Gillian Hadley, 35, Pickering, June 2000: Gillian was shot to death in a desperate bid to save herself and her baby on a street in Pickering. Her ex-partner, Ralph Hadley, dragged her back into her house after neighbours took her child to safety, then killed her and himself. Ralph Hadley had breached several court orders and was out on bail on charges of assault, criminal harassment and breaching orders.

Bohumila Luft, 27, and her four children—Daniel, seven, Nicole, five, Peter, three, and David, three months—Kitchener, July 2000: Bohumila was stabbed to death. Her four children were then shot to death. Her husband, Vilem, then shot himself.

Laurie Lynn Vollmershausen, 35, mother of two children, Stratford, July 2000: Laurie was stabbed to death. Her two children, aged eight and 10, ran from the house to get help before the murder. Police found her partner, Joseph Theodore Willemsen, in the house with self-inflicted, but not life-threatening, wounds. He was charged with first-degree murder.

Jennifer Zumach, 21, mother of one child, Orangeville, January 1999: Jennifer was missing since early 1999 but was not found until September 2000 when her head was discovered in the box on the back of her ex-partner's motorcycle. Her remains were later found buried. Her partner, James Vernon Randall, who reported Jennifer missing, was charged with first-degree murder.

Do you think this bill would have saved one of those women's lives? Do you believe it is good enough to wrap a mantle of a law-and-order justice response, when you're being told over and over and over again by the experts in the field, the women who themselves are abused, the women who are on the front lines working with them, that that isn't going to help save women's lives? Do you think it's appropriate to rattle off a long list of all of what you call accomplishments? In one of the lists I heard one of the members talk about money being invested. It was core funding that had been in place for years that was actually reduced under your government, and still annualized funding hasn't kept up with the need or the times.

And yet you've the gall, in the face of the nature of this issue, to misuse that kind of information to present a

picture to the public. Of course, we can never do enough. That shouldn't be an excuse for inaction. I hear minister after minister after minister say, "There's more we need to do, but we're doing more than any other government." Bull. First, it's not true; second, there's a blueprint for action.

I'm not just talking about the women's coalitions that were here two weeks ago who put forward emergency measures for this Legislature to adopt and to implement this fall session. I will talk about that. But go back to July 2, 1998, after a coroner's inquest into the murder of Arlene May. Go back to the jury recommendations. Look to the recommendations you have refused to implement, that over and over again you've been called on to implement, that time and again I've raised in this House in questions to ministers, where I have never once had a minister respond to the actual question that was asked. I have never once had a minister say, "We're not prepared to do that and this is why." I have had ministers duck the questions. I have had ministers bring out their long list of all of your so-called accomplishments. I've had ministers quote statistics at me of what you have implemented from May-Iles.

What you won't do is answer the key question of why this government is not prepared to address the social community and economic security that women need, the power they need in their own hands to protect themselves.

Please tell me how this bill provides a response that even begins to be adequate, even begins to acknowledge the serious nature of this issue in our society, in our communities, in our neighbourhoods and in our families. Tell me how this bill does that.

Great fanfare, another great showpiece that you can stand behind and say, "We're doing something." It is almost inconsequential. What does it take to get people to wake up and say, "Let's do something different. Let's bring people around the table. Let's respond to the issues that have been put forward as the package of emergency measures to save women's lives. Let's have a discussion to understand the root causes and to see if our actions are actually addressing those root causes"?

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I want one government minister to tell me why they won't implement the measures that we have raised over and over again. I want them to tell me why they believe, contrary to all the expert advice—to the May-Iles recommendations, to the joint committee report recommendations, to the coalition of women's organizations out there on the front line—contrary to what they say, that this will save women's lives. You tell me why it won't. If you can't, how can you continue on, knowing that your could be doing something that will save women's lives?

I'm almost at a loss for words in trying to understand, in this parliamentary system, how we reach a government when the system has become so routine, so blasé. You know, this is just a leadoff speaker's debate. I got a request today from across the floor: "How many speakers

do you need? Can we wrap it up tomorrow? Can we get this thing passed tonight?" Why, because people are willing to say, "If there's a shred of something that's supportable, we'll take the step to support them"?

I wish we could create a forum where those women's organizations that came forward, that wanted to have an opportunity to speak to all three parties—I wish we'd create the forum where we all come together in the same room and where we listen, where we are educated, where we take that information and we say, "We're committed to doing something and we're going to act on it together." How, in this place, in this process of debate, do we cut through the partisan nature of how we react to issues, of how we criticize government, of how government defends itself, of how it spins out its information and we respond to that? How do we cut through that, when surely there are members in the Legislature on all sides who, like me, are sickened to hear that list, those names, to imagine those faces of women and children, to understand that domestic assault and intimate femicide is a reality in our communities? The fear, the horror that families are living in, that women are living in: that they are next; that their names and faces are going to be next on this list. And we respond with a bill that—I'm not criticizing your bill; like I said, it's almost inconsequential.

Please, is there a way that we can break through the great divide of how many feet across this floor and take the steps that are necessary? I'll do what it takes. I'll stop my public criticism on these issues if we can get a working table and bring the women to the working table and make some progress. I'm not the only one who feels this passion, and I am sure of that. Where are the rest of you? Do something. Speak up. Force your government to respond on these broader issues.

I've used only a portion of my time, which may, depending on when the bill gets called back, be shared with the member from Niagara Centre. I hope I have a further opportunity, however, to finish these leadoff remarks, or my part of them, to talk about the response that's needed. I've done it before in the House, but perhaps we have to do it one more time. Perhaps I will undertake to send a copy of the emergency measures to all members of the Legislature, so everyone's got it handy in their desk and can take it to caucus meetings and can raise the issue of an all-party approach.

Sometimes it feels like there is nothing left to say. Sometimes it feels like there is no way for your voice to be heard. I know that there are thousands and thousands of women in this province who feel like their voices aren't being heard. I hope collectively we might be able to open up and listen and do something about what they're saying. I'll continue when we next return to this bill.

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

The House adjourned at 1756.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
82	4301	2	45	tions as made by the member opposite today. I think they

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