



**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

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

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

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

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 17 October 2000**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 17 octobre 2000**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 17 October 2000

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

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*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**PROPERTY TAXATION**

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Some three years ago, the government tinkered with the old property tax system and in its haste created an even bigger problem. By the end of this year, the province must review again how properties are assessed, and as a remedial measure the government is now considering a 5% tax increase for stores, offices and factories.

A 5% annual tax increase on stores, offices and factories would affect small businesses and small business owners in a very adverse and dramatic way. This will surely sound a death knell for many small businesses in our province. A 5% annual increase in property taxes would impact on thousands of small, local community stores that are so vital to thriving and vibrant neighbourhoods. Small commercial properties in the city of Toronto already pay a disproportionately high tax rate compared to counterparts in the GTA and other parts of our province.

I call on you, Premier, on behalf of the many thousands of small businesses, to abandon any idea to impose a 5% annual tax increase and stop penalizing already overburdened small businesses in the province of Ontario.

**LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY**

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** Last Thursday, newspapers carried pictures of protesters at Toronto city hall. On page 5 of the Toronto Sun was a photo of the leader of the third party participating in the protest. Not only that, but he was ejected from the council chambers for his unruly behaviour.

What sort of message is the leader of the third party sending to the public? The message that I think he's conveying is that it's OK to use temper tantrums and unruly, mob-like behaviour to get your own way.

One would think that a person in his position, in his role, in his stature as a member of the Ontario Parliament and a leader of the NDP, would at least show respect for elected city officials and for the political process. I should think that the leader of the third party would have

an understanding of how the political process works, but his unseemly behaviour seems to indicate something else: he'd rather play to the audience back home.

Quite frankly, I'm embarrassed both for him and for the New Democratic Party. Is it any wonder that there is a widespread lack of public respect for the politicians and for the public process?

**HIGHWAY 407**

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** The sale of Highway 407 and the decision by the Harris government to exempt it from paying property taxes has meant the loss of \$90 million per year in combined education and municipal taxes.

Pickering town council recently passed a resolution with the intent to recoup lost municipal tax revenue that they believe was unjustly taken away by the Harris government. The town of Pickering views the exemption of the 407 from paying property taxes as nothing less than a taxpayer rip-off. The exemption places the 407 consortium in the same class as charities, churches, hospitals and schools. The 407 should be subject to taxes, just as railways and utilities are.

This SkyDome was a public asset. It was sold to private interests but still pays property taxes.

The newly privatized Ontario Hydro was not granted an exemption under the Assessment Act and currently pays over \$68 million a year in property taxes.

At a time when municipalities are struggling with the costs of provincial downloading, this decision is nothing short of a taxpayer rip-off. Worst of all, it creates a terrible precedent for future privatizations, if any are done. This decision was a huge mistake by this government and it will cost future generations of Ontarians hundreds of millions of dollars. You should be ashamed of that.

**COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM**

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** It is with great pride that I stand before you today to tell you about the town of Meaford. In only its second year of competition, Meaford, which is located in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, won its category in the national Communities in Bloom program for the year 2000. The town was competing in the population category of 3,000 to 5,000.

The town itself was showcased recently at the 2000 national editions awards ceremony held in Edmonton,

Alberta. Members of the Meaford Bloom Committee were there to proudly accept the award on behalf of every resident in Meaford. Indeed, this award was due to each and every resident of Meaford, for the judges were especially impressed with the community involvement, giving the town a mark of 94 out of a possible 100 for this community involvement and winning the town a special mention in the national awards for this as well. In their ruling, the judges noted that almost every citizen appeared to be involved in some aspect of community life.

The judges wrote that the downtown area, with its historic streetscape, is tidy and litter-free, and the new tree and floral plantings add colour and life to the concrete and asphalt. The town is alive with a multitude of colourful flowerbeds, all maintained by volunteers, in public areas. There is a healthy urban forest and trees are well cared for.

Meaford faced stiff competition for the award, facing off with 10 communities, ranging across the country from British Columbia to Newfoundland. Mr Johnson has already told the House about the honour bestowed upon Stratford-St Marys in winning the classic city category.

I would like to extend my congratulations and those of this House to the residents of Meaford for a job well done. Rural Ontario has once again made this province proud.

#### POVERTY

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I am pleased to rise today on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party in support of the United Nations resolution that declares October 17 as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. While the Mike Harris government likes to brag about the economic boom sweeping our province, the sad fact is that many people are being left behind and the number of people living in poverty is on the rise. It's a shameful reality and one that requires action by all levels of government.

Today, the Ontario Association of Food Banks released their report on hunger in Ontario, and the news wasn't good. The use of food banks in our province continues to increase, and 42% of those benefiting from food banks are children. There are increases in the number of employed people using food banks, as well as the number of people who have no income at all. Seniors, who are frequently living on fixed incomes, are using food banks more.

In northern Ontario, the news is even worse. Food bank use is up 15%, partly because food simply costs more in the north. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit recently issued a report that indicated it costs an average of \$545 a month to feed a family of four, \$55 more than it costs elsewhere in the province.

I believe the public expects our government to care and to act to solve these problems. It is said that good governments are defined by how they treat the most

needy in our society. If one accepts that definition, we clearly have failed the test. I believe the neglect of hunger as a health issue and as an object of concern in public policy is unacceptable to all Ontarians. We must simply do better.

1340

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I'm calling upon tenants to help me out. I want tenants—there are 3.3 million tenants in the province of Ontario—to support my Bill 127 that would freeze rents for two years.

It's not a solution. I know that. The Toronto Star in Ontario says it doesn't go far enough. I know it doesn't go far enough, but I also know I can't move that beast on the other side. I can make them a little more reasonable. I can appeal to the public to say it's a reasonable request. Landlords have done well with the Tenant Protection Act. They made huge profits in the last couple of years. They did OK, but the tenants are hurting. The tenants are hurting because your wages have not kept up with the huge rent increases.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Tories don't like tenants.

**Mr Marchese:** Tories passed the bill because they know that tenants don't vote. We want you to vote. We want you to vote and we want you to send a message to this government. One of the ways you can send a message is, support Bill 127. Call the Minister of Housing and tell him he has to support this bill. Call Mike Harris and tell him he has to support this bill because it's the reasonable, fair thing to do. Isn't it, Peter?

**Mr Kormos:** Tell him to resign. Tell Harris to resign.

**Mr Marchese:** It's a fair thing to do. Call me if you want to reach me and let me know what you think: 325-9092. I want your opinion but, more important, tell Mike Harris what you think.

#### QUILTS FOR CANCER

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** As members of the Legislature will know, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I'd like to tell my colleagues about what one of my constituents is doing to fight this disease.

Carol Miller of Russeldale, Ontario, was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 1997. Carol came up with the idea for an exhibit and auction of quilts to generate profits for cancer research. A lifelong quilter herself, Carol knew of the laughter, sharing and support that could result when individuals gathered together for a quilting bee.

She founded the Quilts for Cancer project to support survivors and to support the research that helps them to survive. At her first exhibition, Carol hoped to receive 35 donated quilts. Instead, she received 134. The project has only continued to grow.

This summer the exhibition of quilts was held at the armoury in Stratford. The exhibit moved on to Toronto, and the quilts are currently on display at Casa Loma until the end of October. On November 18, a gala dinner and quilt auction will be held in Stratford, and 100% of the money raised will go directly to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Church groups, women's institutes, community service clubs and individuals from all across Ontario have contributed to the project. I applaud Carol Miller for her efforts in fighting breast cancer and I congratulate her for her hard work and dedication to this important cause. Carol Miller is truly a survivor.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** Today I want to speak about my deep concern for the needs of the disabled in my riding of Chatham-Kent Essex and of course all of Ontario. I have met with many parents in the past who rely on the special services at home program to maintain disabled children at home. Though they save this government millions of dollars, this program is being systematically starved. Parents are at the breaking point.

Last week I attended a public meeting hosted by local community living associations. The families of disabled clients served by community living, many of whom live in group homes, have also had their funding strangled by the Harris government, from \$500,000 last year to only \$114,600 this year. It will not even begin to address the highest one or two priorities, our local agency says. To add insult to injury, the aging parents of the 300 remaining residents at Southwest Regional Centre are faced with recurring rumours that the centre will be closed.

At a public meeting I hosted last week, parents said residents must be allowed to remain at SRC. The final 300 are faced with the most serious care requirements and are best served by the excellent staff in the close community at SRC.

I am meeting with Minister Baird this week and I hope I can convince him that all the disabled children and adults in my community urgently require a serious commitment of stable funding. They must have the government's assurance that it will not deny the disabled the dignity, security and care programs they urgently require simply because Mike Harris believes they are not a public priority.

#### OLYMPIC ATHLETES

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** It was very exciting to tune in to the Sydney 2000 Olympics this year, especially since seven of the athletes and coaches were from my riding of Niagara Falls.

Today I rise to take some time to make mention of the participation of four of these athletes in a Canadian basketball program. Nikki Johnson, a graduate of A.N. Myer high school, played for the women's national team. Nikki completed a career at A.N. Myer and went to

Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. She fared very well, along with the rest of the women's team, as a defensive specialist on a team that is young and is going to continue to do better.

On the men's team we had Greg Newton and Pete Gurasci, teammates at A.N. Myer. Greg went on to Duke University for a successful career and is playing pro in Europe and South America. Peter went on to Fairfield University and also Simon Fraser University. Pete had an excellent game, especially against Russia, where he scored an amazing 21 points. Greg had a couple of great games against Angola and Spain.

All three of these athletes followed in the footsteps of A.N. Myer's Jay Triano.

Jay went on to Simon Fraser University after Myer and spent over a decade as the captain of the men's Olympic basketball team.

Jay has brought his tenacity and intelligence as a player to the Olympic team to be a coach now. This team will get better and better. They had the best performance they've had in the Olympics, I think, in the history of men's Olympic basketball. Congratulations to those Niagara Falls performers.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer given by the Minister of Community and Social Services concerning Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As you know, today, October 17, has been declared by the United Nations as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. We know there has been a great increase in poverty in this province certainly over the last several years, and I would like to seek unanimous consent to have all three parties have an opportunity to speak about that issue and our support for that resolution in the House today.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Often if I'm approached before a member of the opposition rises on a request for unanimous consent, all three party House leaders can agree to it. But when we're surprised day after day with requests to put aside other government business in order to have unanimous consent for another idea that is brought from the backbenches of the opposition members, unfortunately we can't accommodate that. We can do it if we have some advance notice, but in this case

there was no advance notice to us. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the past, on other items we have in fact approached the government—not on this particular item—and on many occasions the government indicated to us that they won't agree anyway. It's to the point where there's frustration on this side.

**The Speaker:** I thank all members. Hopefully, the House leaders will get together and agree on it. I know at the end of the day it probably isn't that difficult to do and hopefully the House leaders will be able to agree.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### TORONTO GARBAGE LAKE ACT, 2000

#### LOI DE 2000 SUR LE LAC D'ENFOUISSEMENT DES DÉCHETS DE TORONTO

Mr Ramsay moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 130, An Act to name the Adams Mine the Toronto Garbage Lake, 2000 / Projet de loi 130, Loi nommant la mine Adams lac d'enfouissement des déchets de Toronto.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1349 to 1354.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Lankin, Frances	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 41; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I just felt it would be appropriate to rename the Adams mine

site since it hasn't been an iron ore mine now for 11 years. As you know, presently it is a lake, and as of October 11 Toronto decided to send its garbage up there, therefore making it a garbage lake.

I would seek unanimous consent to have second and third reading today.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? No.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Trade is scheduled to make an announcement at 4 o'clock today with respect to an agreement with truckers. I seek unanimous consent of the House to have the minister give a ministerial statement now, since apparently this deal has been struck.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question today is for the Premier. Premier, if Walkerton tells us anything, it's that we desperately need a plan in Ontario to protect our water. The Provincial Auditor told us the same thing back in 1996, and I ran on a platform in 1999 to introduce, at the soonest possible time, a plan that would protect Ontario's water. But what's at issue here, Premier, is your plan—more importantly, the absence of such a plan. So since we couldn't get one from you, we asked the freedom of information people if they might provide us with a copy of whatever work you are doing over there in your government when it comes to protecting our water.

I have before me a draft copy of the plan. But what's really interesting is that when it comes to the action plan, which is found on page 14 of your draft, it is completely blank. It turns out that you have no action plan. This is your sixth year of government, seven people have died in Walkerton, we've been talking about this issue now for years and years, and you still have no plan to protect Ontario's water. Premier, why are you continuing to fail Ontarians when it comes to protecting their water?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think you're well aware that the Minister of the Environment has outlined a whole range of initiatives that we have taken, even in advance of the very unfortunate situation in Walkerton and as a result as well of the Walkerton situation, which I think we all acknowledge has been a substantial wake-up call for all governments, and indeed all Canadians and all who are concerned in this issue. There's a whole range of initiatives from new standards, new reporting mechanisms, new rules and regulations that need to be followed. I think you're well aware too that there's been a substantial amount of consultation that's been taking place on groundwater, both on quality and quantity. These discussions were actually begun last

spring, pre-Walkerton, and obviously continued post-Walkerton. We are consulting on even further actions that we can take in the future.

1400

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you have been unmasked. This tells us that you have no action plan of any kind whatsoever, and you are now in your sixth year of government. Toto has pulled back the curtain and, like the Wizard of Oz, you are nothing but hot air when it comes to protecting our water. You can tell us what you will, but we now have a copy of your draft plan, and under the section entitled "Action" there is nothing at all. You have not moved forward in any means, way, shape or form to put in place a new law in Ontario that will protect our drinking water. So I ask you again, Premier, why are you continuing to fail Ontarians when it comes to protecting our water?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As I indicated, we've made a number of announcements and a number of initiatives. The Minister of the Environment throughout the summer and again in this Legislature—I don't know what copy of what thing you have, but it's not my plan, it's not the government's plan, so maybe it's your plan. I can't comment on that.

I can tell you—for example, you talk about the last six years—we set up the provincial groundwater monitoring network in March of this year and dedicated some \$6 million to this network. The Ministry of the Environment's been working with conservation authorities and municipalities to monitor ground water levels across the province. You saw the new drinking water standards that were outlined this summer. We have signed agreements, for example, with the Hamilton region, Toronto region, Lake Simcoe region, Gray-Sauble, Grand River, Saugeen Valley, South Nation and Upper Thames conservation authorities. I could go on and on. I'd be happy to repeat the initiatives. At the same time, I think you know we are consulting on even more steps that we can take, and if you have something to contribute, boy, we're glad to hear it.

**Mr McGuinty:** You know, Premier, you're quite right: you can go on and on, but the facts are before you. We got a copy of this document through the freedom of information office. It was supplied by your ministry. It tells us that you have no concrete plan of any kind. The page is completely blank when it comes to protecting Ontario water. It's not that it can't be done, and if you're looking for some advice, as you just mentioned, why don't you look to the BC experience? They've got an action plan and, under their section marked "Action Plan," they've got 58 separate initiatives to protect their drinking water, so it can be done. This, Premier, is what leadership is all about.

I'm asking you again, for the final time on this issue at least today, why do you continue to fail the people of this province? This is the sixth year of your government. Seven people have died in Walkerton, but you continue to fail us by not putting forward a law with real teeth that will protect our drinking water.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me go on: \$4.3 million dollars approved through the groundwater management study involving over 120 municipalities; some \$12.2 million dedicated to groundwater strategy; in 1999 we announced the water-taking transfer regulations to prohibit the transfer of water from Ontario's major basins. So we've been taking a number of actions. This year, as you know, we've placed even more conditions on permits to take water. The Ministry of the Environment continues to meet with stakeholders on this issue. Val Gibbons, right now as we speak, is looking at other jurisdictions, including British Columbia, so we can have not only the steps that we've taken now but absolutely the best assurances into the future.

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** The second question is also for the Premier. I want to move along to another area in which you are failing Ontarians, when it comes particularly to their health and our natural environment. I want to talk about your government's continuing failure to protect our air. Your minister lately has been crowing about some smog plan, which he tells us will be of tremendous benefit to Ontarians. You know what, Premier? There's something he is overlooking and failing to mention, and that is the fact that your smog plan is 100% voluntary. There is no law behind it whatsoever, no teeth of any kind. Your plan to ensure that our air is cleaned up and that we reduce emissions that contribute to smog which makes our people sick and even contributes to premature deaths is voluntary.

I'm asking you now, Premier, once again, to tell us why it is, whether we're talking about protecting our water or cleaning up our air, you are continuing to fail Ontarians.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Drive Clean is not voluntary and has already been touted as the most comprehensive plan certainly in Canada, and indeed of all the states that we border on.

As you know, our minister of both energy and of environment is currently meeting with his counterparts from across the country, where we have taken a leading role for national standards. We have said, even though Ontario's electricity, for example, has the second-lowest emissions per electron in Canada, second only to Quebec, far lower than other provinces, far lower than the all the states around us, that we're prepared to go even lower. But we're asking the federal government to make sure that other provinces have to meet these standards that we're prepared to go to as well, and let's make sure we don't sign a phony-baloney agreement with the United States that asks them to do less than we're doing.

Our Minister of the Environment is taking a leading role in these areas, both on specific power plants that we have here in the province and on the overall pollutants caused by electrons of electricity, where Ontario is far ahead of these other jurisdictions. We'd like to go further. We'd like other jurisdictions to come with us.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, we have become a laughing-stock in North America. You have become a polluter's best friend. There is no more welcoming jurisdiction in all of North America when it comes to pollution than Ontario. That's happened as a result of things you have done. You've made tremendous cuts to the Ministry of the Environment. You've extended welcoming arms to polluters right across North America. We've become the favourite dumping ground for toxic waste in North America. All of this has happened, Premier, on your watch.

I want to talk about your 1996 smog plan. It is completely, absolutely, thoroughly and 100% voluntary. You're the guy who was supposed to get tough on law-breakers. You were going to crack down on lawbreakers. Once again, you've proven that you're all talk and no action.

Tell us again, why is it that when it comes to either our water or our air, you are failing to protect the rights of Ontarians?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Here's what some independent, third party people are saying:

Pollution Probe executive director Ken Ogilvie, May 29, 1998: "Some of the major air pollutants, such as sulphur dioxide and total suspended particulate matter in the air, have gone down significantly," when asked by CBC Radio if Ontario's air quality has improved in the past five to 10 years.

The chair of the Windsor air quality committee, Bill Marra: "Time for finger pointing over. Time for action."

That's why we're in Ottawa taking a leading role offering to reduce our pollutants per electron far below any of the northern states, far below any of the states, including New York, far below all of the other provinces save, I will say, Quebec, which does not have any coal-fire generation and, as you know, has a lot more water generation. So at the same time we're there leading the way, asking the federal government, "Let's have national standards. While Ontario is prepared to lead—we're prepared to lead Canada; we're prepared to lead the United States—let's make sure other jurisdictions do the same," for two reasons: both so our industries aren't found to be uncompetitive because we ask them and we are asking them to do more than other jurisdictions, but also that there's a 50%—

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

Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Well, Premier, it's wonderful for you to quote from Pollution Probe some years ago, but you might want to take a look at their recent criticisms of what you've been doing in our province. They point to the fact that 1,900 Ontarians are dying prematurely every year as a result of breathing bad air. They point to the fact that there has been a 400-fold increase in childhood asthma as a result of breathing bad air.

You can stand up in here and proclaim to the world at large that you are at the cutting edge when it comes to protecting our air and our water, but the facts speak volumes otherwise. We have become a national embar-

assment, and this has happened because you have failed to show any real leadership when it comes to protecting our air and our water.

Premier, open your eyes. Why don't you admit the truth once and for all? When it comes to our air and our water and the legacy that we owe this generation and generations yet to come, you are letting this province down.

1410

**Hon Mr Harris:** I can give you quotes from when you were in government and the disastrous job you did—"Liberal delays in updating air quality standards." You didn't bring updated air quality standards. We have brought updates on the standards. We have set objectives. We have set goals. CEIA Ontario, the Canadian Environment Industry Association, says to Minister Dan Newman in a letter, "Your ministry has shown leadership through its endorsement of the pilot emission reduction trading program that allows emitters to take action to reduce their emissions."

The minister right now is taking action, is leading, is offering to have Ontario go even further, lower than any other jurisdiction right now in Canada, lower than the other provinces are prepared to go. But we're asking for a national plan. We're asking the national government to let's make sure that as our power plants reduce, as our emissions reduce, the same happens in other provinces, and let's not sign an agreement with the United States that they seem to be prepared to sign that says they can pollute far more than we're going to pollute. This is absolute nonsense. It's a lack of leadership, and going into an election, I'm surprised Liberals are so wimpy on the environment.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Premier. I want to know when you're going to step in and order your Minister of Health to stop slapping bandages on the crisis in our emergency rooms and do something to start cleaning up the mess your government has created. I want you to commit today to reopening the Wellesley emergency room and to cancelling any further plans for emergency room closures.

Despite your minister's smoke-and-mirror announcements, the crisis is worsening. Yesterday 17 out of 22 hospitals in the GTA were turning away ambulances. As of 9 o'clock this morning, 12 hospitals were turning away ambulances. By noon that number was back up again to 17. On November 9, 1999, the same number of hospitals—17—were turning away ambulances at the beginning of the flu season. The newspaper headlines screamed "Emergency Rooms Overflowing." Here we are in October. It's not even flu season yet and hospitals have been turning away ambulances in record numbers for months. In fact, under your watch the numbers have tripled over the last two years.

Premier, I want you to step in. Will you please commit today to cancelling any further closures of emergency rooms.



**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the advice and, as always, I'm happy to pass the advice on to the Minister of Health. But let me tell you that the Minister of Health, as you know, has already responded to get ready for this season with significant announcements of increased money for emergency rooms. Yes, it's true, some emergency rooms are scheduled to close down, only so that we can rapidly expand the staff and resources at other emergency rooms. In addition, there have been a number of other initiatives the minister has taken as part of this strategy, working with our partners, working with nurses, doctors, hospitals, paramedics and ambulance drivers. So to suggest that we're not taking action is certainly not correct.

I appreciate the member's concern. It's a challenge we are wrestling with, indeed all across Canada, and it's a challenge the minister takes very seriously. I'll be happy to pass any other comments or advice you have on to her.

**Ms Lankin:** Premier, the question was, will you step in? Your minister has been promising immediate steps since 1998 and the situation continues to get worse. Listen to these numbers: in 1995 the total number of hours that GTA hospitals were turning away ambulances was 12,700; in 1996 it was 17,000; in 1997 it was 25,000; in 1998 it was 39,000; last year, in 1999, it was 47,700. The situation continues to get worse.

It is nothing now for ambulances to line up for 45 minutes to get patients off their stretchers. We talked with someone who told us that at a hospital on Sunday, here in Toronto, there were six ambulances backed up and it took over two hours to get the patients off the stretchers and into that hospital. That means they weren't available for other calls. Do you get it? The ERs are backed up, the ambulances are backed up, and now the emergency calls on dispatchers' desks are getting backed up. Would you want to be the parent of a sick child, knowing that your emergency call has gone on to a pile waiting for an ambulance to be freed up?

Premier, please. It is time for you to step in. Will you commit today to reopening the Wellesley ER and cancelling the closure of any further emergency rooms in the GTA?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate the comments and advice. It is clear that emergency rooms are being used dramatically more than ever in the past because, even as we've increased capacity, these challenges are there.

The member suggests that we haven't done anything since 1998. We've invested over \$725 million dollars into improving emergency access since 1998. Had the federal Liberals not slashed funding, we might have been able to put it in sooner, but nonetheless, that's how much we did without their funding.

As you know, we are pre-committing already in spending—in anticipation that they'll at least give us back what the Liberals slashed out of our budgets come next spring, unless there is a mini-budget pre-election tomorrow where we get the money sooner; we'll be happy to wait and see that—\$115 million in alternative funding plans to ensure physician coverage in the emerg-

ency rooms; \$100 million to improve access to emergency rooms, a number of flex beds to be available, even though they're not required for the ongoing operation of the hospital, to make sure we're funding them on a stand-by basis for the emergency rooms; immunization programs.

So clearly, I think you would agree, we have done a lot. But I think you would also agree—

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

**Ms Lankin:** Your minister has been making announcement after announcement since 1998, and the situation continues to get worse. Your latest announcement was nothing more than smoke and mirrors. It amounts to shifting more money out of hospital operating budgets to pay doctors. The truth is that each hospital is going to have to come up with \$90,000 per emergency site in order to get the new plan in place, and they're already facing deficits.

The emergency room at Hamilton General was so clogged yesterday that today, they're cancelling surgery. Even if they had the money to open new beds, they can't hire the nurses to staff those new beds. The \$90,000 could hire two nurses.

You continue to close emergency rooms in the GTA and yet your minister is baffled as to why there's a problem in emergency rooms. You extra-bill hospitals for doctors and yet you wonder why you can't hire nurses. It's pretty clear that some emergency action is needed from your government. Will you commit today to reopen the Wellesley emergency room and to cancel all further closures of emergency rooms in the GTA?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate the comments about Hamilton. I don't know how Wellesley is going to help Hamilton.

But we have done a number of things. Any time elective surgeries are cancelled, we're disappointed. I know it happened with your government and the Liberal government. It happens from time to time in unavoidable ways.

But I can tell you that there were no surgery cancellations at the Hamilton General site on October 16. The hospital has opened 12 flex beds in response to the ER admissions, effective yesterday. No other hospitals in Hamilton have cancelled elective surgery. There's \$115 million in AFP funding for physicians to assume emergency room coverage. HHSC and St Joseph's are eligible for this funding.

Clearly it is a growing challenge. Let me say to the member—let me be the first, and I think the minister would as well—that we've not solved this problem completely. It hasn't been solved across Canada; it hasn't been solved in Britain; it hasn't been solved in Europe; it hasn't been solved in North America. To suggest that this government and this minister have not, for the first time—and you know that 10 years of inaction and the disgraceful record of your party, with the cancellation of long-term-care beds—

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid the Premier's time is up.

## CHILD POVERTY

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to the Premier regarding why so many Ontario kids are living in poverty. In the past two weeks, two very important reports have been released which clearly show the very negative impact that your government is having on kids.

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres showed that 52% of aboriginal children living off-reserve live in poverty. The Ontario Association of Food Banks showed that the use of food banks by families has jumped 18% from last year to this. There are now 118,106 children using food banks. Premier, it's clear that your housing and your social assistance policies are having a very negative, detrimental impact on Ontario kids. How can you possibly justify that?

1420

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think you are aware we have taken a number of initiatives to both improve the economy and improve the lot of low-income people: massive tax cuts, when you had them taxed at one of the highest rates in Canada, and a number of initiatives to allow them to help themselves in working co-operatively, breaking the cycle of dependency.

I know there are studies out there. I'm happy to report to you a study from Olivia Chow, hardly a friend of this government, a New Democratic Party member I believe, who says: "Outlook for Children 'Rosy.'

"It's a very rosy picture,' child and youth advocate Olivia Chow said as she released her report."

The latest report shows that the city's children and youth, while there are still some on waiting lists for affordable housing, while there are still some living in shelters, showed some marked improvement over two years ago.

**Ms Martel:** The question was, how can you justify the level of child poverty in Ontario, which is worse than ever before in the history of this province? Two weeks ago you went to the Toronto Board of Trade and encouraged companies to invest in kids. When is your government going to start investing in kids?

You could do any number of the following to stop this slide of child poverty: you could restore rent controls; you could raise the rental allowance for families living on social assistance; you could stop the clawback of the national child supplement for families living on social assistance; you could build affordable housing again; you could raise the pay of the lowest-income families in Ontario who live on the minimum wage.

You've done none of those things. It's very clear that the economic prosperity in this country hasn't trickled down to the poor; in fact, in this province, it has completely bypassed the poor. I ask you again, when are you going to take some concrete action to stop child poverty in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Even with the \$11-billion deficit, a disastrous record of your government, I think the report you're quoting from is a 1994 report, which pretty much

explains not only the disastrous shape the province was in but how that terrible economy was affecting women and how it was affecting children.

Olivia Chow's report, you see, is a current report, not 1994 data. This—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Harris:** I'm sorry, if the member from Riverdale does not care about the statistics as she screams and yells about the city of Toronto, then I am surprised. We are very concerned about Toronto. If there is one child living in poverty, it is one child too many. If there's one hungry child, if there's one homeless child, it is one too many.

I think of the myriad of programs that we have brought forward. Olivia Chow, obviously a New Democratic Party member, in her current study says it's "a marked improvement over two years ago, when it was doom and gloom for Toronto's children." She talks about the numbers of improvements.

I can tell you, just the fact that 550,000 men, women and children have broken that cycle of dependency on welfare that you condemned them to for—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question's for the Minister of Education. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, as you may know, is struggling at the present time to make some very difficult school closure decisions. They want to make sure that they get it right. As you may be aware, the population in the Ottawa area is exploding. The best available demographic information will be available in the middle of December, so you have on your desk now a letter from the board asking that you grant them a one-month extension.

At the present time, you've told them they have until the end of this year, December 31. They're asking if they might have until January 31 so that they can make their decisions based on the very best available information. I think that's a reasonable request, Minister, don't you?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education):** I'm well aware that the school board has asked for extra time, unlike other school boards. I also understand that they have been asked for the information upon which they believe they have been disadvantaged by these reporting requirements.

I should stress that school boards have many reporting requirements. This is not a deadline for this school board to close schools or not close schools. We're talking about the funding process that school boards have been well aware of for several years now, so there's nothing new or untoward there.

The local MPPs have been involved with this board to try and work out this issue with them within the community. They've been asked for information upon which they based this request. They have claimed population figures which I gather they have not yet been able to

produce. So the ministry is certainly interested in talking to the school board, listening to concerns they may have, but I would like to stress to the honourable member that all school boards' trustees are required to make difficult decisions about allocating their space. That's not new. That is something that school board trustees have done for many, many years, and that responsibility continues.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Madam Minister, I gather you are open to the idea of this request. The school board is looking for data that are being done by the planning department of the regional municipality. That won't be available. This is new information that really illuminates the population boom that is occurring at the moment.

We are totally unanimous within the city. Your members on that side will know this. The board of trade has sent a letter to you as well asking for a one-month extension. It costs nothing, it changes nothing in the process, and it allows the board to make their decisions on school closures based on more recent factual data. Is that not fair? Is that not something that you would want to support to be helpful to a very difficult process in the Ottawa area?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I am surprised, coming from the members opposite, that now since the board of trade says something we're supposed to immediately jump, and yet when our hard-working business community is sometimes consulted on initiatives, they like to criticize us for doing that.

First of all, I would be very surprised if out of the blue, all of a sudden thousands of new people are showing up somewhere in any community and that has not been planned, has not been foreseen. School boards have been asked—and again this is not new. They do long-range planning here. They are well aware of the fact that they are to be submitting information this fall to allow us to better support them in the decisions they make for accommodation. They are well aware of that process. They are to be submitting those long-range plans, and if they have new information I'm sure they can submit new information to the board. We've done that before. We're quite prepared to do that again.

We've heard from some boards, "Oh, well, there's information coming, there's new data." There's new data out of the blue, and it never materializes. We're quite prepared to continue to work with this school board, as we are with all school boards, as they make the difficult accommodation decisions that trustees are elected to make.

We understand that challenge and we'll continue to work with this school board.

#### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. As I arrived this morning, it was clear there was a special group of visitors on the front lawn of the Legislature. Can you please tell this House about this group?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** I thank the member from York North for the question. Indeed, as members from all parties arrived this morning and went to their various caucuses, there was a demonstration of our fire rangers and some of the techniques they use to extinguish fires, not only in Ontario but around the world. The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane was able to get out from caucus and come and join me in greeting our fire rangers.

Every member in this chamber knows that earlier this summer the people in Montana and Idaho faced some very serious conditions—6.9 million acres on fire, a threat to personal property and, more important, lives. When the Americans put the call out for some help with those fires, we responded within three days: 1,300 Canadian firefighters went and did us proud and over half of those firefighters were from right here in Ontario. The reports have come back on their professionalism, their courage, their leadership and, more important, their kindness.

*Applause.*

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** The Premier and I had a chance to acknowledge our fire rangers last week in Sault Ste Marie, and I'm glad all my colleagues have joined in doing that today.

1430

**Mrs Munro:** I am pleased to see that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Would the member take a seat. Order. It was very gracious to give our guests a hand. I don't think we need any shouting while the question is being asked. It was a fine gesture on all the members' parts, on all sides. It's now time to carry on with the supplementary.

**Mrs Munro:** Thank you, Minister. I am pleased to see that not only were our—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Would the member take a seat. Order. Member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, I just called order and I'm not even in my seat and you're yelling at her. I'd appreciate—otherwise, we'll have to name people. I think this one's a non-partisan issue where everybody agrees.

Supplementary.

**Mrs Munro:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you, Minister. I am pleased to see that not only were our fire rangers here to be recognized, but also to give a public demonstration of some of their techniques. In recognition of their achievements, the fire rangers presented a permanent record of the Montana experience to the Archivist of Ontario. It seems to me that our fire rangers should have an enviable reputation. Is the American achievement consistent with our international reputation?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Again I thank the member for her question. In fact, we have had delegations from around the world visit Ontario to visit with our fire management program and look not only at the new CL-415s that were added to the fleet two years ago to help make us one of the most modern firefighting groups in the world, but

also to look at our training techniques, which are the best in the world. I can tell you, as the Premier mentioned in Sault Ste Marie last week when he was praising our fire rangers from across Ontario who did us so proud this year, that when those people leave Ontario they are not only enthusiastic about our equipment but, more importantly, they are enthusiastic about our people and the character of our people who take on this very brave work. Again, we thank them for making us proud right around the world.

### SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. As everyone in this House knows, some more than others because they've been back to school in their ridings, there has been turmoil in schools that you started. Six weeks ago, you passed measures that made it possible to lose out on extracurricular, to lose out on teaching quality in places like Kawartha, in schools—I have a list here that touches every single riding, where there has been student protest.

Minister, it's your responsibility and now we hear that you are going to do something about it. What we hear you're going to do is to invoke some of Bill 74, some of what you put on the table, that you're going to compel boards to compel teachers.

I want you to understand what that means. That would be a failure. It would be provocative, it would be disruptive, and you'd be missing the point. What students and parents and teachers have been saying to members of this House is, "Why don't you stop fighting and put peace back in our schools so that kids can learn properly?" Minister, will you do that instead?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education):** Yet again the member is misinformed. That is not what we're doing.

**Mr Kennedy:** The minister has to do something, but she doesn't have to do the wrong thing. This minister has had her head in the sand for the last number of weeks. Some 76% of public schools, according to the Ontario Principals' Association, have lost some or all of their extracurricular activities. You are worsening the conditions for teachers such that in the Sandwich Secondary School, a teacher, Adam Vially—he coached hockey and soccer; he sat on three school committees; he taught grades 11 and 12 science. On October 6, he resigned because of your new teaching system that is robbing kids all across Ontario.

Minister, you say you're not going to invoke Bill 74. I challenge you to stand up in this House and tell us what you're going to do so we don't lose more good teachers like Mr Vially and that we actually have better education for our kids. You have lowered education. You have taken extracurricular away. What will you do that will actually improve things for kids this year?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** What I said was we would not do what the honourable member said we were going to do.

First of all, we have done many things. We will continue to do many things to make sure our students receive the services they need and deserve, including extracurricular activities.

There are thousands of teachers who are providing extracurricular activities because they care about the students. I know that because I've been in schools, Mr Kennedy, and I don't need staged field trips to do it, either. There are thousands of teachers who are providing extracurricular activities, and some of those teachers are getting considerable criticism in their community for doing that from some people. If he doesn't recognize the work those thousands of teachers are doing, I would suggest he should get out there in the schools and see the work they are doing, because it is indeed happening in other communities—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Minister, take a seat. The member has asked the question; we need to hear the answer now. We don't need shouting across to her when she's trying to answer.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

In those communities where we do have problems because some teachers have chosen to exercise work to rule—we don't agree with that. We share the concerns of the students that they're not getting the extracurricular activities they should have. As I've said many times, I've begun meetings with student trustees and we're quite prepared to take appropriate steps when they are required, to try and fix this issue in those communities where teachers are choosing to continue to work to rule. It's not fair to students; they deserve better. I would like to focus our attention in this House yet again on those teachers who are indeed doing those activities, which the honourable member obviously has not noticed that they are doing.

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** My question today is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The former Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin was today sworn in as the federal Minister of Industry, jumping to the federal government, despite his claim a year ago that he would fulfill his term as Premier, another flip-flop—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Would the member take his seat, please. Sorry for the interruption. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, that's your last warning. One more and I'll have to name you. Sorry, member for Halton, for the interruption.

**Mr Chudleigh:** The former Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin was today sworn in as federal Minister of Industry, jumping to the federal government despite his claim a year ago to fulfill his term as Premier, another flip-flop—which is understandable, the man being a Liberal.

In the past, the federal government promised that it would treat all provinces fairly when it comes to seeking new investments and jobs. However, given the federal

government's record of handling finances, for instance, under Human Resources Development Canada, and the likelihood of a federal election—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member, take a seat. We'll just let the clock run down, I guess. Member for Halton.

**Mr Chudleigh:**—and the likelihood of a federal election coming any day now, Mr Minister, do you believe that the new minister will maintain the federal government's long-standing policy of fairness and will you remind him of that policy?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I did have some difficulty hearing the member's question, but I think I have the brunt of it.

I want to take the opportunity to congratulate Mr Tobin on his new appointment as the federal minister. I certainly look forward to working with him to see how we can bring continued investment to the province of Ontario.

I believe the member is correct that the previous federal minister, the Honourable John Manley, did make a promise that all provinces would be treated equally when it comes to attracting investment into Canada. The federal government should not play favourites among the provinces when it comes to creating jobs and investment opportunities.

I certainly look forward to working with the new federal minister, and I trust that Mr Tobin's appointment will mean a continued assurance that the federal government will maintain their ongoing commitment to treat all provinces equally.

1440

**Mr Chudleigh:** The Quebec government and the company, Mosel Vitelic, have asked the federal government to provide special assistance to establish a semiconductor plant in Montreal. I understand the plant was being considered for Burlington, in my riding, but that location did not reach the short list, because the Ontario government would not put any money into the project. Is it possible that the change in federal ministers will be followed by an announcement of federal assistance for that project?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** While working with the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Some of the noise, I say to the minister, is coming from his own bench. Would the government benches let the minister answer.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I want to say that while working with the city of Burlington, I know how hard they worked to try to attract this investment. Our government was very much involved on a day-to-day basis, and we made it very clear from the beginning that the province of Ontario would not provide direct financial assistance to companies seeking to locate in Ontario. We believe lowering taxes and creating an excellent economic climate is the best way to attract investment. I can assure the member that the government of Ontario will be keeping a close eye on this investment and making sure the federal government's long-standing commitment to treat all

provinces alike is not broken. I certainly hope that Minister Tobin, as a former provincial Premier, understands there must be a level playing field when it comes to attracting investments across Canada.

## SCHOOLTEACHERS

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I have a question to the Premier. You and the minister behind you are driving away our children's best and brightest teachers in the middle of a national teacher shortage. Maybe you don't know this, but we are on the brink of a crisis. Sixty percent of our boards are experiencing a teacher brain drain. I'll give you one example.

Andrew Barally is one person who is the kind of dedicated professional we need—that you need—in the classroom, an award-winning science teacher, a head hockey and junior soccer coach, and a student adviser. Do you know where he is today? I'll tell you: he's working in Detroit as a computer analyst. Your vindictive war against teachers has turned him and many like him away from the teaching profession. Why are you and your minister hell-bent on creating education orphans in Ontario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I assume that if he's teaching in Detroit, he's teaching for less money but paying lower taxes and probably working longer hours. Clearly our goal is to be a magnet for the best and brightest. We believe we are, in offering excellence in curriculum, in offering opportunities, in offering less than the national average for actual classroom times so there's more time for preparation, for counselling, for one-on-ones and for co-curricular activities. As you know, we pay among the highest wages in North America, but we think that's fair. We think we have good teachers; we think they are professionals.

I am aware of the demographics, of the number of teachers retiring. I think we had a period of time when we had fewer than normal retirements, because under your government the economy was so lousy there were no other jobs for them. There are other opportunities; there are other challenges. As you know, we've dramatically increased the number of teacher places in our universities and our colleges of education. As a former teacher, a profession I'm very proud of, I believe the future is very bright for teachers in this province as we move from mediocre and OK to the best in the world.

**Mr Marchese:** The reasons have nothing to do with salaries and nothing to do with your tax cuts. Vector Research, which has done a study on this, tells us that the reasons for the teacher brain-drain are the following: teacher burnout, a reduction in support services for schools, deteriorating working conditions and a negative public perception of the teaching profession. That's what the study reveals. That's what I'm asking you to comment on.

I've got testimonials from two teachers who are sick of what you are doing to the education system. Dale Huddleston, a devoted and passionate teacher, coach for

23 years and national volleyball official, is desperately looking for a new job outside of teaching. You're driving him out of the teaching profession. Mike Doyle, head of physical education and a long-time coach—you're driving him out of the educational system too. Nothing to do with salaries and nothing to do with your tax cuts; it's all to do with the fact that you are turning him off from a profession that he loves.

You, Minister, are creating an entire generation of children who will never know the joy and rewards of a first-class education. Premier, you and your minister have got to address these questions, not the issue of tax cuts. That's not why they're leaving. Speak to that if you can.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think the member is wrong.

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Premier. We were all delighted to pay tribute to the forest firefighters who are in the gallery today. They have been honoured by representatives of all three parties. They've done just an outstanding job on behalf of the people of Ontario, both here in Ontario and in other jurisdictions.

My question is this: if they have done such a great job for the people of Ontario, why is it that the Premier has cut from 186 to 166 the number of fire crews, and why has he closed 17 of 38 fire houses?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the question, because, as the member knows, when it comes to fighting fires we have an unlimited budget. We budgeted a certain amount of money. In a year like this past year, of course, we had very few fires in Ontario and so our budgets would be down. Last year, when we had a considerable number of fires—I think for a couple of years—you would have found that we made every nickel available that was required and we would go way over budget. That's the nature of firefighting budgets.

But the member is quite right. We have consolidated into three centres of excellence throughout northern Ontario on the advice and recommendation of the professional firefighters themselves. We provided, as you've heard, new equipment, nine new water bombers after 10 years of inaction. The last time we had new water bombers was when Bill Davis—I think you wanted him to buy an executive jet and Bill Davis said, "No, we're going to get two new 415 water bombers." That was the last time. Then we had 10 years with you and the NDP—

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

**Mr Bradley:** It's quite obvious that the Premier should be going into the business of writing fiction, because many of the answers in the House do not always correspond with the actual facts that are presented.

You see, Premier, when you extol the virtues of a group in our province, when we recognize how important they are and the service they provide, and when they make recommendations to you—I know of no forest firefighter in the province who said, "Please cut the

number of crews by 20. Please close so many of the fire bases." In other words, you've closed 17 of the 38 fire bases in the province. If you are truly recognizing the importance of these individuals and these groups, would you not want to invest the appropriate amount of funding in them and ensure that we have the full 38 fire bases and the full 186 crews?

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, let me correct the record. There has been no funding drop for firefighters this year—none. So let's get the record straight on that.

No, you would not want to sit pat with old equipment and old ways. You would want to constantly modernize, constantly be on the leading edge. I think it's acknowledged, when we saw the reports of the firefighters and the techniques that came back from Montana—we saw reports there that said, "The Canucks are coming. Now we're going to see some action." So we've always taken a leading, advocate role.

We have consolidated into a number of centres on the advice—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Premier, take a seat. Sorry. Member for Windsor West, I can't hear. You looked at me and then you turned and you started shouting. I can't continue.

*Interjection.*

1450

**The Speaker:** You're still shouting. It doesn't matter to me if you want to spend the day out; that's fine. It doesn't matter to me. I've said this before. But I'd appreciate, at least, if you're going to do it, that you don't look right at me and start doing it.

Sorry for the interruption, Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** There's enough hot air in here; we might be able to put out even more fires in the future. That might be a better use of the rhetoric we hear from the opposition anyway.

Let me say that when you look at the period from 1985 to 1995, and particularly 1985 to 1990, when the economy was stronger, the shameful lack of reinvestment in the forest industry and forest management plans and firefighting and not one new aircraft—as I said, I think the last time we had aircraft—

**The Speaker:** Sorry, Premier.

New question.

### AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Aggressive driving, including speeding, tailgating and improper lane-changing, is a safety issue for drivers throughout this province, yet we know very little about the cause of the problem. Why do people drive aggressively? Who is likely to do this, and under what circumstances?

How we effectively combat aggressive driving is one of the keys to enhancing road safety in Ontario. Can you tell me what action you're taking to advance our knowledge about aggressive driving behaviour?

**Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation):**

I certainly thank my colleague the member for Peterborough for this question. He's absolutely right. Aggressive driving is a very serious concern. We know the number of traffic fatalities could be significantly reduced if we could stop aggressive driving.

MTO is sponsoring a Web conference on aggressive driving behaviour, with discussions taking place on-line. The conference began yesterday and will run through November 30. The conference will provide easy access to new and existing research on aggressive driving, and a discussion forum for road users, safety researchers and policy staff worldwide. This is an opportunity for the public to learn more about aggressive driving. The research topics were chosen by the Ontario Advisory Group on Safe Driving.

**Mr Stewart:** I applaud you for taking this innovative approach to advancing our knowledge about aggressive driving. What else can you tell me about this conference? Specifically, how can members of the public participate and how will this conference enhance your ministry's efforts to reduce aggressive driving in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** The conference is being held at [www.aggressive.drivers.com](http://www.aggressive.drivers.com). The site will be open after the conference for researchers to review the transcripts and all of the available research. We will discuss and debate the nature and causes of aggressive driving and possible solutions.

It provides a one-stop information source—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order.

Sorry, Minister. I wasn't yelling at you for order, but I know it is confusing when you yell at the members.

We're getting down to where we're going back to the official opposition for the next question. Hopefully, we can get to the question and not have the time run out. We will do that if we don't shout. Particularly when a minister is further down the line, I can't hear down there when people are shouting across.

Minister of Transportation. Sorry for the interruption.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** This is an extremely cost-effective way of getting this very valuable information. The public is free to log on and participate in this conference and post comments on the Web site. They can register free of charge because, as we have always said, road safety is our top priority.

## POVERTY

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):**

My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. On September 20, a coalition representing over 80 women's groups came to Queen's Park to ask for all-party co-operation on a package of emergency measures which they are asking to have implemented in this session of the Legislature. Today, on the lawn of Queen's Park, women again came to ask for immediate action to end poverty and violence against women. They too have solutions for this government.

Minister, as you know, poverty and violence against women are inextricably linked. Women represent some 57% of all persons living in low-income situations. Notwithstanding the Premier's earlier remarks, single mothers with children under seven have poverty rates of over 80%, and approximately 30% of them are on social assistance. It's no wonder that 60% of shelters report that women prefer often to return to abusive situations where they can at least feed and clothe their kids, rather than stay safe.

It's been nearly a month since the cross-sectoral strategy group came to Queen's Park asking for support. Minister Flaherty was personally handed a copy of these demands. Dalton McGuinty was proud to sign these measures on behalf of the Ontario caucus. Will you rise in the House today and commit to the women of Ontario that you will finally sign on to these emergency measures?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women):** Let me say that in this House we're all concerned about poverty. We're all concerned about women's safety. We're all concerned about domestic violence. We all work to do things that we think will make a better life for people, and for women especially in that area.

We have reviewed a number of the proposals that have been put forward. We've brought the ministries together to be able to talk about the proposals that are brought forward. Let me remind the House that we spend over \$135 million every year—we will do that in 2000-01—on programs and services that prevent violence and address violence issues with women all across this great province. In 2001-02 this number will once again increase, to \$140 million, so commitment certainly is happening on this side of the House.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Minister, these commitments were there before the sectoral group came and brought to your attention that they weren't enough. I'm happy that the three ministries finally got together; the Attorney General didn't even know about these requests. However, what is your action plan, Minister?

Concern is a good first step, but without action it's actually a slap in the face of the women of Ontario, a patronizing statement. You are failing the thousands of women who were last year admitted to shelters in Ontario. You are failing the women who are abused by a partner and you are failing the women and young girls who have been sexually assaulted. Many of these women struggle to provide for their families on incomes far below the poverty line. A recent study, on top of many other studies, showed that 20% of children living in poverty in Ontario have health problems: asthma, nutritional difficulties.

The cross-sectoral group gave you a very clear list of demands. They recognize that poverty and domestic abuse are linked and, where's there's domestic abuse, there's high potential for child abuse. I have children. I know you have children. Our children can't be guar-

anteed safety unless all the children in Ontario are guaranteed safety. Will you stand up, Minister, and agree to the demands of the cross-sectoral group now?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Let me say that this government is committed to improving the lives of women and families all across this province. In effect, what we do is we work with women's groups all across the province to ensure we've moved toward economic independence. We have some wonderful statistics of things that have happened in Ontario in the last five years: 768,000 new jobs have been created since September—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Beaches-East York come to order please. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Johns:** There have been 768,000 new jobs created since September 1995, and 550,000 people have left the welfare rolls. That's good for women and children in this province. In 1999, 42% of the gains in female employment took place in the higher-paid industries such as manufacturing, educational services, finance, insurance, real estate.

When they talk about me meeting with groups, I have to tell you that I'm meeting this afternoon with two of the groups that they had press conferences with this morning. I've made efforts to try and arrange meetings with the group they're talking about. We're doing all we can to meet with women's groups all across the province to ensure that I represent the women of Ontario in this important issue.

1500

## PETITIONS

### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** The northern health travel grant continues to be a source of great frustration for everybody in northern Ontario; petitions continue to come in. I'd like to read another one.

"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 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 their communities."

I support this strongly, will continue the fight and am proud to add my name to this petition.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario which reads:

"Whereas the Ontario government wants to take an additional \$1 billion out of the education system this year and every year; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has decided to hire uncertified teachers in kindergarten, libraries, for guidance, physical education, the arts and technology; and

"Whereas the Ontario government wishes to remove the right to negotiate working conditions; and

"Whereas the Ontario government would remove at least 10,000 teachers from classrooms across the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has become the sole decision-maker on class size, preparation time and the length of the school day; and

"Whereas the Ontario government proposes to take decision-making powers out of the hands of locally elected community-minded trustees,

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal" any anti-education bills "and create an accessible public consultative process for students, parents, teachers and school board administrators to study alternative solutions that have universal appeal and will lead to an improved educational system."

Since I agree, I signed my name to this petition.

### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Ontario Legislature and it concerns northerners demanding the Harris government eliminate health care apartheid.

"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 affix my signature, as I am in complete agreement with it.

#### PENSION FUNDS

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health announced a new model on January 25, 1996, for improving and coordinating long-term care services. The amalgamation of the home care and placement coordination services function did shift to community care access centres (CCACs). The governing bodies of various pension plans, namely the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Savings (OMERS), Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), Family Services Association (FSA) and Hospital of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) have failed to successfully negotiate agreements for a transfer of pension assets.

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

“That the pension adjustments are a transition item which the ministry has not yet addressed. We are requesting a one-time adjustment to enable the transfer of pension assets. This transfer is required to ensure that employees transferred from predecessor employers (namely health units and the Victorian Order of Nurses) to community care access centres as part of the mandatory government reform initiative for ‘single access to long-term-care services’ receive pension benefits equal to those which they formerly enjoyed. Provincially over 3,000 health care workers are affected. The individuals who transferred to the CCACs had no control over what would happen to their prior pension contributions. Unless a one-time adjustment is made to enable the transfer of reserves, the typical employee will lose about \$2,000 annually in pension benefits compared to the position they would have been in had they been allowed to remain in OMERS.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### 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 and vest too much power in the hands of the founders, who have been more than compensated for their generosity; diminish the authority and responsibility of the board of trustees; limit the focus of the art collection and hamper the gallery’s ability to raise private funds, thereby increasing its dependency on the taxpayers; and 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.

#### WATER EXTRACTION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

I very happily sign my name to this petition.

#### RENTAL HOUSING DEMOLITION

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul’s):** I proudly submit this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the apartment buildings at 310 and 320 Tweedsmuir Avenue,” and many other apartments in the riding of St Paul’s, “are slated for demolition;

“Whereas the vacancy rate in the city of Toronto is currently below 1%;

“Whereas many of the residents are elderly and/or disabled on fixed incomes;

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has determined that the city of Toronto has no control over its own rental housing stock, and in turn;

“Whereas the Mike Harris government has made no attempt to assist the residents to keep their apartments or find alternative living arrangements;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the demolition of rental housing.”

I affix my signature in support.

#### SNOWMOBILE LEGISLATION

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislature of Ontario.

“Whereas Bill 101, An Act to promote snowmobile trail sustainability and enhance safety and enforcement, does not exempt trappers from driving a motorized snow vehicle upon a prescribed trail except under the authority of a trail permit for the motorized snow vehicle issued under subsection (2) or except on lands occupied by the owner of a motorized snow vehicle;

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

“That subsection 2.1(1) of Bill 101, 2000, should be amended to:

“No person except trappers with a valid trapper’s licence shall drive a motorized vehicle upon a prescribed trail except under the authority of a trail permit for the motorized snow vehicle issued under subsection (2) or except on lands occupied by the owner of a motorized snow vehicle.”

I affix my signature to this petition, as it is very important to trappers in northern Ontario.

1510

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 119, An Act to reduce red tape, to promote good government through better management of Ministries and agencies and to improve customer service by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts, when Bill 119 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time, the bill shall be ordered to the standing committee on general government; and

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

That the committee be authorized to meet beyond its normal hour of adjournment on the final day until completion of clause-by-clause consideration; and

That, at 4:30 pm on the final day designated by the committee for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration, and not later than November 16, 2000. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House;

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That, when the order for third reading is called, the remainder of the sessional day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, the debate time being divided equally among the three parties, after which the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That, the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding “Deferred Votes”; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin):** Mr Runciman has moved notice of motion number 64. Debate?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I’m pleased to begin debate on the closure motion by saying that this is a typical pattern of the government. The public should be aware that we’re dealing with a bill that’s 135 pages long, that deals with, I think, 12 different ministries and is part of a pattern of the government where they will bring in this omnibus legislation, much of it relatively straightforward but a portion of it extremely significant, hoping they can get it through without the proper debate.

You may recall, Mr Speaker, that the very first time this was tried, the Harris government had been barely in office and it was then called the omnibus bully bill, Bill 26, but now they continue that process, and it’s unfortunate because much of what’s in this bill does deserve some substantial debate. As we are rushing through a bill that is 132 pages or 135 pages long, I remind the public of the consequences. In my opinion, the problems we are undergoing now with our environment can be at least in

part traced to the things we have done in the past in dealing quickly with these "red tape" bills.

I would urge us to be aware that by rushing through these bills, we are in danger of making major mistakes. I go back to Walkerton and, tragically, I also happen to think the Adams mine will be a similar bad mistake that this government has made, allowing that to proceed. But Walkerton was, I think, at least in part as a result of that.

The government publishes this document, "Doing Business in Ontario," and it brags very much about how they have changed the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Environmental Assessment Act. They say approvals have been, to use their language, simplified. That's language for, "It is now far easier for you to get through approval in Ontario under the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Environmental Assessment Act." My leader, Dalton McGuinty, today in one of his lead questions to the Premier pointed out how now in Ontario we are becoming seen around North America as perhaps the easiest jurisdiction to get environmental approval in. Why is that? It is because we have made, in the last six years under the Harris government, dramatic changes in the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Environmental Assessment Act. They have been "simplified" through, at least in part, these so-called red tape bills.

Here we are now with another major red tape bill and the government is telling us today, "The debate is over." We are now going to allocate the time. The debate on second reading will be over as of the end of today. We'll have a short period of time in the committee, and then it's back here for approval. I'm just warning all of us that allowing this to happen without proper debate is dangerous, and we can see no better example than the Walkerton example.

Within this particular red tape bill, there are several problems. One is particularly under the Tenant Protection Act. I will guarantee us there is a time bomb ticking out there around housing. The province of Ontario should be seeing built every year at least 15,000 rental units. We're seeing less than 1,000 a year built. In the last three years, we should have seen 45,000; there have been 3,000, and those 3,000 are almost all at the high end of rental accommodation. We have a powder keg ready to explode. There is no doubt about that. And if the Harris government thinks they're going to be able to go through the next election without having to face the consequences of that, they're dreaming. My colleague David Caplan debated yesterday this very matter here in the Legislature.

There are major changes in this red tape bill that further strip protection for tenants. So here we are being forced to approve this red tape bill, the debate is over on the red tape bill, and it contains a substantial lessening of protection for tenants in Ontario at the very time when they're going to need, frankly, the maximum protection. I have tenants in my area who are being strongly encouraged to move. Why? Because the day they move out,

the landlord, the owner of that building, jacks the rent up on that unit dramatically. I've had people in my office with some substantial concerns. But we are going to ram this through in this bill. That's one of the major problems in this bill.

I must say that I and our party have no difficulty dealing with a bill that simply gets rid of things that should be changed, things that no longer apply, things that no longer work, regulations and legislation that may have made sense 20 years ago. We have no difficulty in dealing with that and we have no difficulty in dealing with it in one bill.

#### 1520

What we strongly object to is when the government uses that goodwill to try and simplify things to ram through substantive changes. Within this bill there are also many examples where the power to make decisions will move from the Legislature to regulation. What that means is that, rather than the duly elected public people having a chance to debate things, the cabinet is able to deal with it behind closed doors through regulation.

I've been watching Minister Palladini. Two weeks ago he said: "I may have to bring in legislation to solve this. In fact I'm going to bring in legislation." He must have taken that to cabinet and they must have said, "There's no way we're going to allow a debate in the Legislature around this problem you've got," so he's now talking about dealing with it through regulation. Why is that? So that democracy doesn't get in the way of efficiency, so that the public doesn't have a chance to debate it, it's done behind closed doors.

In the next few days we expect a property tax bill. There again the government, Premier Harris, will set tax rates raising property taxes of around \$6 billion, not through any debate here in the Legislature but through regulation.

Why is this important? It's a huge bill. Much of it is relatively benign, things that all of us can agree upon, but hidden within this bill are some significant problems. We're being asked to ram this thing through with virtually no further debate. It's over today. The time allocation has been read by the government and we will no longer debate it.

I point out that we surely should have learned our lesson in allowing these omnibus bills, hidden in hundreds of pages of detail, to be sent through without adequate debate. We should have learned from Walkerton where, to use the language of Premier Harris, we have substantially simplified. To use the language of those who are worried about it, we've substantially made it easier to get around good environmental protection.

The public should be, I think quite rightly, concerned when they see major legislation being forced through with virtually little, if any, debate. In this instance, the major concern will be the Tenant Protection Act, but there are other pieces within this legislation. There are several examples where the government is now taking away the right of the Legislature to debate an issue and will give itself the authority to deal with it through regulation.

For the public, what does all that mean? What it really means is you will not know about the debate. The government will make the decision, not here in the Legislature but in the cabinet room, without any input from the elected people. If you want to know a great example of it, in the next few days you'll see a piece of legislation dealing with property taxes where Premier Harris will be able to set whatever rate he wants to set, raising \$6 billion of property taxes through regulation.

To conclude, I hope the public can appreciate the concern that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party have with this process of trying, under the umbrella of an omnibus bill, to force through substantive legislative changes that really deserve to be debated on their own merits with the proper amount of time and the proper opportunity for public input.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** It's a pleasure to speak on this motion. We have had three sessional days of debate on this bill. We've heard a number of well-thought-out comments from all sides of the House. It's now perhaps time to give the public an opportunity to offer their comments on this bill, to do the clause-by-clause analysis that's so important, and then let the Legislature decide on the merits of the bill itself.

This bill is important, really, because it's part of our overall strategy to create better customer service on the part of the government of Ontario and to attract investment and jobs to this province.

I remind the House that our definition of red tape is any procedure or process we put anyone through that's not absolutely essential to achieving an identified government objective. It does not in any way weaken health, safety or environmental protection. What it does, in fact, is strengthen those protections, because it achieves better regulation.

Unlike some in this House, we are not married to the past. We don't look at how things have been done for a while and say, "That's why, and how, they've always got to be done." We want to eliminate all but the absolutely essential. We want to make Ontario the best jurisdiction in the world for regulatory excellence. It's a difficult, time-consuming and challenging task, but it's an exciting task, and it is also absolutely essential to good service and economic growth.

Even our friends the socialist government of France have established a red tape commission. They understand how important this is to achieve better customer service and to attract investment and jobs.

Since its founding in 1995, the Red Tape Commission has helped some 170 people and businesses with red tape problems, undertaken extensive consultations on red tape issues, coordinated the preparation of some 14 red tape reduction laws, helped revoke some 1,300 outdated regulations and helped improve many regulatory processes.

How are we going to continue this work? We are going to continue it by continuing our ombudsman function. We, of course, take individual complaints. When a complaint comes in, we have our civil servants meet with civil servants from the ministry involved and

try to solve the problem. If that fails, we take it up with the office of the minister and, if necessary, the minister himself or herself, and try to solve the problem. If that fails, we take direction from the Premier of the province in terms of how to solve the problem. We hope that everyone, both in the Legislature and throughout Ontario, will ask for the help of the commission when that help is needed.

We are also going to work very hard to get new red tape cutting ideas and implement them. We need ideas from our citizens, from business, from other jurisdictions, from the public service and from all members of this Legislature.

We hope to develop a business impact test. We want to find out what regulations cost the government, and hopefully determine what they cost business as well. We want to make sure we have at least one red tape bill in the Legislature every year, so that the changes in the law that are needed to create better customer service and attract investment and jobs can be done within a fast time frame. That, by the way, is one of the reasons I support this motion today.

We also want to make sure our government's forms and form systems are 21st-century-friendly. We want them to be the clearest, simplest and most efficient possible.

Computers have great potential to both improve customer service and help get rid of red tape. We've got to look very hard in terms of how to move as quickly as possible to 21st-century service in this area.

This bill offers the latest proposals to cut red tape in some 15 ministries. If it's passed, it will remove two unused acts from the books and streamline 75 acts to provide improved customer service and more efficient government.

Some examples of what this bill does are: it eliminates the requirement to apply for a change of name within 90 days of marriage; it protects consumers by prohibiting the charging of significant up-front fees by credit repair companies for services that consumers can do for themselves at little or no cost; it provides insurance benefits to volunteer auxiliary police officers if they're injured while providing service; and it enhances the Niagara Escarpment Commission's ability to issue stop-work orders regarding unapproved developments.

Red tape reduction is about making it easier, faster and less expensive for both business and the public when dealing with government. It's about encouraging investment in Ontario by breaking down barriers to conduct and manage business. It's about simplifying processes to reduce overlap with other legislation and improve overall efficiency and customer service. Finally, it's about harmonizing and modernizing legislation among ministries.

#### 1530

Cutting red tape is essential to giving better service to our citizens and attracting investment and jobs to Ontario. I urge all members to support this motion and to support the bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate, the member for—

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Essex.

**The Acting Speaker:** Essex. Why didn't I remember that?

**Mr Crozier:** I'm proud to be there. It's newly going to be called the South Shore, as well. You'll hear more about it in the future.

I'm generally pleased to stand and speak to the Legislature, but in these instances, a time allocation motion, in my view, is one of the most undemocratic things that can be brought forward in this House.

As I pointed out when we opened debate only three sessional days ago, we have received a red tape bill that—in fact, I don't know how many pages there are in this—covers some 75 acts. I understand there are over 200 amendments, and yet the government member will stand and say, "I think we've had enough debate on this." Three sessional days; I don't know, six to maybe eight or nine hours. There's so much in here to discuss and so much that's important that I agree with my colleague from Scarborough that this very well might come back to haunt us because we don't take the time to debate and to recommend and to discuss what this bill contains.

I don't think anybody disagrees with getting rid of red tape. It was suggested that we come into the 21st century, look at our laws and get rid of the red tape. I agree with that. Much of what's in here, I'm sure, is housekeeping and much of it, under normal circumstances, I could agree with. But the problem is, there's a lot in here that just is not simple housekeeping. There are two new acts. To me, creation of a new act is not getting rid of red tape. When a new act is introduced, I think it deserves to be dealt with in the fullest ways, and time allocation certainly isn't one of them.

I would remind the Legislature that last fall and in this spring session there have been some 32 government bills introduced. Almost half of them have been time-allocated. Twelve bills have received time allocation, which means that the government in its wisdom said, "We don't need to follow the democratic way of a Legislature and allow all members to have the opportunity to speak on this bill. We've heard enough from you," which indicates to me that they really don't want suggestions, they really don't want recommendations, they really don't want a full discussion of the issues. I don't know why not. That's what we're here for. We're here to represent our constituents, and to do that, we have to be given the fullest opportunity to speak to the issues, and time allocation certainly isn't the way to allow that democratic debate.

The government is suggesting that this will go to committee, and I suspect there will be some sort of public hearing, or at least I certainly hope there would be. But the average number of days that bills have been considered over the fall and spring session of 1999-2000, the average number of days that this government has allowed for committee hearings, is 2.83, almost three days.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** That's all.

**Mr Crozier:** And that's all. We were just discussing this earlier. My colleague is relatively new to the Legislature. She's been here a year, she's doing an outstanding job, and if I could get all the way through your riding name—

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

**Mr Crozier:** Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. She's done an outstanding job in the year she's been here and she too can't understand why we have to treat these bills with such haste, why we can't take time to debate the issues the way we should.

Be that as it may, I would like to point out that those parts of this omnibus bill that we might want to support—we are prevented from doing so because there are parts of the bill, significant parts of the bill, that we can't support. In fact, it's unfortunate that when they bring a time allocation motion in, we have to spend a sessional day just debating the time allocation motion when we could be better spending the time debating the bill itself.

In the opening remarks that were made on this bill when it was introduced but a few days ago, the government wanted some recommendations on how they may better serve the public, because what they're telling us is that this bill will help us better serve the public. I had a couple of suggestions for them. I haven't heard from them in the last couple of days, but I can tell you ways that they aren't serving the public and that they could well make an attempt to do so.

A couple of examples in my own riding: recently a licence-issuing office was closed in Kingsville. What this causes is that constituents of mine are now going to have to go to another community to renew their driver's license, renew their automobile licence plates. That's not a good way to serve the public, in my view. Something like this, a bill like this, does nothing to improve service to the public in the way that the government says they intend to do.

There's another battle that we've been fighting over the last couple of years and that's when they closed the driver examination centre in Leamington—in the south-east corner of the riding, the furthest it could be from the cities of Chatham and Windsor, where driver examination centres remain—which causes a lot of distress to elderly constituents in my riding because they have to go to a totally new community under different driving conditions than they've ever been used to, to get their driver's licences renewed. They have to stand in longer lines. It takes longer to get an appointment to have your driver's licence renewed in our area now. That's not better service to the public. In fact, one might say that it's creating more red tape; it's more difficult to get something done than it was before.

I think of the young people in the riding, too, those who are getting their driver's licences for the first time, who are in school. What do they have to do? They have

to take half a day off school because they have to travel further distances to get their driver's licence renewed. In fact, if you want to talk about red tape, it's so bad at times that we have even had suggestions from the Minister of Transportation down our way that somebody go all the way to St Catharines to get their driver's licence renewed: "Well, we've got appointments open in St Catharines or we've got appointments open somewhere down in the Golden Horseshoe area where you can get your driver's license test." That's not serving the public better.

So when they stand here today and say that they're presenting this red tape bill so that they can serve the public better, you can understand why I just might not take that as being the gospel truth, that I'm not sure that all of this is to better serve the public. What we might find if we had more time for debate, more time to bring the issues forward, is that the public is going to be ill served by some of the changes that this bill will bring forward.

#### 1540

Why we need time to inform the public, why we need time to debate these issues, is that not always does the government fully explain to the public what they are doing. They spend hundreds of millions of dollars patting themselves on the back in partisan advertising, money that could be better spent on health care, education, transportation, long-term care, could be spent on having better water quality in the province, could be better spent in those areas. I guess it's a question of priorities. When you bring forward something like this, and there are good parts of it, then fine: take the time to inform the public, give us the opportunity to debate the issues, give us the opportunity to bring out those parts of the bill that in fact are good and that we might agree with.

I used another example earlier this week of what might not be understood about this bill. There's a very significant change in the Insurance Act with regard to life insurance. At the present time, if you have a terminal illness, there is an opportunity under the Insurance Act to take advantage of what are called "living benefits." You go to your insurance company—in fact, insurance companies are encouraged to promote this—and they will advance a significant amount from your life insurance because of the shortened lifespan and perhaps the economic hardship that it may cause. You still own your insurance policy. You still deal with your insurance company.

What they are proposing here—and as I say, it may not be a bad thing, but I don't think people understand it—is that they're going to allow what are called viaticals. I said the other night that even though I'm not a gambling person, I would bet that most people in the province, and I would even venture to say most in this Legislature, don't know what a viatical is. Far be it from me to suggest or explain the whole thing here today, but what it really means is that you can go out and discount your life insurance and, as with living benefits, you're able to get a certain amount of the face value of your life

insurance policy. The problem is that you have to understand under those circumstances that you're not necessarily going to be dealing with your insurance company. You're going to be discounting what the value of the life insurance is and it's going to be a third party that's going to own your insurance policy.

As we all know, by far the majority in this province are honest, forthright business people, but as sure as I'm standing here, there will be some who are not so upstanding and forthright and will not tell individuals what this really means when they discount their life insurance. It's that kind of thing that I think shouldn't even be in a red tape bill. It should be a subject that's discussed on its own merits so that we have a full opportunity to disclose not only the advantages but the disadvantages of it and people can make an informed decision. These are important life decisions and we should have the opportunity to debate those to their fullest extent.

As much as I want to reduce red tape, as much as there are parts of this omnibus bill that I would like to support, I'm not going to be able to for a couple of reasons. One is because it isn't quite as perfect as the government would lead you to believe; second, we simply haven't had the time to discuss all of the issues that are contained in this omnibus bill that we should have.

I really wonder when the Red Tape Commission comes and reports and says that everything in here is going to be to my benefit, and particularly to the benefit of the public.

I can give another example of red tape, too. This has been brought up several times in the past few weeks, and as we approach Christmas it's even going to become more critical. Last December, this government, with a lot of fanfare, said they wanted to get squeegee kids off the streets of Toronto. They wanted to get them out of the face of drivers. Again, I have no problem with that. If they are being offensive, if they are being aggressive, if there are panhandlers who are being aggressive, I agree that the general public shouldn't have to face that every day.

Anyway, they wanted to get rid of panhandlers, so they brought in, with a lot of fanfare, the Safe Streets Act. Well, Speaker, you and I and others here, and I think even the government members, recognize what really happened was that not only did they get at the squeegee kids, not only did they get at the aggressive panhandlers, but they also got at a lot of charities in this province.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Unfortunately.

**Mr Crozier:** As my colleague said, that's unfortunate. We know, for example, that the Muscular Dystrophy Association, through its work with the firefighters in the province of Ontario, are looking at a possible reduction of some \$750,000 in their fundraising over the next calendar year because their fundraising effort was swept up in the squeegee bill. I have no idea whether it was the intent of the government to do that or not. I certainly would hope that it wasn't. But we were dealt a poorly written bill that not only got at the core problem, as the

government saw it, but it takes in a whole other group of innocent people.

The firefighters who carry on boot drives, who have helped build burn units across this province, are affected by it. The fundraising efforts for muscular dystrophy are affected. Come this Christmas, the Goodfellows's work in this province is going to be hurt dramatically, in their fundraising efforts. In Windsor-Essex county, for example, 40% of the money raised by Goodfellows comes from the sale of their papers. All that the Goodfellows and the people who work with them do is stand on a street corner at a stoplight—they have the appropriate identification, the bright orange vest with the yellow cross, so everybody can see them—and when the light turns red, if a driver in a car rolls down the window and motions to them, they collect some money.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Doesn't sound bad to me.

**Mr Crozier:** It doesn't sound bad to me. It doesn't sound like squeegee kids to me. And now, because the government won't change that bill, they won't back off, they won't say, "Yes, we made a mistake," and amend the bill, these charities are going to suffer. That, to me, is red tape. That, to me, is getting the government in the face of honest, hard-working volunteers who want to do something for their community. That's red tape.

If you agree, if I can get someone to agree with my definition of that being red tape, I think in committee we should amend this red tape bill. We should give municipalities the opportunity to approve registered charities being able to collect money the way they have, in the case of the Goodfellows, since the early 1900s.

When this bill comes back to us after probably a short time in committee, we're going to have one more chance, one more sessional day, to discuss the issue, and then it will be a done deal.

In my view, time allocation motions are simply undemocratic.

1550

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** It's a pleasure to be able to rise today and make a few remarks on Bill 119. I'm going to concentrate my remarks today on a section of Bill 119, that part which deals with the Dog Owners' Liability Act.

In prefacing my remarks to the bill itself, I have to take us back to a most tragic and horrific event, and that was the death of Courtney Trempe on April 28, 1998. This was a very tragic experience and accident in our community. It became the focus of a subsequent inquest and one which, frankly, speaks to a number of issues in our community. The jury made 35 recommendations in areas that are as diverse as education, legislative changes, reporting, recording and research. It also spoke to breeders and trainers, animal shelters. It spoke to the need for some financial support as well as a role for the federal government.

It meant that, in the course of the inquest, many questions were asked on the issue of the responsibility of individuals who are stakeholders within the community

at large. Whether we're talking about people who own dogs—as the Dog Owners' Liability Act obviously deals with—people who have puppies for sale, people who go to shelters, the responsibility of recording institutions like the Canadian Kennel Club, the role of the publicly provided charitable groups like the Ontario SPCA, there was a huge and complex group of stakeholders identified in the inquest.

The areas that seemed to gain most attention were education, training and the Dog Owners' Liability Act. In the area of education, it became clear that both the public at large, and children specifically, need to have greater awareness of the way in which dogs should be approached, the way in which dogs should be handled and the way in which people should think, expectations of their pets.

Another area that received a lot of attention was the role of training and the responsibility that people have in making sure they have a well-adjusted animal that can be comfortable and confident in a home setting.

But obviously, in relation to this piece of legislation, I'm going to concentrate my remarks on the Dog Owners' Liability Act.

In the report on the inquest into the death of Courtney Trempe, there were two particular areas that I would like to just make reference to. Each of the various stakeholders, some of whom I have mentioned, was asked to respond to the recommendations from the inquest. Of course, one of those was the office of the Attorney General. I would like to read a couple of lines that I think set the stage for the legislative framework that we are looking at today. This, then, suggests that the ministry supports the specific recommendations: two involve dog restraining orders, one restricts pet ownership and two relate to fine provisions.

There is another comment that I would like to read into the record. This comes from Andrew Fordham, who at the time was the chief municipal law enforcement officer for the town of Georgina. Because of his relationship with the Whitchurch-Stouffville area, he was then very much involved in the work that went into the pre-inquest activity.

It certainly speaks to the importance of the legislation we are looking at today to look at a couple of the comments he made. One of the first would be the question of the need in legislation to be able to issue an order to restrain a dog where a statement seeking an order to destroy has been filed. This then would also need to be clarified in terms of being able to give the owner of the dog some comfort as to due process. The second one, which I'll just highlight, is his recommendation of increasing fines to no more than \$5,000.

I point out these two examples in this report on the inquest simply to set the stage for the kinds of things we're looking at in this piece of legislation. When you take those particular suggestions that were in the report of the inquest and then look at the specific legislation we have before us, it becomes very clear that those recommendations have been adopted in this piece of legislation.

The first one I would draw your attention to is the inclusion of an interim order, again reflecting the concerns that had been raised with regard to an order to destroy the animal. The next section of this proposed legislation also gives the court some opportunity to make a decision here, where the court may decide if it's necessary for the protection of the public that the dog be destroyed in the manner specified, or that the owner of the dog take measures specified in the order for more effective control.

It also speaks to something that again was suggested in the jury recommendations, and that is the opportunity for the court to be able to make an order prohibiting the dog's owner from owning another dog during a specified period of time. Much of the expert witness in the hearing dealt with the kinds of problems that create what we might more commonly think of as a vicious dog. It's very clear that ownership requires and implies a sense of responsibility, a sense of responsible ownership, which includes making sure that this animal has not been subjected to the kinds of abuse that would colour its temperament and its ability to be the stable pet we desire.

So there are a number of ways by which this piece of legislation is a direct response to those issues. Finally, I would point out, following Mr Fordham's suggestion, section 7 suggests a fine not exceeding \$5,000.

I would like to suggest that here we have a very specific example of a piece of legislation that is responding to some very specific needs, recognizing the tragedy that prompted them. I think it is important to see this in that context of responding to the community needs, in contrast, perhaps, to some of the comments that we have heard about how the question of a bill that encompasses a number of ministries will not in fact be meeting specific needs.

#### 1600

I would like to close by questioning the earlier opposition speaker, who had real concern about an omnibus bill. Here I'm quoting the member, Gerry Phillips. He said, "I have no difficulty with the process, and in future years this government or a new government will probably want to employ a similar technique to be as efficient as we can in keeping the legislative bills in the province up to date. So the process is fine."

That was a quote from Gerry Phillips on the whole need for providing the kind of bill that we are debating today.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you very much for the opportunity to address yet another time allocation or a motion that closes off debate in the Legislative Assembly. I'm going to put the emphasis on that end of it, the procedural end, which is the constant use of closure by this government to choke off debate on various bills.

I wish they would spend some time on bills that they refuse to bring forward, for instance, that wouldn't need time allocation. We have Bill 122, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to increase the penalties for driving with a suspended licence; Bill 32, An Act to amend the

Highway Traffic Act to require a driver's licence to be suspended if a motor vehicle is used when purchasing sexual services from a child; and Bill 6, An Act to protect Children involved in Prostitution. All of these are in the name of Mr Bartolucci. Rick Bartolucci, as you know, is the Liberal member for Sudbury. None of these bills gets brought forward. He's introduced all these bills. The government claims to have a law-and-order agenda. It refuses to proceed with these three particular bills, yet here it is trying to push yet another piece of its own legislation through the Legislative Assembly.

So that people know, this is not a prop, as you can see, but I just want you to be able to see, Mr Speaker, because I know sometimes it's difficult from that vantage, just how thick the compendiums are for the so-called Red Tape Reduction Act, 2000, volume 1 and volume 2, schedules A to F and G to P.

The reason I show that is that's how much is in this bill. They've taken everything except the kitchen sink and thrown it into a particular piece of legislation and said they want to push it through now, without the kind of scrutiny that every piece of legislation would want. I wonder what they'll do when they have their so-called victims' rights bill come through, because they do a lot of talking about victims' rights.

I listened the other day to these petitions that certain members from Scarborough and east of Scarborough like to get up and read in the House. They talk about the case of Karla Homolka. In fact, the Premier got—I won't say drawn into that. He inserted himself into that particular issue the other day in the hallway, for political purposes, quite obviously. I well recall, as you will, because you've been a member long enough in this assembly to do so, that on March 19, 1996, there was a headline that appeared in the Toronto Sun that said "Tories Stand by Deal with the Devil." I want you to see, Mr Speaker, not necessarily people at home, that headline which says, "Tories Stand by Deal with the Devil."

These same people who get up and make noises about the way Karla Homolka is treated—and of course, all of us are repulsed when we see some of the photographs that are out there—had a chance to undo the so-called deal with the devil and they chose not to. That was a decision that government made, and yet we had the Premier out in the hallway a couple of weeks ago suggesting that somehow the federal government should do something.

I would like to see us take some time on bills of this kind and other pieces of legislation so we can see in detail where there are any problems. There is often a hostage in here. A lot of what seems to be quite reasonable may be found in a bill, yet there are some hostages in there, something that one of the two opposition parties, or both, cannot support.

This government has used its strength—that is, strength in numbers in this Legislature—to push its way through any and every crisis that it might have.

People at home should know what has happened to diminish democracy in our province. One thing is the



changing of the rules of the Legislature. That always sounds boring. Indeed, when you mention it to reporters here at Queen's Park and the possibility that they might do a story, either an electronic or a print story, on rules changes, they say, "Our editors would never allow it because it would put people to sleep."

Yet what is most important is the way you run meetings and what you allow to happen. This government has changed the rules twice; in both cases it has severely diminished the role of the opposition so that now the opposition—if you were playing poker, and heaven knows, you know that I am not a gambler. But if one were playing poker, they've taken away all the poker chips the opposition could possibly play—in other words, any of the teeth that are there to slow the government down when the opposition believes the government is moving too quickly.

So those rules changes have had a major impact. This government now comes in as late as it can, gets out as early as it can in terms of the session. It has sessions at night instead of sessions in the daytime so it can pass twice as many pieces of legislation and we don't get the appropriate scrutiny we should have and the number of question periods that we need to hold the government to account.

The second thing it did which diminishes democracy is it has politicized the officers of the House. There are certain positions where all members of the House are supposed to concur in a decision. You will notice that when we chose the Environmental Commissioner—that's usually a role played by the Legislature—that in fact the Conservative majority imposed an individual. Regardless of what you may think of the person as an individual, as a personality, or the job the person is doing, what they did was take a person who had been the president of the Progressive Conservative association federally in North Bay, had run twice for the provincial Conservatives, and imposed him in the position of environment commissioner, a watchdog over the environment in Ontario. So they've started to interfere with those positions which were the prerogative of all members of the House.

Next, they changed the rules on spending in election campaigns, the amount of money that you can spend and the amount of money that you can collect as a political party or as a candidate. Surely they would look south of the border and see the corrosive affect of money in politics; that the more opportunity you give people to give larger donations, the more money there is available to spend in a campaign, the more it is weighted toward the party in power or indeed the party that collects the most money. How do you collect the most money? Well, you appeal to those who have the most money. The most powerful and the richest people in the province are those who have the financial wherewithal to make donations. Therefore, this government has expanded that opportunity for the wealthiest people in this province to make those donations to the Conservative Party.

The one thing they have been successful in is fundraising, and that is the reason. When you have policies

which are geared to favour the wealthiest people, those who already have the power, the establishment in the province, then quite obviously you're going to get a lot of money from them. What does that do? That gives a greater advantage to the government.

The next thing they did was to get involved heavily in partisan government advertising. You'll recall, Mr Speaker, that I raised with the Speaker of the House the issue of cheating in the last by-election campaign that was held in the Hamilton-Burlington area, surrounding Hamilton and Burlington and Ancaster, Aldershot, Dundas, Flamborough and those communities. The government of Ontario was running government ads during the election campaign. They had ads with the Premier talking about Lands for Life—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** Well, I say to the member for Stratford, he should get his Alliance candidates to complain about that, if he wishes to do it. I am elected to the Ontario Legislature, so I have a responsibility to deal with the provincial aspect. The Alliance candidates from the other side can make sure that they raise that federally.

So what they have done during the provincial by-election campaign—there were at least three ads running. There was print material coming to every household in Ontario that was meant to influence the people in that riding. Fortunately, it didn't in this particular case, but it was an abuse of office.

Next, they changed the rules for election campaigns to shorten the length of election campaigns, to exempt certain expenditures, such as polling, from any controls by the election finances commission. What they've done, as I say, is skewed the system, rigged the system in favour of the governing side in this particular case.

**1610**

I can tell you that what we see here, with this kind of legislation being shoved through the House rather quickly, using time allocation, closing off the debate, is that in fact what we're up against is a government that does not want to have close scrutiny of this kind of legislation but rather simply wants to rush it through. It would be different if this were one isolated incident. It has become the norm. Today, ministers themselves determine how much time there should be for debate in this Legislature within the rules that they've written to set themselves up.

Now the smarmy people in the backrooms of the party say: "Aren't they smart? Look what they've done. This is really clever." These are the hangers-on who set up the fundraisers and so on. They think that's really clever. But I think even people of goodwill who might support the government should be very wary of this government's record when it comes to dealing with democracy. Most certainly this time allocation motion is yet another example.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to join in the debate on Bill 119. Bill 119 is entitled An Act to reduce red tape, to promote good government through better management of Min-

istries and agencies and to improve customer service by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts.

There have been some comments with respect to this type of legislation and the format of this legislation. Comments about this were made by the member of Scarborough-Agincourt. The member was speaking on Bill 115 on October 9, 1987. That was, as we all know, when the Liberals were the governing power. He stated: "As a matter of operating principle, I think it's useful to have a process where governments of any political stripe can update and modernize our acts. They do get out of date and we're very supportive of a legitimate process that allows any government of the day to update them.... We have to constantly review our laws and our regulations and keep them up to date."

He goes on to say: "I've always argued that omnibus bills such as this are quite in order.... In the future this is the kind of process we would be supportive of." Today, Mr Speaker, he says one thing and yet another day he said another thing.

I'll say this: this is a process. A lot of hard work went into this. There are a lot of pieces of legislation that have been looked at, a lot of hard work on red tape. I think this type of legislation should be supported because there are a number of measures that I want to speak on that are very helpful in terms of clarification and in terms of the roles that should be played.

For example, when I was on city council in the city of Barrie, there were issues with respect to attacks by dogs and the rights of individuals with respect to situations where they were attacked or their child was attacked by dogs. This particular piece of legislation addresses the Dog Owners' Liability Act, which is a piece of legislation that's been in effect for a number of years. The changes that are being proposed here are as follows.

It says: "If a proceeding is commenced against the owner of a dog under the act, the Ontario Court of Justice may make an interim order before a court makes an order under the act.

"If a court orders the destruction of a dog and it is not taken into custody immediately, the owner is required to restrain the dog by means of a leash and muzzle until it is taken into custody.

"If a court finds that a dog has bitten or attacked a person or a domestic animal, the court may make an order prohibiting the dog's owner from owning another dog during a specified period of time."

Certainly what they're trying to address here is a situation that is in the interim before it gets to the court in its final process. That's a serious issue for people who have been subject to a dog attack and have been put in a situation where they have to live in a neighbourhood where there is a dangerous animal. I think that's one area that will be welcomed by municipalities in terms of strengthening their bylaws to deal with those types of situations.

The other change I want to address is put out by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. It

deals with the Change of Name Act. What will happen here is that there's no longer any time limit for a spouse whose marriage is dissolved by divorce, annulment or death to elect to resume the surname he or she had immediately before the marriage. Before, there was a time limit; now there's not going to be a time limit with respect to the Change of Name Act for spouses who are affected by a marriage that is dissolved by divorce, annulment or death to elect to resume the surname they had before the marriage. I think that's going to be something that is welcome in reducing a situation that a lot of people wanted to have addressed.

The other area I want to look at here are amendments proposed by the Ministry of Education. The Education Act will be amended to increase the maximum number of members of the Ontario Parent Council from 18 to 20. The Ontario Parent Council, as you may know, is an agency of the ministry that provides the government with timely and greatly appreciated advice on issues related to elementary and secondary education. The proposed change here is going to increase the number of members on that Ontario Parent Council, and I think that's a constructive change with respect to education in terms of broadening the representation on the council in the type of role they play in education in this province.

As you know, we have taken a number of measures in education to streamline the process and provide better government in that area. When we took office in 1995, the number of school boards stood at 129 major school boards, and they were cut significantly. There are 66 new district boards, including school authorities, and the total is now 72. That has been a tremendous decrease in the number of school boards in which we deliver education and also the number of trustees along with that in terms of reducing the number of politicians in the education field.

Another area I want to address is promoting good government. The other day, I came across in the Barrie Examiner, in the editorial section, information with respect to the recent Canadian and US agreement with respect to limiting smog-causing pollution that drifts across the border. The deal, which still needs the consent of the Canadian and US governments, is called the ozone annex to the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement. It will require a 50% reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions from the fossil-fuel-powered plants in southern Ontario.

This is from the Barrie Examiner of October 16. I want to read from it because it's very interesting in terms of how good intentions such as this can get led astray by actions of certain members with respect to not promoting, in my opinion, good government in terms of trying to preserve our environment. It says here:

"What about the federal government? While it is willing to play hardball with the provincial Conservatives on this particular issue, is it willing to honour this agreement at the federal level?"

"This week, the Globe and Mail claimed Heritage Minister Sheila Copps used her political weight to exempt a company in her Hamilton East riding from new

environmental standards. Natural Resources Canada has ruled that all refrigerators sold in Canada meet tough new guidelines requiring them to use 30% less electricity, but it was announced this week that certain models made by Camco Inc will be given an 18-month reprieve from the new regulations. According to a memo obtained under the Access to Information Act, the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources warned the minister the delay could set a precedent which may affect Canada's ability to meet the Kyoto greenhouse gas reduction targets.

#### 1620

“Legislation or government mandates are only as strong as the government's will to enforce them. The Kyoto Protocol itself stands as an example of the federal government's lack of will when it comes to meeting internationally agreed upon standards. The government has not done nearly enough since signing the 1997 protocol, in which it agreed to cut greenhouse gas emissions 6% from the 1990 levels by the year 2012. That actually represents a reduction of 26% because emissions have gone up since 1990.

“We appreciate this is a difficult task. We also recognize the fact that the government has committed millions of dollars in funding to the cause. But we maintain it isn't enough. Reprieves like the one given to the refrigerator company in Cops's riding only hinder the government's broader efforts. Setting goals to combat pollution is not the same as meeting goals to combat pollution. The first is relatively easy. The second is impossible without leaders who will make tough decisions with their eyes on the target.”

I wholeheartedly endorse that opinion in the Barrie Examiner with respect to what I must say is obviously a member looking out for their own riding, but quite frankly undermining the commitment and the ability of the federal government to be taken seriously with respect to the environment.

One other area that I want to address in this proposed legislation, Bill 119, is the Tenant Protection Act, 1997. In these changes:

“The definition of ‘landlord’ in section 1 of the act is amended to clarify that a tenant who shares a rental unit with another person and receives rent from that person is not considered a landlord under the Act.

“Section 1 of the act is amended by adding a definition of ‘sublet’.

“Section 5 of the act is amended to give a social housing landlord the same right as any other landlord to increase rent under section 132, without complying with the 12-month rule in section 126...”

What I want to focus on here is the situation which is causing some difficulty with respect to situations where you have an individual or individuals who aren't tenants and decide to take up residence with a tenant in a building, an apartment unit or a house—whatever is being rented by the tenant—and the tenant leaves and the people who were not the tenants stay. That's a situation where a landlord is put in a very difficult position. The way this act is dealt with, with respect to clarifying who

is a landlord, is helpful in one sense, obviously for the tenant, but not necessarily for the landlord. So that's an area that certainly has to be addressed with respect to dealing with landlord and tenant rights, and then also a hybrid that isn't even necessarily a tenant.

There are other changes we see here with respect to the act, for example, “Section 52 of the act is amended to allow a landlord of a rental unit in a condominium who has entered into an agreement of purchase and sale of the unit to give the tenant notice terminating the tenancy on behalf of the purchaser, if the purchaser in good faith requires possession of the unit for the purpose of residential occupation by the purchaser, the purchaser's spouse or same-sex partner, or a child or parent of one of them.” That's one of the amendments that has been put in place that certainly is consistent with a situation where the landlord wishes to take over the residence because they want to use it for their personal use. It makes common sense with respect to dealing with that situation in a condominium setting.

In closing, the legislation that's being proposed certainly addresses a lot of areas, but as the member for Scarborough-Agincourt said, and I agree with him, “Bills such as this”—and he called it an omnibus bill when he made his statement back in 1997—“are quite in order. In the future, this is the kind of process we would be supportive of.” This is what he's saying in 1997 when—I may have misspoke myself—we obviously were the government. He was in support of this process, yet today he says he's not.

What's going on here is a legitimate process, and it allows the government of the day to update a great number of statutes through extensive consultation with respect to what is needed to streamline those sections of the act and promote, in the same course, good government. I'm supportive of this legislation.

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** It is indeed a pleasure to rise today to join in the debate on the time allocation or closure motion that the Harris government has brought in to stifle debate, to limit debate on Bill 119, the Red Tape Reduction Act.

I can't let the comments of the last speaker go by and I will try to get at them at great length. The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford is a lawyer, I believe, and could tell you that the definition of “landlord” and the relationship of a landlord and tenant is one that dates back in common law for hundreds of years. It is a significant relationship. It is ground in law. What's really interesting is that in something called a red tape act, which is supposed to deal with minor technical and administrative matters, a fundamental change in the relationship in law is being made and that is namely the change in definition of being a landlord.

I say with great respect to the previous speaker, with great respect to all members of this House, the change which is being made in this act as it relates to the definition of “landlord,” and consequently the landlord and tenant relationship, eliminates a whole host of tenants from having any tenant protection or any tenant rights at all—any tenant protection or any tenant rights.

A cohabitant is no longer as a landlord, not the person they pay rent to if it's a roommate and not the landlord or the owner of the building. That is major, and for it to be included in this kind of legislation with this kind of purpose is insulting. It's incredibly deceptive, and it's in my opinion inappropriate for this type of a measure, a major policy, a major change in law, to be included in this kind of an act. Really, if the government has the desire to make this change, it should be included—

**Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation):**

Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I believe that the language being used by the member is inappropriate. I think you should ask him to retract.

**The Acting Speaker:** I didn't hear some of his speech. Is there a word or phrase that—

**Mr Caplan:** Everything was parliamentary. Thank you.

To make this kind of a major policy change, a major change in law, in a bill of this nature is wrong. It is simply wrong for this to happen.

I'd like to talk about Bill 119 in part not only for what's in the bill but also what's not in the bill. The previous speaker, the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, talked about the change in sublet. Let me read to you section 21. It says that clause 140(3)(a) of the act that it's amending is repealed and the following is substituted: "(a) sublet a rental unit for a rent that is payable by one or more subtenants and that is greater than the rent that is lawfully charged"—so the government has decided that lawful rent, according to their own act, is thrown out the window—"by the landlord for the rental unit." A direct quote from this bill; a major change in policy. This is not administrative. This is not minor or technical.

**1630**

For members of this government to try to stifle debate, to prevent the people of Ontario and members of this assembly from learning about some of the provisions contained in Bill 119, is abhorrent. It really is. People in the province of Ontario ought to know that the rights they expect to be in place are being systematically removed under the guise of an act to reduce red tape and to promote good government. Reducing people's rights is good government? My God, talk about Orwellian.

There are other sections of this act which are just reprehensible. One is an entire policy change related to default orders, related to the fact that now adjustments can be made by adjudicators before or after an application "if the tribunal considers it appropriate to do so and if amending the application would not be unfair to any party." The definition of "unfair" is not in here. It's a very subjective term.

The other is section 28 of this bill: "The tribunal may designate one or more employees of the tribunal as default order officers for the purposes of subsection (1.2)." Now staff can issue defaults, which has denied people their right—usually defaults are ordered in the case of eviction. They can now issue these default orders—which, by the way, Speaker, you would know,

are harder to get set aside than court orders—without any kind of due process, without any hearing process, without any check or balance.

It is reprehensible, what is happening here under the guise of red tape. This is the worst kind of policy-making. I'm terribly disappointed that the government would engage in this kind of blatant disregard for parliamentary procedure but also for decency for the people of the province, to let them know what's really contained in this bill.

Here today we are debating a time allocation motion, a closure motion. There will be no more debate. It's going to go to committee, we hope. We hope we'll have the opportunity, that it will be heard at committee so we can introduce amendments to prevent these kinds of abuses from occurring, to prevent people from losing their hard-fought rights, what limited rights they have right now that the Harris government hasn't already removed. We hope to have that opportunity. We also hope that government members will see the light and understand that this is not minor, inconsequential, that this is not technical or some kind of adjustment. These are major areas that need to be addressed.

I want to let you know that there are other things that could have been here in this act that would have been housekeeping matters. I would like to make some suggestions and put them on the table right now.

There has been a suggestion from the eviction project that the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal communicate directly in writing to both parties when there is a dispute. That happens in other government boards and agencies; why not the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal? At the moment, a tenant receives five calendar days' notice, and they have to formally respond. If a response isn't made, a hearing is waived and a default order is issued.

You would want to know that default orders are issued about 60% of the time. That's by the government's own operational review of the tribunal process and hearing situation. What's really interesting is that it looks to me and to all observers that what the Harris government is intending to do is to try to increase defaults, to try to prevent Ontarians and Ontario tenants from exercising the limited rights they have right now. Sixty per cent of the time isn't good enough for Mr Harris or Mr Clement or members of the government? That's absurd, absolutely ridiculous. Anyone who has tried to grapple with the notice that tenants get would know that this is a major area.

There are other suggestions the government could have acted on; they have to do with retaliatory measures and where an application follows one. So let's say a tenant submits an application for disrepair and it is immediately followed by an application from a landlord. That kind of arrangement should proceed immediately to a hearing; there shouldn't have to be the same kind of notice provisions.

Why couldn't full access to justice be guaranteed? That's a housekeeping amendment that could be made.

How about a definition of what "persistent late payment" means? This is something tribunal adjudicators

have been grappling with. There's a very low burden of proof on what that means. Why not have that kind of clarification? Obviously the Harris government is not interested in protecting the rights of tenants.

How about the suggestion that the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal issue a letter when a procedure of eviction is disposed of? For example, Mr Dunlop is in arrears in his rent and his landlord moves to evict him. That will go to the credit reporting agency. But Mr Dunlop, being a good tenant, as most tenants are, will pay the arrears of rent, yet on his credit record there will be no notification that he made good on his obligations. He will have a bad credit record. Why couldn't the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal issue that kind of letter to clarify the record, to make sure it's accurate? There are all kinds of other recommendations and suggestions.

How about making it easier for emergency applications by tenants who have been illegally evicted or face urgent hazards for health or safety?

This bill is not red tape, and it is not a serious attempt at housekeeping matters.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in support of Bill 119, which I believe is our third red tape act and continues a process we commenced in 1995 to eliminate the unnecessary barriers to growth and prosperity in Ontario. Let's remember that that's the definition of red tape. It isn't the passing of a regulation in and of itself that's bad; it's when you pass a regulation that has no effect except to impede business, except to add to the expense of doing business or even living as a private citizen in the province. Then it becomes something that nobody—on this side of the House, at least—wants to be part and parcel of, the package of legislation that oversees this great province.

We've heard from the other side, and they're quite prepared to nit-pick and go through and find one or two points in a bill that is very impressive in its length. You won't hear them talking, of course, of the dozens and dozens of other statute changes that they know would find favour if the people of this province had an opportunity to hear them fully debated. This bill changes statutes that operate under the purview of 15 different ministries, a total of 72 statutes, including the abolition of two acts completely, and a total of 232 changes. This is on top of literally hundreds and hundreds of other changes that have taken place in the two previous bills.

Before us here today is an act that among other things will now allow the Ministry of Natural Resources to permit American citizens who might own cottage properties in parts of this province to get a tax credit by donating the land to the province. The opposition parties would impede that. They would suggest that we should continue to allow a barrier to exist and that even though the American government is prepared to reciprocate, the fact of the matter is, as we expand parkland at an unprecedented rate in the province, they want to leave a barrier so that all those Americans who over the last 100 years have bought property in our vacation spots, and else-

where in the province, won't be able to participate in that parkland expansion, even if their conscience would otherwise drive them to do that.

The bill, for the first time since 1965, increases the amount of assets that someone who has gone bankrupt is allowed to keep. Under the current statute, if my memory serves me correctly, only \$2,000 worth of assets can be protected. Obviously, with inflation since 1965, whatever logic had prevailed at that time in setting that threshold has been undermined to the point that those assets are only worth 25% today of what they were worth 35 years ago. So this bill increases the amount of money that someone who has gone bankrupt, perhaps through no fault of their own, is allowed to keep, in order to keep them from going on social assistance. I guess the other side finds that unacceptable, because we certainly have not heard any words of support for that section of the bill.

#### 1640

From the Ministry of Labour we had a submission that is now part of this bill that would allow the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to be amended to provide coverage to volunteer auxiliary police. Again, to my colleagues on the other side of the House, if you don't think having auxiliary police, people who want to volunteer their time on parade routes and other low-risk opportunities to assist the police forces, not just in Toronto but all across Ontario, but at the same time give them at least some rudimentary coverage in case they suffer an accident on the job—if you really think that's an inappropriate change, I would invite you to stand in your place and say that. Don't keep harping over the one or two things that we've heard from one speaker after another from the other side. Let's hear what you have to say about remedying that longstanding oversight that prevented somebody out there helping their fellow citizens, volunteering, in many cases for no pay, no compensation at all, from getting workers' safety insurance coverage if they suffer an accident on the job.

Perhaps they'd like to comment as well about the change that was made by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations to the Consumer Reporting Act. This bill proposes to prohibit credit repair companies from charging customers large sums of money in advance to help them repair their bad credit reports. What a scam. Nobody on the other side has considered it important enough to stand and suggest that the government is heading in the right direction. So we must assume from your silence that you disagree with this. I think it's utterly shameful that you would not want us to protect consumers from such charlatans. The ministry is not going to allow payment of advance fees until services are actually provided and will prevent companies from using false advertising that they can "clean bad credit."

Maybe the opposition members might want to pass judgment as well about why they would be voting against a bill wherein the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations is amending the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to ensure that the purchasers of new homes are covered by the plan, whether or not they bought it from

the builder or a subsequent owner. It's an administrative change, but it guarantees now that all of the protections built into the new home warranty plan continue to exist even if the house changes hands more than once. Let's not forget, the builders have paid into a fund, the house was built, presumably according to building code standards. Why should there be any wiggle room at all, why should there be any circumstance where someone in that home, within the warranty period, is not protected by that fund? But again, we've heard a deafening silence from the other side. They don't think protecting homeowners—and of course we're talking in most cases of people buying their first home, a starter home, and they don't think this is a worthy change to the legislation in the province of Ontario. I have a hard time reconciling that with their sworn oaths, but we see it bill after bill after bill. If the government says to do one thing, they feel inclined to simply suggest the alternative as the proper course of action.

We've changed the Chartered Accountants Act. This act became law in 1956. Since then, there have not only been no major changes to the act, but the act refers to each member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario as "he." If I had a dollar for every time someone on the other side of the House has stood in their place and pontificated about the need for a balanced approach to the issues when it comes to gender, but they disagree with taking a statute that's 44 years old and making sure its language is contemporary. They're going to vote against that. I hope all the female accountants in the province pay heed, because I think it's utterly shameful that they would countenance voting against such a minor change, but while minor in its drafting, important in its significance.

We've had a number of other changes to legislation that reflect the fact we've found more efficient ways of delivering services. The members in this House will know that we have proposed, in all of the red tape bills, a number of mergers of various agencies, boards and commissions in the province. We have, in this bill, taken steps in the Ministry of the Environment to consolidate two different panels into one. When we hear from the other side the questions, as we did today, about Walkerton and other important environmental questions, the fact that they would countenance the idea of having duplication in the oversight and the monitoring of some important statutes of the province really is nonsensical. The fact of the matter is, if we focus the resources efficiently and effectively, the issue we're talking about doesn't matter; we're going to get to the root of a problem far faster, at far lower cost to the taxpayer.

This act is going to consolidate the operation of the Environmental Assessment Board and the Environmental Appeal Board, a long-standing recommendation of the committee that Bob Wood chaired and that I was privileged to sit on a number of years ago. Its sole impact is going to be to eliminate administrative overlap and duplication. Who on the other side of this House is

prepared to stand up and say they don't think that's a laudable goal?

We've got some very minor details as well. Under the Mining Act, there's an amendment that now gives the Minister of Northern Development and Mines the authority to approve a refund due to an administrative or rounding error. Did you know that we needed the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to be able to rectify something where there's just been a rounding error in the calculation of a refund? What an extraordinary waste of time of the Queen's representative, totally unbecoming a \$60-billion-per-year enterprise like the province of Ontario. My goodness.

When you look at that and the fact that the Mining Act required that mining claims be filled out in red ink—we cared about the colour of red ink. Now I know that previous governments used to get a volume discount buying ink in that colour, but to have required the clerks in the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to actually fill out the forms in red ink is something quite incredible indeed.

While each of these changes, in and of themselves, may be relatively minor, in total the ability to remove barriers to growth has been, and we are convinced and the numbers would suggest, part and parcel of why the Ontario economy has led not just Canada, not just North America, but all of the G8 countries every year since 1996.

I continue to be disappointed that the members of the Liberal and NDP caucuses aren't proud of the accomplishments of this great province, that they're not prepared to stand up and say that when we have seen accomplishments such as the one I just spoke of, it's worthy of tribute, it's worthy of praise, it's worthy of acknowledgement in this House, if for no other reason than to reinforce the behaviour of those Ontarians who have had the courage to open up their wallets to take a risk and make an investment.

Whether it's starting a new business or expanding an existing business or going back and getting skills upgraded to be able to take on a new job in a new economy, to all of those Ontarians who have reflected the fact that lower taxes and fewer regulatory barriers have made Ontario a better place to live, work and raise a family, it's truly saddening that the members opposite, each of whom represents over 100,000 Ontarians, would rather be a prophet of doom and gloom in this chamber, would rather come here and suggest the cup is half empty when the right message, as we find in at least the majority of government-held ridings where you've got MPPs who speak in support of small business, who speak in support of Ontarians who are prepared to take a chance—we've seen growth, we've seen vibrancy, we've seen expansion in our economy unprecedented in the history of this province.

We've cut tax rates: 166 times we've cut taxes and the income of the province has gone up \$11 billion. That's \$11 billion more to put into health care, to put into education, to improve our roads, to make the sorts of

investments that are long overdue but which are critical if we're going to make sure that this province stays at the forefront of all of the world's economies.

**1650**

We don't have a lot of oil and gas and other natural resources that have seen their prices explode by 50% and 100% in the last year. But what we have seen are thousands, indeed tens of thousands, of individual businesses and individuals themselves who have, by pooling their resources, expanded this economy tremendously. For the member in front of me, I would suggest that each rotation is considered on its own. I'm sure he will have lots of time.

I just wanted to close by saying that this bill is an important step forward. I would challenge the members opposite to look at all the details in this bill, to take the time to read at least the explanatory notes—they're only about six pages at the front of the bill—to understand the significance, sector by sector, of eliminating duplication and waste, of eliminating unnecessary regulation, of eliminating barriers to growth.

It's only by guaranteeing to the taxpayers of this province that we remain committed to the goal of a free and vibrant economy that we are going to see the kind of resources put into our coffers that in turn can be invested into ensuring this remains the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I appreciate the opportunity, however limited, this afternoon to speak on this bill. I'm going to be, in the time I have, speaking from a number of fronts on this piece of work before us here. It's rather substantial. It covers a whole host of ministries and changes to a myriad of acts and statutes in this Legislature and will, in some instances, yes, be good. Within the bill, there are a number of pieces that we as a party in this place would probably support. But right at the very outset I must say that the nature of the bill, the fact that it is an omnibus bill and that there is so much in it and the speed with which it is moving through this House lends one to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** Yes, exactly. It's another case here—and you've heard me use this analogy before—of the Trojan Horse, where you bring in something that looks rather unthreatening and innocuous, that presents as perhaps even good, as something that could be useful, but when you get into it further and you begin to look at the pieces piece by piece, which is what we would have preferred this government do—as a matter of fact, we would prefer that this government operate in that way across the board.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** We'd prefer they weren't the government.

**Mr Martin:** Well, if you want to take it that distance, of course we would prefer that they weren't the government. They've shown, since they came here six years ago, a total and complete lack of respect and understanding and support for the legislative process in this province, which has been developed over a long period of time, has served us well by way of check and balance

to the kind of initiative and agenda that any particular party brings to this place, so that at the end of the day whatever we do is well thought out, has public input into the consultation process and serves the greatest number of people but at the same time protects those who are in perhaps a minority situation in any particular circumstance, so that we have fairness and justice, access and equity across the board as much as we possibly can.

In fact we've done that. We've had an evolution in this province over a number of years now that has seen us become the envy of many in other jurisdictions, I would suggest, in the country, in North America and indeed across the world.

But what we have here before us this afternoon is another example, in some very important ways, of how this government operates. We have a bill that we're not just blanketly opposed to. I don't think anybody in this place would stand up and speak against efficiency, the government working more effectively for people, streamlining, changing things, bringing things up to date. I don't think anybody here would be against that. As a matter of fact, as I was listening here this afternoon, I listened to a number of the government members speak to particular pieces of this legislation that, yes, could garner support, that we could probably support, that are important to do. But then you wrap them up into an omnibus bill such as you've done here and you push them through this place.

I don't know if the member from Scarborough realizes that this bill—did you see the size of the bill and the compendium? When it was brought in here last week, it was massive. It was one of the bigger pieces of work that has arrived in this place in a while. For it to be pushed through here in less than a week I think must present as problematic to him. I know, having served with him on committee, that he respects and understands the value in having good debate, having fulsome debate, allowing people an opportunity to get their thoughts on the record about the whole raft of suggestions that's often contained in these kinds of packages.

In this instance we're not doing that. We have here again one more example of a huge piece of legislation that has in it some very significant changes that this government is going to push out there by way of its agenda, that we will not have had an opportunity to get into in any significant detail. Yes, we have put, as has been suggested, and I will put a couple of the areas of concern that we have on the table here this afternoon about a couple of pieces of the bill. To listen to the government members, you would think that everything in this bill makes sense, everything in this bill is about creating efficiency in government, everything in this bill should have the blessing of everybody. They're probably wondering why we would get up at all in the first place to even speak to this bill or to challenge it or to ask questions or raise issues about it, because after all, they see themselves as that font of knowledge that is above all challenge in this province, and have acted that way over a period of some six years now.

I think we have to look at the overall agenda of this government to understand why some of us have concerns about this legislation. The problem is that the Harris Conservatives seem to think that almost anything that protects the public from being taken advantage of by large corporations or that stops government agencies from abusing their power should be done away with. That's exactly what we have here in many serious and significant ways inside this so-called red tape omnibus bill. This government takes regulation which has been in place in Ontario over a long number of years now, after some very serious consultation by folks directly involved, with some concern, some interest—sometimes regulation is put in place in this jurisdiction after some tragic accident in a workplace, on a highway or in a school or hospital. There's an inquiry that accrues. All kinds of time and effort is put into studying a particular circumstance.

I would suggest that probably the inquiry that started yesterday in Walkerton is an excellent example of the kind of work we do in being vigilant in this province to make sure that when a circumstance such as that happens, we get to the bottom of it and we understand what caused it and how it could have come about in the first place. Ultimately, when all is said and done, we come up with a set of proposals or recommendations that we bring to government to put in place by way of the legislative process and legislation, which then become what we refer to in this place as regulations.

#### 1700

We regulate a particular operation or way of doing things in this province to protect people. To make sure circumstances are safe, to make sure children are not at risk, to make sure communities are not at risk, to make sure people who go to work in this province are not at risk, we put in place all kinds of important regulations. People don't just dream those up. People don't just go to bed at night and wake up in the morning and say, "I think we need a regulation here or a regulation there, or why don't we do this?" I have to say, though, that sometimes one would think this government is beginning to operate exactly in that fashion—and it's typical of so much we've seen over the last six years—where somebody has dreamt up a new regulation that would somehow support their agenda and brings it to the Premier's office. They go over it very briefly and say, "Who supports it? How is this going to help our friends and benefactors out there make more money and get some of this obstructive, very difficult challenge that's in place out of the way so perhaps more money can be made?" That doesn't serve us well.

They take regulations and in this instance—this is the third or fourth omnibus bill we've had before us—they call it red tape. By calling it red tape, they give it a negative connotation; they invite people to think of everything in it as suspect, as not being in the best interests of the larger populace out there. Because it's been painted as red tape and named red tape, obviously we need to get rid of it. That's what we on this side of the

House have such grave concern and worry about. We know the agenda of this government, as indicated by some of the things they've done over the last five or six years, is not in the best interests of the overall population in any significant or meaningful way.

We know the agenda of this government is not in making sure that everybody who calls Ontario home is included in the things that go on, that speak of doing well and of being successful. We know this government is not interested in efficiency and in government working well, for example, where the delivery of health care is concerned, where the delivery of education services is concerned or even where the protection of the environment is concerned. We know that where those kinds of things are concerned, they want to diminish government, they want to reduce the ability of government to be a major player and to participate in an effective and progressive way, so that the corporate sector, the big multinational industrialists, can come in here, set the rules, take advantage and make off at the end of the day like bandits and leave the rest of us wondering what happened to us.

The agenda of this government, served by these kinds of omnibus bills, is very clearly and simply to get as much government regulation as you possibly can out of the way, to move it aside, to reduce government and its ability to act on behalf of the ordinary citizen out there and to diminish it in a way that allows their corporate friends and benefactors to come in and take over, to come in and, as they say, create wealth. Again, nobody's against the creation of wealth or against taking advantage of opportunities to generate some resource. It's when you look at how that wealth is distributed and how so few people benefit at the end of the day that you begin to question the direction of this government and why we would allow them to continue the way they do.

This red tape bill coming in here this last week is a perfect example of how we have yet one more Trojan Horse pushed among us. Yes, it presents on one hand as something that makes some sense. If you look at some of the pieces that were presented in this place over the last few days and this afternoon by some of the members from the government side who spoke, yes, there are some things in this bill that warrant our support, that we could support and that we think would make sense and be good and in the best interests of moving forward in this province. But there are too many other questions in the bill that we haven't had a chance to get into, to discuss with the government and to challenge in any serious and significant way, and I suggest to you that we won't.

This afternoon we will vote on this time allocation motion. This time allocation motion will allow the government to put to a vote all the questions where this bill is concerned, and then it will move on to the next phase, which should be some significant and serious public consultation across the province, but I suggest it won't. That's my prediction. My prediction is that there will be very limited consultation on this bill after second reading, that it won't go much beyond the premises we now are in and that it will be very quickly back here for third



reading debate, which will be as brief and brisk as the one we've had on second reading. Then they will have gotten away yet again with changing the climate of this province where government and its ability to protect people and communities and workers are concerned, and it will allow the yet more aggressive involvement of the big corporate agenda out there to come in and do their thing and leave the rest of us unprotected. That's unfortunate.

In some ways I think it's rather scandalous, in the world we live in in Ontario, where we have so much we could share together in order to protect the common good, in order to protect those things that, over a long period of time, we have decided collectively are in our best interests to protect, but we won't do that. For example, this government thought that having a Ministry of the Environment that could actually enforce the law and that tested the water supply was red tape. So, what people living in communities out there, living with the results of circumstances such as Walkerton, which presented so tragically here over the last year, would see as proper and effective and good regulation to make sure we have clean drinking water and that people are safe and protected out there, this government calls red tape. That in itself should lead you to the same conclusion I've come to, which is that where red tape is concerned, this government doesn't really understand that if you have regulations that protect people and communities and workers, they really aren't red tape, and a lot of what is in this bill we're debating here today is of that ilk.

This government's Red Tape Commission also sent up a trial balloon this past summer which, if implemented, would take away the Rand formula, the cornerstone of labour rights in this province. Mike Harris and his Conservative colleagues seem to think that unions are just so much red tape to be swept away so management can get on with the job. That brings me to another point, which is the aggressive way this government has targeted people in this province who don't quite fit their agenda, who don't quite support the agenda they think they were elected to implement or impose on us here. So they take it and wrap it up in a package and they call it red tape, when so much of what they're trying to do away with is things that people in this province have over a long period of time decided were in their own best interests, were in the best interests of the people they represented and worked with and were willing to do whatever it took to make sure they did everything they could to put in place the regulations and those organizations they felt would be helpful in making sure that we had a province, a jurisdiction here that was inclusive of all people and involved as many people as was possible.

**1710**

Let me give you an example of a couple of the things that we think this bill raises by way of concern for us and that people across the province should pay attention to as they see this piece of legislation work its way through this place and in some probably significant and very meaningful ways begin to see the effect of out there as

they go about their everyday dealing with each other, both in the workplace and in the communities they live in; changes, for example, like the changes in here that are being brought to the Theatres Act which would allow changes in film classifications to be done by regulation instead of through amendments to the act. This could, in a worst-case scenario, be used to bring back censorship in a serious way without any public debate.

That's key to the concern we have and that we're putting on the table here this afternoon, that the Liberals put on the table earlier on, that the Tories don't seem to understand because they feel they had that public debate before they got elected in 1995 and again in 1999 and they don't need to have that debate any more because they have now all the answers.

We all wish it were that simple but frankly it isn't. If we're going to do things in this province that speak of government working effectively and efficiently on behalf of people, we shouldn't be doing it this way.

They shouldn't be taking a myriad of concerns and issues, some that could be supported, some that couldn't, wrapping them up in a huge omnibus bill, bringing it in here, ramming it through in three or four days, bringing in time allocation motions, not having any significant public consultation on any of the pieces in this bill, then bringing it back for third reading and putting it through and then saying to themselves and to others out there, "Look at how wonderful we are. Look at how we live up to the commitment we made when we were running for government to get rid of red tape," without taking the time that was necessary to define and explain why it is that they saw this as red tape, why it is that this red tape—which in fact in a greater percentage of the incidents is not red tape at all, it's regulation that has been put in place over a long period of time to protect people—is now going to disappear in the interests of allowing their corporate benefactors and friends to come in and take advantage of opportunity that will be presented then to make more money, at the expense of the common elements of the communities that we have built up over a long period of time now.

As I said before, if they were as serious about making government working efficiently and effectively in those ways that we all wish they would, in the areas of, for example, health care and education, and making sure that the work that is being developed out there accrues to more people being better off and more secure, then we wouldn't have any difficulty here. But that's not been the track record; that's not been the agenda of this government. That's not been where they've wanted to go and they've not wanted to have any public debate about that. So we're concerned.

I put on the table that the changes to the Theatres Act, for those out there who have concern about the very important issue of censorship, without any debate whatsoever in that respect, should present as very problematic and difficult.

The Environmental Assessment Board and the Environmental Appeal Board are being merged into the

Environmental Review Tribunal, again a diminishing, a downsizing of some very important vehicles in this province that over a long period of time have served us well, but perhaps needed to be changed. We have no difficulty with that, but change in this manner, wrapped up in a bill called the red tape bill and being rammed through here in the three or four days that we've had to debate it—I don't think so. I don't think that's what the people out there expect of government.

After what they've seen over the last five or six years by way of some of the amalgamation of other very important organizations out there, including municipalities and school boards, if they knew—and I'm telling them here tonight—that these two boards were going to be merged into what is now being referred to as the Environmental Review Tribunal, I don't think they would be too excited. I think they would have some real concern and some questions they would want to put, that they would want to come to a table to discuss and debate those things so that the truth of the matter might have a chance to raise its head and we could see in fact if going in this direction was in the best interests of the general public out there, if in fact, where the environment is concerned—and we know in this province there are some very real, genuine and serious concerns where the environment is involved in the province at the moment—particularly where the issue of water, and clean water are concerned, this government would be in any way meddling and diminishing some of the vehicles that we have out there, even if it is in an attempt to perhaps make them more efficient.

When you consider the track record, it has to raise some red flags and present as disconcerting. It's something we should have had more time in this place to debate and discuss so that we could bring forward some of the amendments that we think would be helpful and, at the end of the day, have something that perhaps all of us could support.

But I suggest to you that's not going to happen. The way they've operated so far where this bill is concerned, three days—as a matter of fact I didn't even get a chance to give my leadoff speech on this until they brought in a time allocation motion. I thought maybe three days. This came in on Tuesday or Wednesday of last week and it was before the House—we get at most two to three hours of an afternoon and then in the evening we get another two and three quarter hours in here to actually debate bills. When you distribute that among the three caucuses that are here, you begin to realize how very little time any one of us gets to debate these important issues. The fact that I, as the critic in this area for our caucus, because this thing moved so quickly—at lightning speed through here—didn't even get a chance to come and speak to the issues that we have with so many of the pieces of this bill in a serious and fulsome way before we had placed on the table before us a time allocation motion, which is in fact what we're debating here this afternoon, should speak to people very clearly about what this government thinks about public consultation, thinks

about the process of government that we've all supported and participated in here in this place over such a long period of time now and is with every day that goes by being taken away and changed and diminished.

**1720**

The tribunal is given wide powers to award costs for hearings under several acts. Again, this is part of introducing user fees or fees of various sorts to people out there to replace some of the money that they have collected but then subsequently, by way of their largesse at budget time, have given away to their friends and benefactors by way of tax breaks, so that we don't have any more money left in the public coffer to pay for those processes that we have, as a government, decided over a period of time that government should pay for.

What we have here is an example, through the red tape bill, of government doing what they should be doing in a more public way, using the ministry that's there to administer these kinds of things to introduce another way of collecting more money for government, so that the government doesn't have to pay for the things it is expected they would, because they're giving the money away. They're giving the money away and they don't have it; there are a lot of people—

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** It's the taxpayers' money.

**Mr Martin:** Yes, that's right, it's the taxpayers' money, and you're giving it away. It's the taxpayers' money that they give to us, as government, to spend on those things that they have identified as important: education, health care, protecting the environment, infrastructure such as roads and hospitals and other buildings; and what you're doing is you're letting all those things fall apart. We look at health care and what's happening out there; look at the problems that we have in education and the pressure that's now put on teachers to do more and more for less and less. Look at the way our roads are falling apart across the province and you begin to understand why people have some very real concerns about the agenda of this government, which is to give away the very significant money that they are now collecting because, yes, we're in a good economy; the surpluses that are beginning to build in this province, to their friends and benefactors, so they can take it and put it into their Swiss bank accounts—you know, buy another yacht, take another vacation or whatever.

At the same time, you and I, who live in communities like Gore Bay and Sault Ste Marie, look on as our education system becomes a shadow of its former self. They look on while we in the north try to access health care in the hospitals that have fewer and fewer of the new technical advances that we need to have, and fewer nurses working under much more stress than ever before, while they give away the money that is collected rightfully from all of us as taxpayers, by way of our taxes, so that we can give those things to a very few quite wealthy individuals, who for the most part don't even call Ontario home for a great percentage of the year.

What we have in this act, in this red tape bill, is a tribunal given wider powers to award costs for hearings

under several acts, which is another way of saying, “Let’s collect more money by way of user fees so that it’s not seen as taxation out there, so we can replenish, in the coffers of government, some of the money that we’re giving away by way of tax breaks to the very few wealthy out there who actually benefit by it.” The tribunal is specifically not limited to the considerations that govern the awarding of costs in any court while, absent intervener funding, the awarding of costs may be the only way currently for public interest groups to get their expenses paid. The bill may also be widening the criteria, something which could be detrimental to such groups. Further consultation with environment lawyers on this issue alone is required.

So you begin to see, as I lay it out for you, some of the areas of concern that we have with this bill, how it fits in so very clearly and neatly with their agenda, which is to get rid of regulation—they call it red tape; those of us who are responsible and concerned call it regulation—and not only to get rid of the regulation that’s there, and to block any new regulation such as the bill that my colleague the critic for environment, Ms Churley, brought forward here a couple of weeks ago, which would go a distance to protecting the clean water stock of this province, but also to amalgamate or get rid of, in some very serious ways, some of the vehicles that are out there now that could be used by people to protect each other where these things are concerned and to change the way we pay for people participating in processes to, at the end of the day, challenge government; where decisions are sometimes made before the courts that can be quite expensive, complicated, technical and legal in nature, turn the cost of that back on to the backs of those people who have some very real, genuine and sincere concerns in the hope that they’ll just go away, that they’ll just not bother any more, so that this government then can have a free hand to move in and wield its power and have its way and do whatever it wants.

Alas, what we will have in this province if we continue down that road, doing away with red tape in this way, which, as I’ve said, is in fact a reducing of the regulatory regime that’s in the province, not allowing those vehicles that we’ve put in place to operate at their full capacity because they now have to take on more and more responsibility with fewer and fewer resources to do it, and, at the end of the day, putting a charge on the backs of those who would participate in some meaningful way in the discussion, such as the inquiry that’s going on in Walkerton today, is that they might think twice about actually participating, because they may find it’s just too expensive and too costly. Many of the people who participate in that activity are not your well-off residents in this province. They’re not the people benefiting from the very significant and generous tax breaks that are going out there these days across the province. They may not be there.

These people we have counted on for such a long period of time to pick up the slack—when so many of us who actually should be driving the bus in the first place

have gotten tired or missed the opportunity or were too busy doing something else—to actually pick up the gauntlet, will not have the resources they need to do the job that’s required to bring the challenge and to be effective in protecting those things that we all so often take for granted. Yet we know, from the example of Walkerton, what happens when we do that. We put ourselves, our families and our neighbours at risk.

There are changes to the conflict-of-interest provisions for the chair and president of the WSIB, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and the chair of the appeals tribunal. They are no longer prohibited from owning stocks or bonds in prescribed sectors. That means they could have holdings in companies that appear before them—a conflict of interest. Under the guise of red tape, we’re getting rid of the issue of conflict of interest, where some of the folks who sit on very important boards and commissions in this province are concerned, when they in turn have to challenge those companies that are acting in a way that is not in the interest of the common good, because they may, when some investigating is done and if they haven’t tabled a conflict of interest in the first place, turn out to own stocks or bonds in companies that come before them.

I have to tell you I’ve been shocked over the last six years, sitting on the standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions, by the number of people who continually come through the door by way of appointment—the governing caucus on that committee is controlled by none other than the chair of the Red Tape Commission, who simply fast tracks the process each Wednesday morning—the number of people who have come forward from the corporate sector, friends and benefactors of the government, to sit on boards and commissions. When we challenge the government members as to why they think it’s OK to continue to appoint their friends and supporters and people who gave money to them during the election, people who are in business with them when they’re not in government, they simply say, “So we can get our agenda out there and operating in the province.”

**1730**

Now we’re saying through this red tape bill that perhaps they can appoint more of their friends and benefactors, because up to now perhaps they weren’t able to appoint them because they had a conflict of interest. Because of their holdings, because of their stocks or bonds, they were not a good appointment because they might have a conflict of interest and might have to declare that on a regular basis. Under this act now they will be allowed to sit and operate and not have to worry about that at all. It’s an inconvenience where these folks are concerned to have to think for a second, “Maybe I have a conflict of interest here. Maybe the decision I’m making is being made in a selfish, self-serving way.”

That doesn’t worry the folks over there as long as it supports their agenda, as long as it goes a distance to diminish the ability and the effectiveness of government where serving the common good is concerned, as long as

it supports the giving away of the massive amounts of tax money that are being collected these days in this province that could be spent on education and health care and protecting the environment. As long as it's supportive of that agenda, then this government sees it as good, and if it gets in the way, they label it red tape and they bring it forward and it becomes, then, that which all of us have to live with around here.

Changes to the Planning Act let the OMB dismiss appeals or requests for a hearing if the appellant fails to respond to a request from the board for further information. If an ordinary citizen who doesn't have access to the very sophisticated and sometimes intimidating vehicles of communication we have today, and doesn't see that he or she has been requested to table further information on an appeal they made before, in many instances, the last court they can go to where a decision is concerned that impinges on them and perhaps the little bit of property they own in a community, and they miss the deadline or fail to respond, then their appeal is thrown out. No matter how good the appeal was, no matter how serious the appeal or how real the appeal, if they fail to respond to a request from the board for further information, the OMB can simply dismiss it.

That's considered here, in this instance, as simply getting rid of red tape. This is taking away an ordinary citizen's right to due process, to participate in a process because they perhaps didn't pick up the e-mail that came through, or maybe the computer crashed and they weren't able to fix it and so it sat there for a few days or weeks, or perhaps they moved and their mail wasn't referred to their new address, or perhaps they lost their phone or whatever—the myriad of things that can happen to any one of us in our day-to-day lives.

Because they were not able to respond in some timely and short, limited way, they lose their ability to participate in a process that, in many instances, is the last resort many of us have to get in the way of some often bigger entity coming in and disturbing the lifestyle you've developed over a period of years, simply because we live in a society that this government likes to think is free for the taking. It's let the free market decide. You have a little piece of property and a garden and some peace and quiet that you've spent a lot of money building up over a number of years. The community decides to put up a big-box shopping mall right behind you. You want to challenge that. You don't know if you have any legal legs to stand on, but you want to challenge it anyway. You know that you can go to the OMB. You do, but because you missed a request for some information, you lose that opportunity. This eliminates the necessity for the board to send another letter giving the person another chance to respond. Community groups appearing without legal counsel would be most likely to have their cases dismissed for this reason, and this amendment could be a barrier to their participation. This is what this government means when they talk about red tape.

Changes to the Tenant Protection Act make it easier to evict drug dealers. The notice period to those who

commit an illegal act related to drugs has been shortened from 20 days to 10 days. Even before a person is found to be guilty of doing something illegal, if they are labelled as somebody who is dealing drugs, a landlord can come in and within 10 days have them evicted.

The bill also allows the board to designate employees as default order officers so that tribunal members do not have to personally sign default orders. Tenant advocates are telling us that tenants are already being evicted without notice through default judgments because landlords are not giving tenants the proper notices. This gives the board the appearance of being the eviction machine that tenant activists have accused it of being.

Here we are under the guise of red tape—and I don't think there's anybody here who wouldn't participate in a full and wholesome debate on the question of how we deal with some of the difficulties out there in the landlord-and-tenant world of Ontario, some of the challenges that are faced on both sides of that fence, to sit down and have a full debate about that, discuss it, develop good public policy around it, make sure that everybody's heard and that we do the right thing, make sure that people have decent, affordable housing and that they can't be just summarily dismissed or kicked out whenever the landlord decides, for the myriad of reasons they do that, that this tenant is no longer acceptable there. On the other hand, we might want to talk to landlords who have been given a difficult time over a period of time now on issues that they've brought before all of us, I'm sure, here in this place concerning tenants who become the tenants from hell from time to time.

I think we need to have a full and comprehensive discussion about that. I think the government needs to be more forthcoming with resources to make sure there are enough facilities out there to house those people in Ontario who are looking for affordable housing today in every community across this province. Yet we're not doing that. What are we doing? Under the guise of a red tape bill put forward by the Red Tape Commission—and I want to speak very briefly about that for a minute before I wrap up here this afternoon—they are bringing forward some legislation here that will have far-reaching and very difficult and problematic effects on some of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our communities, people we're trying to work with every day to make sure they have good housing so that they can stop doing some of the things they're doing and get on with their lives.

The changes to the Theatres Act also eliminate the regulation of projectionists. This may or may not be a problem, but we need to talk about it. We need to have a discussion about it.

If the notice is revoked because the tenant made an agreement to stop doing the illegal act involving drugs, the landlord can later decide that the tenant has broken the agreement and apply to the tribunal for eviction without notice to the tenant. Another amendment that we should be talking about says, however, that default orders cannot be issued in eviction cases involving drugs. That

should mean the tenant must have a chance to be heard by the tribunal.

I suggest to you that further clarification, further debate, further discussion and the involvement of more people on these things is required.

1740

There are what appear to be minor and technical changes to the mechanism whereby the minister can require the board to rehear a case. These should also be checked with environmental lawyers to be sure we're doing the right thing.

What do we have here? We have a Trojan Horse brought in by this government to do what it obviously thinks it doesn't have the time to do through the regular channels, through the regular ministries, through this House, with fulsome debate, public consultation, and back in here for further debate. And then? If we think it's in the best interests of all Ontarians to do a certain thing, then we do it. But no, we've set up this Red Tape Commission, another in a long line of commissions. You remember the gas busters and the crime commission. I'm wondering where they got to, particularly the gas busters in light of the big truck debacle that's happening out there today because this government doesn't have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to the big oil companies in this province.

We now have the Red Tape Commission. Who mandated it? Where does it get its power? What are its terms of reference? Nobody knows. Who is it responsible to? Where did it get the money it uses to travel around the province and do its consultations? How much money is it spending? Who are they talking to? We all have our hunches but we're not sure. That's just to give you an idea of how clandestine this whole operation is and how it must be a vehicle of government to get some things done that it couldn't do through regular channels. It's obviously been effective over the last five or six years because this is the third or fourth package of legislation we've had come through.

I was reading over the weekend a magazine that we all get here. It's called Ontario Business Report. Inside that report, I'm told, not by way of a statement from a minister or a press release put out so that we could all talk about it or discuss it, is an announcement that the Red Tape Commission is to become a permanent commission of this government. I guess we as government are going to now fund the Red Tape Commission to continue to do the work it does, which is to set up another vehicle for this government to ram its agenda down the throats of all of us here and the people of this province.

I suggest to you that if we continue down this road, we will rue the day.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** As the member from Sault Ste Marie was saying, it's become a permanent commission. I say hear, hear. What could be better than a permanent Red Tape Commission to get rid of some of these useless government regulations that were brought in by previous governments during that lost decade from 1985 to 1995, some 1,000 new regulations a

year that they were bringing in? It's an undue burden to business to have useless regulations. I'm not talking about quality regulations. Those are needed.

The quantity of time businesses spend on useless regulations takes them away from their business activities. Small businesses have to spend something like six hours a week on government regulations. If you think that's going to help create jobs in this country, you've got another thought coming.

Talking about useless regulations, some of the ones we have are a real joke. In the past we've had regulations on how and where you can buy beer and regulations on how long a wooden ladder should be. I'd like to share a few others.

From the state of California, they had a regulation that you had to have a hunting licence to be able to set a mousetrap. I can't quite comprehend the need in California to have a hunting licence, but so be it. In Hartford, Connecticut, people are not allowed to cross the street while walking on their hands. I can understand that. I guess they'd go a little more slowly than if they were on their feet. In Seattle, they have a law that forbids you from carrying a concealed weapon that's more than six feet long. It's pretty hard to conceal a weapon that's more than six feet long, but that's the useless regulation they have there. In Florida, it's illegal to go skydiving on Sunday. I don't know if it's more dangerous to skydive on Sunday than any other day.

This is just to give you some examples. In Boston, you're required to consult a doctor before taking a bath. In any case, even if the doctor approves it, you can't take over two per month. I think that one could be stricken from the records. Then Arkansas: I'm careful how I pronounce Arkansas because in that state it is illegal to mispronounce the state's name while you're within its borders.

But I think one of my favourites comes from Louisiana, and that's where if you bite someone with your real teeth, it's considered simple assault, but if you bite them with your false teeth, it's considered aggravated assault. Those are the kinds of useless regulations that are out there.

If you think I'm going outside of our country, how be you look at Ontario in 1995. At that time, the previous government, which the member sitting here from Sault Ste Marie is very proud of, was saying that it was illegal to recycle pesticide containers; you had to bury them. That was the law. They were promoting recycling, but it was illegal to recycle a pesticide container. Similarly, it was illegal to clean up pure chlorinated drinking water just as water; it was considered a hazardous substance and had to be cleaned up as such. Imagine a law requiring the cleanup of pure, fresh chlorinated drinking water as a hazardous substance.

You say these are rather harmless regulations. Not so, when you look at the time and energy that go into looking after and implementing those kinds of regulations. Useless regulations on the books make people lose respect for the proper regulations that are needed to run a

country, and they also create an awful lot of confusion. The Conference Board of Canada, for example, just to look again, in 1994 estimated that it cost some \$85 billion in a year just to look after red tape in this country.

We believe that getting rid of some of these regulations will improve customer service and improve the efficient operation of government. We do support regulations that have sound scientific and economic principles. It makes for a better province to live, to work and to raise a family.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** That completes the time allocated for debate.

Mr Runciman has moved government notice of motion number 64. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Palladini, Al
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Snobelen, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Murdoch, Bill	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Lankin, Frances
Bountrogianni, Marie	Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario
Boyer, Claudette	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Caplan, David	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Christopherson, David	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Cleary, John C.	Kennedy, Gerard	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 41; the nays are 26.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare this motion carried.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The

member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Community and Social Services. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

#### NATIVE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** First of all, I think it's important that I indicate that with us in the members' gallery today are May Maracle and Claudette Deveau of the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto.

The question I put to the minister yesterday was, when would he make Native Child and Family Services of Toronto a full-fledged children's aid society? Your ministry undertook a review of Native Child and Family Services. When that occurred, certainly you gave them the very clear impression that you were considering supporting society designation, and yet it was indicated yesterday that that has changed.

The minister indicated that, in fact, there had been other society designations to other native agencies. However, none of those agencies that have been designated are located off reserves. Representatives from the aboriginal community have indicated to me that aboriginal children in the urban setting of Toronto are especially in need of aboriginal services, perhaps even more than children on reserves, because they are away from, they are apart from, their culture and disconnected from their community, and really do need services that respect their culture. That certainly is what your government recognized in Bill 6. I wasn't asking about general child welfare reforms. That was the response that was provided to me, and that is why I think it's important for me to stand again tonight and make very clear the specific issues of the aboriginal community in Toronto that relate to providing services for children.

Since the minister's letter in June to Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, there has been the publication of this document. It's a very comprehensive document that talks about urban aboriginal children and their families. It was my hope that in light of this new information, you would be inclined to reconsider your position and understand that the aboriginal community deserves whatever additional support can be provided to them to address the serious issues that face their children.

Your legislation, Minister, section 1 of Bill 6, a bill you personally brought forward, states: "To recognize that Indian and native people should be entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family." This right already existed, and certainly my leader, Dalton McGuinty, made that commitment in the First Steps document.

Your government talks about efficiencies and effectiveness, yet in the city of Toronto, Native Child and Family Services is an award-winning agency and you refuse to empower them, even though your own legislation would give you this direction.

Native Child and Family Services won the first-ever Atkins Award for Excellence in children's services in 1999. They were up against thousands of other agencies, so I think it's exemplary and noteworthy.

There are over 60,000 aboriginal people in the city of Toronto, a city that has systems for multiple children's aid societies. There is no reason for you not to designate this agency, an award-winning agency.

I also know that you receive \$4 million from the federal government every year for native services in Toronto. However, Native Child and Family Services gets \$1.052 million. Your government says it stresses efficiency and effectiveness, yet you continue to waste money on the duplication of services. You need to understand that this agency already goes out, it visits families, it makes assessments, and then they have to call in another agency to come in and do the same thing. If they were recognized as an agency, as a CAS, there would be a savings.

My questions remains: given all of this information, when will you designate Native Child and Family Services as a full children's aid society for the aboriginal peoples of Toronto?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The parliamentary assistant.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I am pleased this evening to stand in place of the minister to reiterate part of his answer to the question of the member opposite.

I reviewed the Hansard, and it was rather clear. Sometimes some members opposite say you don't get clear answers during question period, but the question yesterday afternoon, as I go back and look at it, was, "Will you make Native Child and Family Services of Toronto a full-fledged children's aid society?" The answer from the minister was, "If the member opposite wants a clear answer, it is no, not at this time." I think the minister couldn't be more clear.

We in this government have done more in the area of the children's aid societies than any government before us, including the passage of new legislation. On top of that, we increased the funding to the children's aid

societies by about 100% over the last few years. We've increased the number of children's aid workers across the province by over 1,000.

But to get directly to the member opposite's question about aboriginal child welfare agencies, I just want to give some background. The first three agencies were designated in 1987. A few more were designated in the years since. In early 1997—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Maves:** The members opposite should really pay attention to this, because I think the safety of kids should be important to them.

In early 1997, there were increasing concerns about the capacity of some of these agencies to meet the ministry's requirements. Questions were raised about the cost for services and child safety. So in 1997, the ministry informed the aboriginal political leadership and agencies that it was conducting a review of the aboriginal child welfare program. The review was to help identify what should be done differently in the future to protect children, make better use of resources and inform ministry policy work on issues such as customary care and criteria for future designations. When the review was initiated, the ministry indicated that it would not designate any new aboriginal children's aid societies until the reviews were completed and the ministry had completed its policy work.

In October 1999, the ministry released the draft consolidated report to the office of the Chiefs of Ontario and aboriginal child welfare agencies, indicating that while implementing child welfare reform the ministry would focus on recommendations related to capacity building, customary care and coordination of services.

It remains that at this time a moratorium on further designations of aboriginal child welfare agencies will remain in place until we have a clear picture of how to best address the concerns raised. When all issues have been addressed, we will again look at possible designations for aboriginal agencies, but child safety must come first.

**The Acting Speaker:** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1810.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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