



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 24 October 2000

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 24 octobre 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 October 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 octobre 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I want to speak to you about the Ontario welfare system and an individual in my riding who just went on to the welfare system: an able-bodied young father of three with a wife at home as well: that's four dependants. Here's an individual with a skilled trade—he's a cabinet maker—perfectly prepared and willing to work, who has now joined the welfare system in Mike Harris's Ontario.

What is the difference with Mr Mousaly, other than that a couple of weeks ago I brought up in this House the fact that this is an individual who is waiting for knee surgery out of a London hospital and has to wait until September of next year to have very much needed knee surgery so that he can go back to work? The only thing Mr Mousaly asked was that he be allowed to go back to work.

Desperate for this operation, we've made lots of inquiries, and the fact of the matter is that even in the mecca of health care, London, which is what Windsorites consider London to be, they cannot get operating room time. Why? Because they've closed two operating rooms. Why is that? Because University Hospital in London also received funding cuts.

Last week in this House, our health critic announced that all of the operating dollars given to those hospitals are not what they seem to be, and the result is that a perfectly able-bodied young individual who wants to work and to raise his family is on Mike Harris's welfare roll, a place he should not be.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Durham.

Interjections.

OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Could you start the clock again. We'll give you the full 90 seconds; we'll hold the clock.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm very disappointed by the member from Windsor West continually interrupting an important announcement that I'd like to make about one of my constituents.

On October 14, a former Durham riding constituent, Constable Phil Edgar, was awarded by the Durham regional police the Officer of the Year Award, which is determined by the men and women serving on the force.

Constable Edgar, who grew up on Skugog Island, is a general patrol officer and has been in the Durham regional police since 1994. His enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to serving the people of Durham region have resulted in some very impressive accomplishments during this short career. Over the past one and a half years, Constable Edgar has been responsible for the recovery of nearly 160 stolen vehicles with an estimated worth of \$4 million. Seventy-seven of these vehicles have been retrieved this past January alone.

Auto theft affects everyone. The people in Durham riding appreciate the steps being taken by Durham regional police to curb theft and return stolen property. Crime costs all of us. Last year the Insurance Crime Prevention Bureau stated that \$46 out of everyone's auto insurance premium in the province goes toward covering theft claims, which amount to almost \$200 million annually.

I'm sure that all members of the House will join me and my constituents of Durham, including Constable Edgar's parents from Scugog Island, Gary and Alice Edgar, on their son being named Officer of the Year.

SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Over the last couple of weeks, I've presented to the Minister of Education over 3,000 letters from students across my riding pleading with her to resolve the education crisis so that all our students can get a full and complete educational experience. Today I will be tabling with her another 1,500 letters from Ernestown Secondary School, Holy Cross secondary school and Regiopolis/Notre-Dame imploring the minister to take immediate action.

Extracurricular activities such as sports, drama, debating, clubs and other related activities are an important integral part of a student's education. They have been put on hold in many parts of this province as a result of the unilateral action taken by the Minister of Education changing teacher conditions and thereby lowering school and student morale and undermining the fundamental purpose of our young people to receive a first-class quality education.

One student put it right on the mark: "Through participating in these activities, we all learn about teamwork,

responsibility, respect, work ethic and the value of participation. Extracurricular activities also provide a way to relieve stress, build friendships and motivation for students to work hard in school to make the grade.”

I say to the minister that I completely agree with the student who wrote, “It’s time that the divided parties work together to resolve these issues so that education, teachers, students and the community will not continue to suffer.”

Please, Minister, stop denying the students in my riding and across this province their right to a fully enriched education.

DEFIBRILLATION EQUIPMENT

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to talk about one of the most recent initiatives of the emergency response training enterprise in Northumberland. Sudden cardiac arrest claims the lives of more than 44,000 Canadians each year and is the leading cause of death and disability for Canadians over 45. The most effective immediate treatment for sudden cardiac arrest is defibrillation. Advances in defibrillator design have made it possible for rescuers to provide defibrillation sooner following cardiac arrest by using an automated external defibrillator, or AED.

I’m proud to say that all of Northumberland’s fire departments are now using AED units. With support from local foundations and service groups, as well as community fundraising efforts, Northumberland is the first county in Canada to accomplish this feat. With a population of approximately 71,000, the emergency response training group’s efforts have ensured that there is one AED unit for every 2,629 residents, and this means that the citizens of Northumberland county have a better chance of surviving sudden cardiac arrest.

It’s my pleasure to congratulate those fire departments that have most recently come on board for AED training, and I applaud the efforts of the emergency response training enterprise in promoting public health and awareness in Northumberland county.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I rise in the House today to speak about the important role that parents play in the lives of their children in the early years. I call upon the Harris Tories to extend parental leave to equal that of the federal government. The changes to the federal Employment Insurance Act will enable parents to take a leave of 50 weeks. Provincially, we still only provide for a leave of 35 weeks. If we value our children and recognize the important role played by parents in the most formative years of our children, then the province would emulate the changes made to the Employment Insurance Act and allow for a leave of 50 weeks.

It is shameful that in this day and age amendments and changes have not been made to allow for both mothers

and fathers to make the best choices for themselves and their families and to have the option available to them to remain at home with their newborn children.

1340

I call upon the Premier to live up to his supposed commitment to children and to introduce changes to the Employment Standards Act which will allow parents to take 50 weeks’ leave to remain at home with their children. This government is good at talking the talk, but it’s time to walk the walk when it comes to caring for our children.

My leader, Dalton McGuinty, put forward a clear and comprehensive plan outlining our priorities as Liberals on the importance of the early years. This government, and in particular this Premier, have paid lip service to this issue, calling yet again on the federal government for more dollars with no clear initiatives in place. Tough on talk, weak on action.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise today to speak on behalf of the 130 case managers and 70 support staff of OPSEU local 256 who work at the CCAC, the community care access centre, in Hamilton.

Members of the House will recall that we just went through a similar battle in our community with the VON workers, who made it very clear at that time that their problem and their fight was not with their immediate employer but, on the other hand, it was indeed a battle with this government, a battle with underfunding, exactly what we’re facing here at the CCAC.

The government came along recently and offered a little over \$3 million, touting this as the be-all and end-all in terms of saving the CCAC and home care services. Quite the contrary. That only matched about half the projected deficit that the CCAC has, and that’s before we get into these negotiations.

This government has a track record they ought to be ashamed of in terms of pitting elements of our communities against each other. In Hamilton, we’ve had the difficulty of the hospital boards pitted against the community, including nurses and support staff and doctors, and eventually we saved the Henderson hospital. We’ve got school closures now, pitting school trustees against communities and parents. We went through the same thing with municipal councillors who were trying to preserve services. All because this government is fixated on tax cuts rather than building communities and improving working families’ lives.

PROMENADE WEST

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): It was my pleasure to attend the first Promenade West Home-owners’ Association barbecue on Sunday, October 15. Based on the success of this barbecue, I am sure it will become an annual event.

Though Mother Nature decided it was time for fall weather and dredged Promenade Green Park with

blowing rain and an easterly wind, none of this dampened the lively community spirit of the Promenade West residents. Live uplifting salsa and jive music brought warmth to the crowd, who swayed and danced to stay warm. As well, they were fuelled with warm, freshly cooked sausages, chicken and beef. The atmosphere continued to be enlivened as door prizes were awarded.

It is scenes like this, though traditionally seen during the summer, where one sees the true community spirit which has developed and grown in this province and which continually makes Ontario the best province in Canada to live. Participants in this event represented a mosaic of ethnic cultures and various ages, and reflected a variety of family structures. It was enjoyable to see all of these individuals drawn together in friendship on a cold, wet October afternoon, united in the common element of living in the same neighbourhood of a few streets. I congratulate the hard work and effort of Bob Bak, Joanne Fisher, Mario Botticelli and Arlene Stone.

This group of residents gathered at Promenade Green Park shared one other common element. They were all Ontario taxpayers who are to receive a \$200 taxpayer dividend cheque. In fact, many of them had already received their cheque and were pleased that the government of Ontario, after balancing the provincial budget, saw fit to return close to \$1 billion surplus to those who had paid taxes. After all, it is their money to save, spend or donate as they so choose.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Just when you thought that out of conscience, sheer embarrassment, or at least a discreet call from the Ontario Taxpayers' Coalition or the National Citizens' Coalition, the Harris government would have brought to an end its orgy of self-serving, blatantly partisan advertising at taxpayers' expense, yet another expensive booklet landed in the mailbox of every Ontario resident.

The latest propaganda sheet is nothing less than what Toronto Star columnist Jim Coyle described as "another colossal waste of tax money by an administration which urges frugality on everyone else."

As Toronto Sun columnist John Downing put it after receiving an education brochure last month, "You know what, Mr Premier? If there's any steam left from the Common Sense Revolution, you could grab the initiative for your floundering government by swearing off blatant partisan ads paid by taxes."

Both journalists are right on the mark.

What is particularly galling is that the Conservatives were elected on a platform of cutting government waste, yet it is the Harris crowd that has spent almost \$190 million on advertising at taxpayers' expense—\$30 million more than the entire budget of the Ministry of the Environment this year.

If Mike Harris wants to spend millions of dollars on propaganda pamphlets or partisan ads in newspapers, on radio and on television, let him dip into the political war

chest of the Conservative Party, swelled by grateful donations from the wealthiest and most powerful in Ontario, and keep his hands out of the wallets of Ontario taxpayers.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd just like to bring the attention of the House to our guests today from Assumption College high school in the riding of Brant. The history students are joining us in the gallery with their teachers, and their department head, Mr Rob Campbell, is a big advocate of democracy in the province of Ontario.

MIKE LAZARIDIS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I'm honoured to recognize the outstanding contribution of Mike Lazaridis, founder and co-chief executive officer of Research in Motion of Waterloo and, as of yesterday, one of the greatest Canadian philanthropists of all time.

The Honourable Elizabeth Witmer and I were present at the announcement yesterday, which was also attended by Dr David Johnston, president of the University of Waterloo, and Dr Bob Rosehart, president of Wilfrid Laurier University.

Mr Lazaridis will personally donate \$100 million to found the Perimeter Institute, a Canadian institute dedicated to research in theoretical physics. This investment will vastly improve research and development in Waterloo region and will benefit my constituents in Waterloo-Wellington as well. It will have a profound impact on Ontario's future by fostering pure research in physics, which will improve our economic competitiveness and put us at the leading edge.

To quote Mr Lazaridis, "The pursuit of theoretical physics gave rise to all the technological advances of present-day society," from lasers to computers, from cellphones to MRI machines.

As a young man, Mr Lazaridis struggled in choosing between the study of engineering and physics. He chose engineering and founded Research in Motion, a world leader in wireless communications technology, but obviously continues to have an interest in physics. His contribution to physics was well described by Mrs Witmer, who, in expressing thanks, said that the institute will "fuel the enlightened thinking of tomorrow's Newtons and Einsteins."

I hope all members of this House will join me in showing our appreciation to Mr Lazaridis for this gift to humankind.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would like to take this opportunity to invite all members to welcome to our chamber a special visitor who is seated at the table, Mr Niall Johnston, who is the special advisor to the Speaker

of the Northern Ireland assembly. Would all members please join in welcoming Mr Johnston.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to regulate the sale of imitation firearms / Projet de loi 133, Loi visant à réglementer la vente des fausses armes à feu.

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

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Given the nature of this bill and the fact that my colleague from St Paul's was able to bring this to the attention of the House, I would seek unanimous consent for the member from St Paul's to make a statement on the bill.

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

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. In just two months' time, you're going to download the life-and-death responsibility of our ambulance services to our municipalities. I am afraid, Premier, that our municipalities don't have the resources or the expertise to carry out the job safely, and many of those municipalities agree. Listen to what North Perth mayor Vince Judge had to say earlier this summer: "By downloading it to non-professionals, you increase the opportunity that something can go wrong. Municipalities are not in the health field. We don't want a Walkerton situation, but that's what we could very well be facing."

Premier, given that your government failed to take the necessary time and all reasonable precautions when you downloaded water testing on to our municipalities, I'm asking you here and now, can you assure us that municipalities of Ontario have everything they need and are ready to take on the new life-and-death responsibilities associated with operating an ambulance service?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Just as an aside, I think the member is well aware that the cost of testing was not downloaded by our government. I just wanted to correct the record on that. We did maintain municipalities

paying for those things. That was done long before we were in office.

As to the second part, the main question, dealing with ambulances, we did enter into extensive discussions that were started under the former government under the guise, at that point, of disentanglement.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Don't blame the NDP.

Hon Mr Harris: Nobody's blaming the NDP. If the Liberal member from St Catharines would stop interrupting me, I'd be happy to give the answer.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, earlier this month, local taxpayers in Niagara learned they had to spend \$3.3 million to upgrade their ambulance service. They were told to do that because their local medical officer of health said that when you downloaded the responsibility for the system, you downloaded a response time that wasn't even complying with provincial law.

In Kingston, local paramedics say you're handing over an ambulance and emergency system on the verge of collapse. They say the system's shortcomings are already costing lives. Today they've got three ambulances to cover 800 square kilometres and 165,000 people. They're using cardiac monitors and defibrillators today in Kingston that exceed their life expectancy. Their warranties have run out and the machines repeatedly malfunction during ambulance calls.

I ask you one more time, Premier, are municipalities ready to take on the life-and-death responsibilities of operating ambulance services?

Hon Mr Harris: As I was saying before I was interrupted by the interjections of the member from St Catharines, this is all part of a number of discussions. It started with the disentanglement discussions under the NDP—they were not successful, as you know—and then concluded, at the request of the municipalities, by us, with the discussions under what was known as Who Does What. We've taken a considerable amount of time in making this transfer to ensure exactly, as the—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Harris: I'm sorry, but if the Liberal members keep yelling and screaming, I can't answer, Mr Speaker.

Mr McGuinty: I can appreciate that the Premier is looking for any excuse whatsoever not to answer the question, but I'm going to return to it again nonetheless, Premier. If you won't heed warnings from elected officials, then let's listen to what your own hand-picked transition boards are saying around the province of Ontario.

In Ottawa—that's a place where ambulance response times under your watch have become so slow that the regional medical officer of health says that 100 lives are being lost every year. There in Ottawa, your transition team is saying that property taxpayers are going to have to spend somewhere between \$28 million and \$30 million just to bring that ambulance system up to standard.

In Haldimand-Norfolk, two people died last Christmas after it took ambulances 24 minutes and 18 minutes to

reach their homes. This was at a time when the Ontario standard was 15 minutes. They've been told they need to spend \$750,000 to bring ambulance services up to Ontario standards.

These are your transition boards. They say that you are creating an economic burden. Elected officials say that this is going to be dangerous to the health of their citizens. I'm asking you again: are you really sure it is appropriate and safe to download this new responsibility on to our municipalities?

Interjection.

Hon Mr Harris: I am happy to answer, but if the member from Thunder Bay wishes to yell and interject and answer the question, I'd be happy to let her answer. If the Liberal members can't control themselves—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Premier, take a seat. Stop the clock.

This is where I'll step in. There was too much noise that time. I ask all members to come to order. For some of you who read Saturday's Globe and Mail, at the federal House, a chap by the name of Lee Morrison said there's a difference between intelligent heckling and boorish noise. He was talking about the federal House. If people are going to scream and shout, then I will interrupt and proceed to warn people. Having said that, we also know that "intelligent heckling" is allowed in here. Where the line begins and ends is sometimes very difficult for all sides to understand. But I also say to the government members that this House isn't going to be in total silence. It never has been and it never will be. Hopefully, we will have some type of balance.

Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: That's why, of course, that very concern. There are challenges in delivering ambulance service. You've pointed out that some of the ones we run are not as good as we would like them to be. But I have to tell you that a large number of ambulance services are already run by municipalities across this province. In fact, many of them are model examples of running ambulance service. Many are run by the private sector. Many were when you were in government, many were when the NDP were in government and many are now that we're in government.

What we have moved to now are more coordinated, tougher standards and a more rigorous service. As you know, the trades transferred \$2.5 billion worth of tax room to be able to assist with this. As you're also aware, we cost-share 50-50 and we set the standards. So yes, we are very confident that municipalities have the wherewithal—the money, the resources and the expertise—to perform these services, and in those areas where they're not ready, that's why we've been taking the time to make sure they are ready.

CONTROL OF SMOKING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This question is also to the Premier. Every year in Ontario 12,000 Ontarians die from tobacco-related illness.

This costs our health care system \$1.1 billion annually and it requires more than one million hospital days for treatment. Yesterday a report was released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit which tells us that 42% of our grade 11 students are experimenting with cigarettes today in Ontario. They also tell us that this has held steady since 1995.

One in six of these children later on will suffer from lung cancer, with all the associated pain and suffering for themselves and their families. I ask you, why is it that you have failed to lower smoking rates among Ontario youth in the six years that you've been the government?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): This is a good question and a big challenge for us all. As you know, we've had cigarette prices from 1995 to 2000 substantially lower than they are now, when we had a virtual ease. Like a prohibition-type availability of liquor, we had a prohibition-type availability of such cheap cigarettes that the federal government, in a coordinated strategy with ourselves and our government, realized that when the taxes were so high, they did not have the resources within the federal government to control the cheap cigarettes coming across the border points. I think we're all aware of those challenges.

1400

We have worked with those groups that are concerned and advocating for policies to do everything we can to curb smoking, particularly in young people. There are more young people—there are some badges of honour, I guess, in doing things that are even more expensive and more illegal. It is a tremendous challenge. We've not found the solution yet—

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

Mr McGuinty: Nobody said it's going to be easy, but I can tell you that there are some real successes out there. California has experienced a 33% decrease in smoking among their young people. Massachusetts has experienced a 31% decrease in smoking among their young people.

You commissioned that a report be prepared. It was submitted in February 1999. It's called Actions Will Speak Louder Than Words—I would ask you to pay some attention to that particular title, Premier—and it includes 29 specific and substantive recommendations on how to attack the incidence of smoking especially among our young people today in Ontario. It includes everything from raising taxes on our cigarettes, so that we are no longer the lowest-priced jurisdiction in Canada, and it talks about hard-hitting ad campaigns. If you want to put some money into ads that have a really positive effect, then stop putting them into those partisan political ads and start putting them into ads that discourage our young people from smoking. If you're looking for some ideas, there are all kinds out there, including 29 specific ideas that came back to you from your own committee.

I'm asking you today as a parent of four teenagers, when are you going to act on these ideas and make it tougher for our kids to get hooked on cigarettes?

Hon Mr Harris: As you know, we spend a considerable amount of our advertising on anti-smoking campaigns. This was one of the recommendations. We did set up the committee. We are working with those groups and we spend a large amount of money advertising in these areas.

We're always looking for new ideas. As long as one person, a young person in particular, takes up smoking, then there is still a job for us to do. We work on the tax side with the federal government in a coordinated way, as you know, because there's not much point in one government working by itself in this field when we both have taxation areas there.

We are acting on a large number of the recommendations. I can let the minister give you the litany of those. But you know, there is a large number of young people right here in the chamber today. Maybe we should hear from them what we need to do to discourage smoking. I invite them to send their comments directly to me.

Mr McGuinty: I want to bring you back to the title of the report which you had prepared for you: Actions Will Speak Louder Than Words. There is nothing more eloquent than actions, Premier. You have been painfully silent and inactive on the issue of the incidence of smoking among Ontario's young people. There are some real successes that have been experienced in other jurisdictions. There are things we can do. In particular, you might start by acting on the 29 specific and substantive recommendations found inside this report.

The facts don't lie. For the last five years, this report released yesterday tells us, Ontario's young people are still experimenting with cigarettes at the rate of 42% in grade 11 and 28% in grade 9. That has not changed. Again as a parent I am asking you, when are you going to crack down on the incidence of smoking among young people in Ontario and act on those so many good ideas that have been placed on your table?

Hon Mr Harris: As you know, we continue to welcome new reports and new suggestions. But to suggest that we haven't acted on them—let me share with you a few things.

We've laid more charges than all other provinces combined for selling cigarettes to minors—4,000 charges under the Tobacco Control Act, an increase of 43% over the predecessor government before we took office in 1995; 4,800 tickets issued for smoking in a prohibited place, almost all of which are for students smoking on school grounds. This is an increase of 86% over the previous government, before we had taken office. We have a very ambitious \$17-million heart health campaign, a good example of our commitment to identifying tobacco-related health issues.

We continue to welcome these reports, we continue to work with the federal government, but I say to you, perhaps it's time that instead of listening exclusively to all the experts and all the scientists and all the adults, maybe we should be talking a little more to the kids. For your information, they're from Centennial public school

in Guelph-Wellington, and my bet is they'll have better ideas than your whole caucus.

NURSING HOMES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Six months ago we asked your Minister of Health why nursing homes across this province had not been inspected in over two years. Your Minister of Health first tried to deny it and then she tried to blame the previous government.

Now, thanks to freedom-of-information documents obtained by Colin Perkel of the Canadian Press, the truth is out. Your Minister of Health, under her watch, gave the direction that nursing homes were not to be inspected as frequently as they had been in the past. In fact, the cut was close to 80% in Toronto and 40% elsewhere in the province. Tens of thousands of frail elderly seniors who depend upon your government to protect them were neglected.

Premier, what do you say to those frail elderly seniors and their families who now know that your government, not accidentally but intentionally, reduced the inspection of nursing homes where those frail elderly people reside?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Premier?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The Minister of Health can respond.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): First of all, let's be accurate and let's be correct. There was no direction given to anyone for the reduction. Our government is very committed to high-quality standards for all our long-term-care facilities, whether they are homes for the aged or whether they are nursing homes. In fact, your government and the Liberal government before you also were criticized by the Provincial Auditor for not ensuring that all facilities received an annual review.

Our government, for the first time, has made it possible and has made it mandatory, and we now have a program in place in order to ensure that all long-term-care facilities will receive an annual review each year. I'm pleased to say that 53% of all the facilities have been reviewed this year and we will reach 100% compliance by March 31 of—

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): Minister, it's interesting. The briefing note you just read—the words are verbatim in the briefing notes that were prepared for you at that time. Even your staff said in the confidential documents we have here, "This cannot be turned into a good-news story." But what did you do? You tried to spin it; you tried to deflect it. You tried to blame others, and you're doing it again today.

You told the world that there was no law requiring annual inspections and you said the NDP got rid of it. And here in your confidential briefing notes are the notes, the handwritten staff comments, saying, "This is a statement of error." Did you admit that? No. Instead, we have an e-mail from your staff as they're trying to help

you spin it, and it reads, and I'm going to quote this because I love it, "FYI: we have a response for the scrum. Don't kill yourself. Frances was right." But day after day you denied it.

You know, you stand up here, you deny, you refuse to take responsibility, and the proof is now incontrovertible. It's right here in these documents. You pulled inspection staff off the job to do something else that you thought was more important. That was a wrong choice, but for God's sake, now that the proof is there, would you please at least finally admit it, Minister?

1410

Hon Mrs Witmer: There was no decision to pull any staff. I would again indicate very strongly that I was very disappointed to learn that all facilities in this province had not been receiving annual reviews. In fact, let me quote from the Provincial Auditor in 1990 on the Liberal record: "We concluded that the procedures used by the branch to monitor the quality of care in nursing homes required significant improvement.... The number and nature of cases selected for reviews was inadequate." Then the Provincial Auditor, in 1995, on the NDP: "No annual reviews of homes for the aged were conducted in 1993 and 1994"—none. "We understand that the ministry decided not to conduct any annual reviews of homes for the aged." This meant that there were 176 that received no review in 1993, and 164—

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

Ms Lankin: Well, the minister continues to do it. I find this absolutely astounding. Let me read to you from one of the other e-mails: "During the 1998 and 1999 RFP"—that's for the new long-term-care beds; I told you that's where you put the staff—"there were no annual inspections, I'm sure, unless it was tied in with an urgent complaint." This is your own staff admitting it to you, and you won't stand here and tell us the truth today.

This is a question—

The Speaker: I would ask the member to withdraw that, please.

Ms Lankin: I withdraw that, and I say once again that you will not admit to the facts that are here, and there's proof of it.

It's not a question about a minister doing acrobatic feats to avoid admitting facts that are now proven; it's a question about accountability to the people of this province. It's about getting correct, factual and, dare I say, things that are honest answered in this. I want you to admit that the truth of this is that you pulled staff off, and as a result of your wrong choices you left vulnerable seniors' lives at risk in this province. Will you finally admit that?

Hon Mrs Witmer: If you want to deal with facts, I think it's important, first of all, to take a look at the fact that opinions of staff are not necessarily facts. Let's deal with the facts. The facts are that we discovered there had been no annual—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The minister take her seat.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Which one of your staff are we to believe?

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton West, come to order, please.

Interjection: That's Hamilton East.

The Speaker: Hamilton East. I apologize. You'd think I'd know these, wouldn't you?

Sorry for the interruption. Minister of Health.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It was our conclusion—information provided to us by ministry staff—that there had never been 100% compliance and review of all long-term-care facilities in this province. I indicated to my deputy that he was to provide us with an action plan. I am pleased to say that on July 5, 2000, we announced an action plan with \$860,000 to ensure that for the first time all long-term-care facilities, nursing homes and homes for the aged would receive an annual review. New compliance advisers were hired. I'm pleased to say that over 53% have been—

The Speaker: Order. New question.

SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Through Bill 74 you have created an education nightmare in Ontario. You insisted that cutting the number of teachers in our schools wouldn't affect the quality of our students' education. You wanted complete control of the school boards, and through Bill 74 you got it. You wanted complete control over extracurricular activities, and through Bill 74 you got it. And now what's happening? Students across the province are losing out on their extracurricular activities. They can't get the remedial time they need, because teachers are so busy doing the bureaucratic nonsense you've thrown on them.

At Malvern secondary school here in Toronto, in northwestern Ontario and in schools I know of across this province, students are not receiving the full quality of education they deserve.

You wanted all the power. You said you had all the answers. What are you going to do to fix the problem that you and your government have created, Premier?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): This is, as you know, a serious issue and a serious concern. Just so I understand very clearly and to help me answer, I wonder if you could describe for me what bureaucratic nonsense we've asked teachers to do that they weren't doing before. That might help me respond.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I think when I become the Premier I'm going to answer that question, but in the meantime, Premier, I quite frankly think you are paralyzed by your own power.

Let me give you a perspective. Before Bill 74, you and the Minister of Education agreed that 99% of the boards were doing extracurricular activities. You decided to fix a problem that didn't exist. You brought in Bill 74 and

forced teachers to teach an extra class, thus getting rid of some of the teachers. Those who are left, in my view, are stuck with hard choices: an extra class or extracurricular activities. That's the choice you left them with.

You exported the problem from Durham, from one board, and spread the disease all over the province. You gave yourself the power to cure the disease and instead, in my view, it has become an epidemic. Premier, I don't think you or your minister know what you're doing.

Hon Mr Harris: I can recall a question and a statement, I think from this very member, back last spring, saying, "We don't think you need to proclaim this section of the legislation. We don't think you need it because 99% of the teachers are already performing these co-curricular activities." We listened to your advice. We did not act on that legislation.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Harris: My colleague interjects with one of the more intelligent interjections I've heard this session, that that's the last time we should listen to you when we're trying to deal with these issues.

I can tell you that we've never shirked our obligation and responsibility in trying to ensure that all our kids all across the province receive a full and balanced education, including very important co-curricular activities.

Again, since you could not identify one single piece of bureaucratic nonsense we've asked teachers to do that we haven't asked them to do before, I would take that as a sign that you agree with us that we've tried to make life easier for—

The Speaker: Order, Premier; your time is up. New question.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a follow-up question for the Premier. He stands here saying he'll listen to young people, but instead he is the government that cancelled extracurricular activities. What happened since last spring? You passed Bill 74. You made sure that teachers couldn't do it.

Premier, students are saying to you that you sucked the spirit out of their schools. Last year, we had 70 out of 72 boards providing extracurricular. You passed that law. Now they're not able to provide it.

Your member for Leeds-Grenville said to the students in his riding who came with a petition that you would be doing something by the end of the year. Students out there can't wait. They don't want you to use the big hammer in Bill 74; they want you to do your job. They want you to stand up and make sure that students have a quality school year, that their extracurricular activities that you took away, that you cancelled, are restored. Premier, stand up in this House today and tell us how you're going to bring back extracurricular activities, having taken them away in the first place.

Hon Mr Harris: The minister can respond.

1420

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): The reason extracurricular activities have been cancelled in some communities, in some schools, is because some

teachers have chosen to work to rule and not to provide those activities.

Secondly, the honourable member says that Bill 74 should somehow not be in existence. Bill 74 says things like if a school board is given money for lower class size, they'd better spend it on lower class size. If the member disagrees with that, he should tell us. Bill 74 says that if a school board is given money for special-needs students, they'd better spend it on special-needs students. Perhaps the honourable member disagrees with that policy.

Bill 74 establishes a workload standard for classroom time for high school teachers that's based on the national average: four hours and 10 minutes. Perhaps the honourable member thinks that is the wrong standard. If so, he should stand up and say that.

Mr Kennedy: I can't tell you how disappointed I am, on behalf of these young students, that the Premier was afraid to answer this question.

Last year 70 out of 72 school boards delivered extra-curricular to these kids, and now they don't because they've passed this law. This minister can't name one school board that isn't affected by the loss of extra-curricular.

This minister tried to say it's work to rule. She tried to avoid her responsibility. Let me tell you what the director of education in London, John Laughlin, says. In London they have settled; there is no work to rule. He says that even after a contract, only 10% of extracurricular is taking place. This is what he says: "A provincial solution to the problem" is needed to bring back extracurricular activities to these students.

Minister, you should know this, and if you don't know this, then we have a bigger problem than is apparent. The parents, the students and the public have every right to believe that you're not just cancelling extracurricular activities on purpose. You brought in Bill 74. It took away extracurricular activities. Minister, will you at least tell these students, tell the House and tell the public—

The Speaker: Order. The member's time is up.

Hon Mrs Ecker: The only people who are afraid in this Legislature are people who are concerned about facts. When the honourable member stands up, it is quite fearsome what he does to them.

First of all, I assume from the question that what the honourable member is asking us to do is to proclaim the section of Bill 74 which would make extracurricular activities mandatory. On the one hand, they said we shouldn't. We didn't. Now they are saying that somehow we should.

The other thing that I think is important to recognize is that the workload standard, the four hours and 10 minutes, is based on what teachers do across the country—the 20 minutes a day. On the one hand, we have teachers in communities who are providing extracurricular activities, who are choosing to do that because they care about the kids, because they know it's important, and at a school up the road they are choosing not to do that. That is work to rule. If the honourable member supports that, he should say that.

We think all students deserve those extracurricular activities. I support those students in their protests—

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

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. A week ago you were in my riding, signing an agreement between the Ontario government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Will the member take his seat. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton East, come to order. The Minister of Education, come to order. And the Minister of Labour, come to order as well. The member for Sudbury, this is his last warning. I've warned three other people. I don't appreciate the yelling across. It's the member for Sudbury's last warning. I say to the Minister of Education, it was your own member asking the question and he couldn't do it.

The member for Halton.

Mr Chudleigh: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member for Hamilton West perhaps would be interested in this question as well.

Minister of Transportation, you were in my riding last week signing an agreement between the Ontario government and the town of Oakville to reconstruct the overpass over the QEW and Third Line. It's a very important overpass for my constituents who travel down that road to go to the GO train, and they will appreciate that reconstruction. It will also pave the way for the expansion of the QEW, and we very much appreciate the fact that this expansion is taking place along that very busy road. Minister, could you give me any details on when these events will begin to happen?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): Obviously, the QEW is a very important transportation corridor. Last week we signed an agreement with the city of Oakville to reconstruct the existing Third Line interchange. This calls for \$12.4 million to be expended by the provincial government and the balance of the \$20 million it will cost to be paid by the city of Oakville. The construction will begin in 2002 and be completed in 2003. When completed, this interchange will support future widening of the QEW into the Halton region.

The government has initiated—

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

Mr Chudleigh: Thank you very much, Minister. That expansion can't come too fast for my constituents in that area. Traffic congestion, of course, is horrendous in that area. As the QEW is a gateway to the US, that congestion has real economic impact. I wonder if you could tell us about the enhancement of trade and how soon we can look to that expansion on the QEW.

Hon Mr Turnbull: In order to minimize disruption of traffic, we'll be working in off-peak hours on this import-

ant development. We'll minimize lane closures and we will be using special construction message signs to guide traffic. We'll also be using movable concrete barriers and expanding the Compass camera system to that area. This is a \$100-million investment and it will take approximately five years, subject to property acquisition and environmental approvals. It will considerably improve traffic movement in this area.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Five years ago this month your government began its attack on Ontario's poorest citizens by cutting social assistance rates by 22%. Since that time, you know that the cost of food has increased and that the cost of shelter has gone through the roof, particularly in the Toronto area.

We all know that the upcoming increase in home heating costs will be devastating to Ontario's poorest families. There's no doubt that more and more children are living in poverty in this province. Even the national children's benefit, meant to improve the lives of our children, has been brutally clawed back by your government from those who need it most. Clearly costs have gone up. Ontario's poorest families are falling further and further behind. Even the cost of David Tsubouchi's dented can of tuna has gone up.

Minister, my question to you today is simply this: isn't it time to attach a cost-of-living adjustment to social assistance benefits?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): This government committed in the 1995 election to keep welfare rates more than 10% above the average of the other nine provinces. That's not just a commitment we made; in fact they're up to 34% higher than the average of the other nine provinces. For those with disabilities they're well over 45% above the average of the other nine provinces.

But I think it's important to go to the honourable member's leader, Mr McGuinty. He was asked by Richard Brennan, "Are you going to restore" the welfare cut "or aren't you?" "That money's going to be restored, yes it is," he said. Later that evening, McGuinty issued a press release denying what he had said in the interview: "I fear I may have left the impression that it was my intent to fully restore the 22% welfare cut to all welfare recipients. That is not my intention."

Mr Gravelle: We're not asking for much at all. We're asking for a cost-of-living adjustment increase. What we are left with is a government determined on driving more and more people into poverty. Instead of any expressions of shame and a commitment to find the solution, we end up with this awful partisan rhetoric.

Minister, you know that it's a fact that Ontarians living on disability support have had no increase, as well, for the last nine years. People in my part of the province

have seen the impact of rising costs in a far more severe way.

1430

It has been five years. People are getting further and further into poverty. The costs are increasing. Can you not at least acknowledge the reality? Take the first step today to fight the disgrace of child poverty: forget the partisan rhetoric and add the cost-of-living adjustment to social assistance programs in this province. It's the least you can bloody well do.

Hon Mr Baird: Isn't this a great world we live in? He can agree with his leader when he says one thing and I can agree with his leader when he says the other thing. We all win.

This government not only keeps the disability rates for those on social assistance more than 45% above the average—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. Last warning to the member for Windsor West. Anybody else want the last warning? Last warning to the member for Windsor West. We've got two now.

Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon Mr Baird: We're keeping rates for those with disabilities more than 45% above the average of the other nine provinces. Not only do we have the most generous earn-back—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member's asked the question. The time was there for him to ask it. He can't then shout across.

Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon Mr Baird: It's over 45% above the average of the other nine provinces, and this government has the most generous earn-back welfare policy in the country, where more than one quarter of all people on social—

The Speaker: The member take his seat. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, his last warning. If he shouts out again, he'll be asked to leave for the day.

Hon Mr Baird: In fact, more than 25% of those on welfare are working and are taking advantage of that earn-back program, are taking advantage of the supports of workfare, of training, of learnfare and are being able to realize the dignity that comes with a job and the pride that comes with independence.

This number speaks for itself: more than 549,000 people breaking the cycle of welfare dependency and realizing the dignity that comes with being independent.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Last week you told my colleague the member for London-Fanshawe about an announcement you were about to make on improving safety in our bars and clubs. For the benefit of those who may have missed the details, could you explain to the House what has come out of that announcement?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I want to thank the member for Peterborough for the question and the opportunity. One of the key recommendations coming out of the report, Building Safer Communities, is the creation of a centralized, interdisciplinary unit which will involve the police, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and other agencies from all three levels of government.

This unit would co-ordinate efforts using provincial liquor regulations, fire, building and health codes, municipal licensing powers and any other avenues available to put problem establishments out of business.

The report also calls for tougher penalties, the treatment of a liquor licence as a privilege, not a right, expanded powers to revoke or suspend licences as well as the ability to hold landlords accountable and liable for illegal activity occurring on their property.

While the vast majority of the 16,000 licensed establishments in Ontario run good, law-abiding operations, there are a few habitual offenders out there who are threatening the safety of our communities, and we will take tough measures to make our communities safer.

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

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Minister, for your response. It sounds like a good first step in the battle against illegal activities in these establishments.

I want to make one comment before I ask the supplementary, and that is to comment about the conference that's coming up in Peterborough on October 26 and 27. Regarding the Safe Communities: Everyone's Responsibility conference, I want to comment about the Greater Peterborough Safe Communities Coalition, which is a major part of setting this up, as well as the national coalition. I compliment them on it and I also suggest that it will be a well-attended conference.

Minister, now that you have the recommendations in hand, could you explain how they're going to help protect the well-being of Ontario's citizens?

Hon Mr Runciman: There's no reason our thriving hospitality sector should have to suffer because of bad actor operators who break the law and do not act in the public interest. Ontario is open for business, legitimate business, and legitimate business should not have to put up with criminals who ignore the law and have a total disregard for the safety of our communities.

We're acting on the suggestions and ideas that came out of the conference in responding to the concerns of the people of Ontario. Our review will look at ways to beef up the Liquor Licence Act. We need to get tougher in our enforcement actions. Licence holders who chose to ignore illegal activities in their establishments should face swift and decisive action like having their licences suspended or revoked, and licensees must be held accountable 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for what goes on in their establishments. We'd like to keep the bad guys out, close problem facilities quickly and develop some new enforcement tools to protect the people of

Ontario. We're committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to build safer communities in this province.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question, again, is for the Premier. Despite your drastic efforts to force the Adams mine deal down people's throats, it's now dead. People across the province are asking, why is your government so opposed to new progressive technologies that promote the three Rs, recycle, reuse and reduce? Premier, in Edmonton, in Halifax and just down Highway 401 in Guelph, there are exciting new technologies that are diverting up to 80% of the material that used to go to landfill sites.

Even your own organization, the Ontario Waste Diversion Organization, strongly recommends that you ban organics from landfill and that you get serious about the three Rs. Those are your people, Premier. Can you tell us, why does your government refuse to answer the phone when all those people are calling you and offering to help you reduce, reuse, recycle and ban organics from dumps? Why won't you even talk to them?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I appreciate your question. I know a number of environmental groups have said that—if you go back from that period of 1995 let's say 20 years—the only meaningful, significant move they saw in this area was a report released by the then Conservative minister, Keith Norton, on the four Rs—you forgot one of those along the way—and the most significant advances that have been made in reducing and recycling over that period of time.

Other than increasing the tax on cans that the Liberals introduced, you took no meaningful steps at all to advance the blue box program and a number of those initiatives. We are very strong on reusing first and then reducing and then recycling. As to your reference to any individual facility, we take no position on any individual facility. Our role is to ensure that any facility that wishes to be used—

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

Supplementary?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Premier, in 1995, when you came to office, you cut blue box funding completely. Let me tell you, Premier, that when it comes to waste diversion, you make Mel Lastman look good, and believe me, that's bad. The goal is: reduce waste and keep it out of landfill sites and out of our water supply.

Instead of promoting the three Rs, you pushed the Adams mine and did nothing else, but you failed. Now we're looking at a million tonnes a year of municipal waste in the GTA. Your Waste Diversion Organization says you cannot meet diversion targets unless you keep organics from landfills, and the technology now exists to do it. Why don't you go to Guelph yourself and see how it works?

Premier, which of the WDO recommendations will you implement and when will you do it?

Hon Mr Harris: I don't know why you bring up the Adams mine or the Michigan proposal that your party favours. There is absolutely no difference. Whether it is your party's Michigan proposal or the proposal of the city of Toronto and the Kirkland Lake proponents for Adams mine, there ought to be no difference. We have the top priority, that wherever ultimately waste that is not dealt with is disposed of we want—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Premier, take a seat. The member has asked the question. Now this is your last warning as well. You can't ask the question and then shout at the person who's trying to answer it. If you do, we'll do what we did last week and we'll ask you to leave.

Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

So the issue really is that it shouldn't matter whether it's Keele Valley, Britannia, Adams mine or your proposal to ship it to Michigan that you've promoted and encouraged. We should be trying to reduce, reuse and recycle everything we absolutely can so that wherever it is ultimately disposed of, we minimize that. That's our goal. I would hope it's your goal, although I haven't heard too much—

The Speaker: The Premier's time is up.

1440

CANCER CARE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. Cancer Care Ontario has completed its report on the pending crisis in providing chemotherapy treatment to cancer patients. That report is on your desk, and I understand it tells you that we need more than 30 medical oncologists and more than 30 cancer nurses if this crisis is going to be avoided. Minister, we've seen the crisis in access to radiation therapy, with people waiting as long as seven months for treatment. You promised you would solve that problem by last year, but instead you are planning to send more and more people out of the province for care. That crisis is completely out of control, and now we're facing similar problems in getting chemotherapy treatment.

Minister, will you release the Cancer Care report on chemotherapy today, and will you acknowledge the seriousness of the problems we're facing?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Our government has acknowledged that one of the priority health areas we are addressing is the issue of cancer, another is cardiac, another is the need for dialysis services, and the increased number of MRIs. Unfortunately, the incidence of cancer is increasing in our province, and it will probably continue to do so as our population ages and as our population grows.

As a result, our government since 1995 has invested over \$160 million into cancer services and cancer care. Just this year, our budget included \$54 million for

priority programs such as cancer, and we will continue to make additional money available. We added \$24.9 million in 1999-2000 for 11 new drugs to treat 17 different cancer indications. As the member knows, we are also expanding and building five new cancer facilities to respond to the growing incidence and need for treatment.

Mrs McLeod: People in this province were horrified to realize that you could not get radiation treatment in a timely way in Ontario and that people would have to be sent out of this province to get care. The people of this province have a right to know the seriousness of the problem that may be facing anyone who needs chemotherapy in Ontario. You must release the report so the public can judge whether or not your government is responding to this pending crisis.

Even without the release of that report, we know there is a critical shortage of medical oncologists and cancer specialists in this province. We know that the reasonable standard for workload for medical oncologists is to see 140 new patients a year. We know that in Ontario medical oncologists are seeing 200 new patients a year. We know that the critical shortage of cancer specialists is exactly the reason that you can't reduce the waiting times for radiation therapy. We know you needed 14 new radiation oncologists this year and you graduated two; this year we graduate none.

Minister, will you commit today to increasing not only medical school spaces but training places for specialties like cancer care?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member may have forgotten, we take this issue seriously and we have invested considerable money. In fact, I'm pleased to say that we have been recruiting additional cancer health professionals, and we have been able to recruit a total of 128 radiation therapists, 11 medical physicists, 13 physics residents and 16 radiation oncologists. We know there is a need to do more, and I can assure you we will continue to do that.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is to the Minister of Correctional Services. Just a few days ago, the federal Liberals announced that the Canadian citizens would be going to the polls in November. I might add, this is an announcement that comes just a little over three years after the 1997 election, an unnecessary exercise, an unnecessary cost to taxpayers, unnecessary to everyone except Chrétien, and obviously they didn't learn from Peterson.

In the wake of this election call, the Toronto Star printed an article mentioning several federal bills that have been abandoned due to the dissolution of Parliament. One of those bills was the proposed amendment to the Young Offenders Act. Minister, do you think the federal Liberals were ever serious about this legislation?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): I thank the honourable member for the question. It's actually hard to tell what the federal Liberals felt

about the Young Offenders Act, because they took a number of positions on it. But the last bill that was before the House was, of course, one the Attorney General, the Solicitor General and I were trying to encourage the federal Liberals to change, because it frankly didn't reflect much of a change from the current bill. If you go and ask the people of Ontario, do they think the current Young Offenders Act is getting tough on young offenders, they would say no. They would say, as they have said to me many times, they believe the act needs to be toughened up so that young offenders who commit serious and violent crimes face serious consequences for their actions. I hope the Liberals, as they go door to door, will listen to Ontarians as they say that.

Mr Galt: It's certainly no secret that the federal Liberals are soft on crime. They're soft on our endangered species. A bill that came in some three times has died on the order paper.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat. I am going to have to put the member for Hamilton East on the list of warnings too. You can't continue to shout across like that.

The member for Northumberland.

Mr Galt: Obviously, like their provincial cousins, they're soft on crime. They've been unwilling to take a stand that the citizens of this country can be proud of. This would be a good opportunity for them to realize that Ontario is indeed a leader in putting the rights of victims first and that we have taken steps to reform the system in favour of victims.

Minister, during this federal election, what policies would you like to see created by the federal Liberals to improve their stand on crime?

Hon Mr Sampson: Frankly, I'll take any policy at this point. The Attorney General, the Solicitor General and I have been to many justice conferences where we've pleaded with them to establish changes to the criminal justice act and the criminal justice process to get tough on crime. I believe at the first meeting we went to, we had a list of 10 items, and at the second meeting we went to, we had a list of 15 items. I suspect we'll have a list of 20 items, because the list keeps growing and they just won't listen.

What we need to get them to do is follow the lead of this province and the Premier of this province, who is prepared to allow victims to have a stronger role in the criminal justice process, a stronger role in parole hearings—of course, we have made tremendous efforts to establish the victims of crime office. There are a number of things they can do. I'll take any one of them. We have a long list. I'll take any one that they want to deliver on.

RECYCLING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, Dalton McGuinty raised the issue of how you've got out of the business of protecting the environment. Ontario

has the lowest recycling rates in Canada. You are the only provincial government that doesn't mandate the private sector to share the cost of recycling products they have produced. Of course the Provincial Auditor, in 1997, was critical of your government's lack of commitment to recycling programs.

The result of your lack of leadership is that we're now drowning in garbage. We all heard the outcry about shipment of garbage to Timiskaming. Now you're creating a wave of controversy in southwestern Ontario by allowing more shipment of garbage.

Minister, what are you actually doing to provide responsible leadership to solve this problem that's not going to go away; it's only going to get worse?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): Nothing could be further from the truth. The protection of the environment is the role and responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment, and that's what we do.

The member opposite should know that waste management is indeed a growing global problem. I've heard concerns from many members in the Legislature, on both sides of the House, in fact, about the city of Toronto's plan to ship its garbage to the United States. Let me assure you, Mr Speaker, that this government takes very seriously its responsibility to both preserve and protect the environment. As you know, it is our role to review the environmental impacts of waste management proposals and to ensure that the environment is protected. Municipalities, on the other hand, are responsible for determining their own waste management long-term plans.

1450

Ms Di Cocco: Minister, yesterday you were reminded of the fact that the LCBO collected a \$240-million levy for recycling and you spent \$4 million. It's a mere drop in the bucket. Where is the money going?

Whether it's Windsor or Sarnia-Lambton or Essex or London, garbage problems should not be about shipping it from one area to another. What message are you sending to municipalities that are doing the right things? Are you telling them to get out of the recycling business and into the business of shipment of garbage to other jurisdictions? Do you know what responsible leadership is about? It's about diverting from landfills and other progressive alternatives for garbage.

What explanation do you have, in light of all of the facts, that you are out of the business of protecting the environment?

Hon Mr Newman: That is our business in the Ministry of the Environment: protecting the environment. In our continuing efforts to ensure the financial sustainability of waste diversion in Ontario, we are currently reviewing the final report that has been submitted by the Waste Diversion Organization, which is a multi-stakeholder group that we as a government created in November 1999.

Our government continues to be committed to the blue box program and we will ensure that it remains sustainable over the long term. Our government established the

Waste Diversion Organization to provide municipalities with blue box funding support and, more important, the tools they need to achieve greater waste diversion.

I think we all agree that waste diversion is an important aspect of the long-term sustainability of our environment. I would encourage all municipalities to include these alternatives in their waste management plans.

I want to say to you today that I'm committed to ensuring that the work of the Waste Diversion Organization continues beyond its one-year mandate and that the recommendations in its final report—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up. Stop the clock.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the response the minister gave to the member he stated, and I quote directly, "Nothing can be further from the"—

The Speaker: There's no point of order.

The member for Scarborough East.

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, at a recent student forum held by one of the government members, a wide-ranging and very productive discussion took place. The students demonstrated an excellent grasp of the issues and, unlike the opposition members, they saw past the union rhetoric and understood that a sincere dialogue with the government was the only way to get to the truth in this important area.

Far from evading our responsibilities, the students know that our government is prepared to practise what we preach. Much of the recent reform to education has been concerned with accountability. Minister, I'd like to know what the government has done to make itself more accountable for the reforms and the decisions it's made.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): It is indeed an excellent question. Accountability is one of the goals that we have for our education quality reforms, and whether it's the minister, the ministry, a school board official, trustee, teacher, all of us as part of the system have responsibilities and obligations to be more accountable to students, to parents and to taxpayers.

That's why the ministry does, for example, an annual plan, sets out targets for what it's going to achieve every year. That's publicly released. We measure how well we succeed on that.

By law, we'll be requiring that the ministry report regularly to school councils on issues and information that they need. We continue to have regular reports to taxpayers using a variety of communications vehicles to talk about the reforms we have underway and why we think they're necessary and how we are delivering on the commitments we made to the voters in 1995 and 1999. Accountability is very important and we are living up to it.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Petitions continue to fly in related to the northern health travel grant and the discriminatory treatment of the province in that regard.

“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 our communities.”

It’s a huge issue. I’m very grateful for the support we’re receiving, and I’m happy to add my name to this petition.

PAPER SLUDGE

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I’m very pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

“Whereas residents of the riding of Durham have voiced their objection to the storage of paper sludge and related material within the Oak Ridges moraine; and

“Whereas the residents are concerned over the impact of this material on the air, water and soil of the moraine and on the health of those living nearby; and

“Whereas this issue has been raised at several public meetings by both individual citizens, members of the Protect the Ridges Coalition and municipal governments; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment is currently completing a study of the impact of paper sludge in the Durham riding:

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take whatever steps are necessary to re-evaluate the use of paper sludge in Ontario, including in stockpiling and storage in rural areas, the spreading of this material on farm fields and any other commercial applications for this material. And that such re-evaluation of this process include consultation with residents in communities where paper sludge is spread, stored and processed. And that the re-evaluation also include whatever technical studies are necessary to fully understand the impact of this material on the natural environment.”

I’m pleased to support this petition on behalf of my constituents.

CARMEN ROAD OVERPASS

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

“Whereas the community of South Dundas has a major concern regarding the closure of the Carmen Road overpass. The impact on the business community is devastating. Our children are at risk by crossing the busy railway at level crossing (14 buses a day). The cost for the closure alone is astronomical and we appeal to the government to find the funding and repair this bridge immediately.

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

“Repair the overpass immediately.”

I also sign the petition.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with the petitioners. I have signed my name, and I'd like to thank Gerry Lougheed Jr for all of his efforts in this regard.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

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

"Whereas the activity of farming is being severely threatened and restricted by urban sprawl and infrastructure construction in the GTA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide protection of the class 1-3 farmland and the business of agriculture and provide a competitive environment conducive to the business of agriculture."

I will affix my name to this.

1500

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; 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 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 to this petition.

REGISTRATION OF VINTAGE CARS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am very pleased to present a number of petitions on behalf of constituents like Lynn Trotter, Jim Grieves and others, because I support their concern.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are many Ontarians who have a passion for perfection in the restoration of vintage automobiles; and

"Whereas unlike many other jurisdictions, Ontario vintage automobile enthusiasts are unable to register their vehicles using the original year of manufacture licence plates; and

"Whereas Durham MPP John R. O'Toole"—that's me—"and former MPP John Parker have worked together"—tirelessly—"to recognize the desire of vintage car collectors to register their vehicles using vintage plates; and

"Whereas the Honourable David Turnbull as Minister of Transportation has the power to change the existing regulation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass Bill 99 or to amend the Highway Traffic Act" to enable the use of vintage automobile plates for registration.

I am pleased to endorse, sign, and ask all members to raise this issue.

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a very short petition, which is forwarded to me by the Action on Women's Addictions—Research and Education committee in Kingston. It merely states this. It's very powerful and forceful. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario claws back the national child benefit supplement from families on social assistance,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop its discriminatory practice and return the national child benefit supplement directly to its rightful recipient—the family on social assistance."

I agree with the petition and have signed it accordingly.

FARMFARE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Further petitions from farm workers, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as follows.

"Whereas the government of Ontario introduced farmfare on September 21, 1999, to supplement their workfare program, forcing social assistance recipients to work on farms for their benefits; and

"Whereas the Harris government of Ontario has not provided for any consultation or hearings regarding this initiative; and

"Whereas the Harris government has excluded agricultural workers from protections under the provincial labour code by passing Bill 7; and

"Whereas this exclusion is currently being appealed under the Canadian Charter of Rights for infringing on the right of association and equal benefit of law;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to retract the farmfare program until hearings have been held and to reinstate the right of agricultural workers to allow them basic human rights protection under the labour code of Ontario.”

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

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Ontario Legislature, and it concerns northerners demanding the Harris government eliminate the health care apartheid which presently exists in this province.

“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.”

Of course I affix my signature to this petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Further petitions from Sarnia.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

As my caucus agrees with this position, I proudly add my name to theirs.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

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

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

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

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

“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.”

This is signed by a number of my constituents in Atikokan, a small community where residents routinely have to travel 200 kilometres to get health care.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): The CAW continues their campaign of fighting against cancer in the workplace. Their petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government”—

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Why do you have to heckle every time I read something to do with human rights?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I just heckle because it's you.

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

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

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

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer; and

"That the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

I add my name to those of these petitioners.

INVESTIGATION INTO CHILD ABUSE

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

"Whereas Garry Guzzo, MPP, Ottawa West-Nepean, has brought forward Bill 103, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry to inquire into the investigations by police forces into sexual abuse against minors in the Cornwall area; and

"Whereas Bill 103, 2000, has the public support of John Cleary, MPP, Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh,

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

"To enact Bill 103, Inquiry into Police Investigations of Sexual Abuse Against Minors in the Cornwall Area Act, 2000."

I have also signed this petition.

1510

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 124, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Pesticides Act in respect of penalties, when Bill 124 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 finance and economic affairs; and

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

That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to meet during its regularly scheduled meeting times on one day for clause-by-clause consideration; and

That pursuant to standing order 75(c), the Chair of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall establish a deadline for the tabling of amendments or for filing them with the clerk of the committee; and

That the committee be authorized to meet beyond its normal hour of adjournment on the that day until the 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 14, 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 finance and economic affairs, 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 caucuses, 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.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is a complete betrayal of what was offered by the Deputy Premier to our, the NDP's, deputy leader when asking a specific question about this bill. As you know, we have major concerns with it. The Deputy Premier that day said, "I can assure the member opposite"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Order. I didn't hear a point of order. Under which standing order are you rising?

Ms Churley: It breaks the spirit of the agreement we had in House leaders' meeting and it breaks the spirit of what the Deputy Premier—

The Acting Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order. Debate.

Hon Mr Newman: I welcome this opportunity to debate the motion to allocate the schedule for the remainder of the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000, so that, without further delay, this bill can be voted on. I want to thank all the members who will take part in the debate this afternoon.

The goal of the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000, is to maximize the effectiveness of the safeguards that protect Ontario's air, water and land. I know this is a goal shared by all the members of this Legislative Assembly. I know that all members desire a clean environment for the health, well-being and prosperity of the people they represent and indeed for all Ontarians.

There are several key requirements for strong environmental protection. We need tough standards and effective programs and policies, we need high-quality monitoring and reporting, we need to ensure compliance and be able to conduct investigations and prosecutions when compliance is not forthcoming and we need tough penalties to serve as a credible deterrent. If passed, this bill will be more than a credible deterrent; it will become the law of this province.

I believe the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000, is a very important piece of legislation for our province. I would like to expand on three of the reasons I believe it is so crucial. The first is the deterrence factor: we need to send a loud and clear message that it doesn't pay to pollute in Ontario. The second reason is that tough penalties protect the vast majority of individuals and companies who do play by the rules. Third, the tougher penalties we are proposing will increase the strength of our environmental protection and show the commitment of the Mike Harris government to our environment, to ensure cleaner, more prosperous communities for all Ontarians.

One of the challenges of environmental protection is the fact that there are people who do not obey the laws that have been put in place to protect the air, water and land in our province. They show callous disregard for the environment and for the health of other people. They believe their short-term gains outweigh any further losses for their community and for future generations.

This government has worked hard to stop polluters. We have put a lot of effort into ensuring the soundness of our environmental protection system as a whole. We have made regulations better, stronger and clearer. We have given ministry staff better tools for ensuring compliance and investigating suspected offences against the environment. These tools include more modern investigative aids and techniques. We have broadened the scope of enforcement to cover not only those caught breaking environmental laws but also the behind-the-scenes operators, and we have toughened the penalties for environmental offences.

Clearly we need to build on these accomplishments to provide maximum deterrence. We need to do this because, frankly, we are still seeing many of the same faces in our courts. There are a number of bad players who persist in polluting in this province. This legislation needs to send a message as quickly as possible that they have met their match. We need to make it even more obvious to them that pollution does not pay. We need to give Ontario the toughest fines and jail terms in Canada for major pollution offences. That is exactly what the passing of Bill 124 would do today.

If we work together and quickly pass the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000, it will send an important message to these repeat offenders. The message is simply that the elected representatives of this province are united against them. Our desire to put an end to their behaviour transcends party lines.

We must work together and give priority to the health, well-being and prosperity of Ontarians. Our families and communities, especially the children and future generations, will be the beneficiaries.

We also need to send a message to those who obey the environmental laws of this province. We need to tell these individuals and companies, and they are clearly in the vast majority, that we appreciate their efforts and we will not let them down. We have taken strong action on behalf of the good environmental players and will continue these efforts. We will not rest on our laurels. We will be like Simon Whitfield, the Canadian triathlete who won gold this past summer in Sydney. We will persevere as long as there are polluters we have not caught. We will track them down one by one, and even if we have to come from behind, we will win.

Unlike a race, there is no finishing line when it comes to protection of the environment. There are times when great gains are made—and Ontario would make great gains with the passing of the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000—but there will always be the need for adjustments and refinements as new knowledge and situations arise.

1520

By keeping to this course, we are making it known to the good environmental players that we are on their side for the distance. The individuals and companies that focus on their environmental performance have a big advantage on polluters: intelligence. It's not simply the desire to avoid stiff penalties. They have a broader awareness of the importance of meeting the requirements of the law. They know they are contributing to the health and well-being of society at large.

They also know that strong environmental performance contributes to strong economic performance in terms of efficiencies to be gained, market advantages and so on. In fact, the environment itself is one of the strongest drivers of economic growth in Ontario. We do not want to lose the momentum that has been achieved by the good environmental players. I urge the members to pass the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000, to help us maintain and build upon this momentum.

The final and most important point I'd like to make about the proposed bill is that it would be good for the environment. A sound environmental protection system depends on good standards and on the ability to effectively enforce them. By passing this bill, we would increase the effectiveness of the actions we have taken on so many fronts to protect Ontario's air, water and land.

We are fortunate to live in a province that is economically strong and blessed with an abundance of natural resources. But we must be constantly vigilant to ensure that our environment is not compromised by the few who would put short-term profits over the interests of our air, water and land.

I urge all the members of the Legislative Assembly, in the strongest terms possible, to support the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, 2000. If we work together in passing this important piece of legislation, we will send a strong message to everyone that offences against Ontario's environment will not be tolerated.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I rise today very pleased to speak on this bill. The bill we're contemplating is really a question of the difference between the hypothetical and reality. The hypothetical is that this government passes such a bill, which solves the problem they're dealing with, which results in tougher penalties, which results in a lower number of violations with respect to environmental laws being broken. A greater number of penalties are imposed, and they're tougher.

However, the reality is they will never be enforced, and therefore there will not be the number of cases brought and charges laid. So you have the difference between what the government deals with in terms of a political problem and its attempts to solve its political image with the public, which is to say, "We brought forward tougher laws. We are not soft on environmental crime." That's what it amounts to.

Essentially, the government is posturing, suggesting we are getting tough on environmental crime. That's the only way we can describe it. We're getting tough on it, we're increasing penalties. But the reality is that this government has decimated the Ministry of the Environment and its enforcement branch and therefore does not have the ability to carry out the enforcement required to back up its rhetoric.

This government has demonstrated that from the very beginning, when it was first elected, by downsizing the Ministry of the Environment by one third. Nine hundred staff were laid off at the Ministry of the Environment. Its budget was cut by \$121 million.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): What percentage is that?

Mr Cordiano: That's a 42% reduction. A 30% reduction in the compliance and enforcement branch resulted in 141 staff being fired. This is like the jail guards leaving the keys of the jail right there for the inmates to unlock themselves and sneak out any time they want. Of course, they've done that in the boot camps.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): We did correct that incident.

Mr Cordiano: My good friend the former minister of corrections is here today, and I know he'd like to correct that incident. If he were the minister, I'm sure he would want to do that.

But when all is said and done, this is a government that does not stand up true to the environment and its protection. It does not do that with the full force of the law and with any kind of vigilance. When all is said and done, the problem this government faces is that the Ontario public does not believe that this government truly is tough when it comes to dealing with environmental violations. It's not going to do it. It does not have a track record. It does not have the credibility that's required.

As we know, not dealing with these problems today means that we will have enormous problems tomorrow. Our children will inherit this huge environmental deficit—that's the only way you can describe it—the cost of which will be rising. Trying to deal with the pollution problems of tomorrow could very well bankrupt future governments if we don't deal with some of the huge problems we're facing today when it comes to water pollution or air pollution. These are problems that are not going to go away unless we take immediate action today, and taking the action that is required today means that it will cost less tomorrow.

We have all kinds of new technologies that are available to us to divert waste, to divert the kinds of wasteful initiatives we have been seeing just recently with the Adams mine.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Such as that advertising.

Mr Cordiano: The wasteful initiatives we're seeing by this government in terms of advertising: a huge, full-colour brochure. Once again this government uses propaganda to talk about issues that—

Mr Bradley: There's a picture of the Premier in there.

Mr Cordiano: Where's the picture? Let me see. Oh, here he is right here: "A message from the Premier."

Again and again—and we saw this in all kinds of ministries. Just recently, in the summer, the Minister of Community and Social Services put out another piece of propaganda talking about welfare and the reduction of the welfare rolls, yadda, yadda, yadda. At the end of the day this government, on every single issue, will send out a piece of propaganda to talk about, "Isn't the government great?" patting itself on the back. Millions and millions of dollars are wasted on government advertising. That's the only way you can describe it. This is blatant. Previous governments could never have gotten away with this kind of nonsense. Never, ever did they even attempt to do such blatant advertising.

This is a full-colour brochure, great colours of fall. Look at that.

Interjection: Pumpkins.

Mr Cordiano: Pumpkins. Every season has a new propaganda pamphlet out there. That's what we're seeing from this government, rather than dealing with the very real problems of the environment.

This bill does nothing to convince those of us who are very skeptical about this government, and that list is growing. Every day the Ontario public becomes more skeptical about this government's true intentions when it comes to the environment, the vigilance with which this government is dealing with environmental problems, whether it's water or air pollution, or garbage for that matter. This is not a government that takes these problems seriously. It's not a government that is in effect dedicating additional resources.

We have a glorious opportunity at this present time to take the initiative in this province to support emerging technologies. It's a great time to do that. It's a great time for Ontario to show leadership, to make certain that the future is a better place for all of our children, that we're not passing on a legacy of enormous costs which will, as I say, affect future governments and the economy of this province. At some point down the road the bill for these enormous costs will come in and we won't be able to deal with it.

This government has a terrible legacy, a terrible record when it comes to the environment. It is third from the bottom of the list, where all North American jurisdictions are concerned, as the worst in dealing with environmental questions. It has not proven to the public that it will do so with any kind of vigilance. Therefore we look at a bill like this and tell ourselves that this is nothing more than posturing on the part of the government, as they have demonstrated time and again they will do when they realize there's a political problem, that there's a perception problem: introduce a bill or send out a pamphlet to deflect any real criticism; create the alternate perception out there that in fact they are doing, that they are taking action, that they are vigilant about these problems we're facing.

1530

That's the style of governance we've seen from this government time and time again. When it comes to the environment, we should be depoliticizing this question. It should not be a partisan question; it should not be a question at which we have any kind of division. All of us in this House should be for environmental protection, should be vigilant in our efforts to ensure that there is good public policy to protect the environment. After all, it affects all of us. It should be "apple pie" that we're talking about. We've dealt with many other issues in previous years. This one should be an issue that does not have to be politicized.

It's a question of dedicating resources and having the political will to deal with some of these problems, and they will be solved. Once again it is a sad thing that this government does not recognize that in dealing with the environment, and ensuring that there is clean water and air, we're providing to all of the people in the province a great service and doing what is required of us as

legislators. That is the first and foremost priority for all of us.

I think the time has come, in this new century, to declare that the environment is something that will be depoliticized and no longer a partisan question, that it can be something all of us work and strive to achieve with respect to better air and better water for our children in the future.

Unfortunately that is not the case and unfortunately that is why some of us stand up in the Legislature and have to make these kinds of speeches and have to be skeptical about governments that do not recognize the need for greater protection and enforcement and dedicating true resources to dealing with these problems. This government has failed miserably to do that and it is a real shame in this province.

Ms Churley: Mr Speaker, I'm sorry that I rose earlier on a point of order that turned out not to be a point of order, and I realize you had to do your job and rule me out of order on it, but I was making the point because I feel that some faith was broken in this House today.

In the spirit of co-operation and agreement about this bill, I was led to believe and understood that there would be some—not enough but some—time for public hearings on this and some time to make amendments. What we've got before us today is yet another closure motion, a motion to shut down debate and shut down the public. The public will have no input in this bill whatsoever now. We will have a few hours of what's called clause-by-clause so that we can put forward amendments which, my assumption based on what's happened here today, will go nowhere.

I'm hoping very much that at the very least some of the concerns we raised in this House will be incorporated into amendments that can be made to fix this bill, which has some really deep flaws which we have pointed out repeatedly here. Let me tell you two reasons why I believe we should have at least some public hearings.

The deputy leader of the NDP, the member from Beaches-East York, Frances Lankin, asked a question in this House to the Acting Premier on October 16. I was in Walkerton that day, it was the first day of hearings in Walkerton, and my leader was also in a community, so Ms Lankin asked this question on behalf of our caucus and pointed out a very deep flaw in the bill, a very important flaw. I'm going to tell you what that flaw is first so members will understand one of the reasons why the NDP caucus has such a problem with this bill and why we want it to have public hearings, so that the government could hear from people who are experts in the environmental field who could give some advice. But no, they don't want to hear that.

The issue she brought to the attention of the Acting Premier that day, and the Acting Premier on that day was the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet, was that she told him about what we had discovered in this bill, and they don't talk about this. They never told us in the explanatory note that they were actually weakening the bill before us. What she asked about was that, right now

on the books, there is a law that allows administrative penalties against a director or an officer of a corporation who has failed to take all reasonable care to protect the environment. This law that this government is getting up and bragging about day after day repeals that. It's actually a bill before us that brags about increasing penalties, which nobody can disagree with on the surface, but that's the only bit of the bill they talk about. That was the question she asked that day to the Acting Premier.

I'm going to quote to you some of the words from the Acting Premier that day, the Chair of Management Board. He said, "I can assure the member opposite that our draft legislation will go through consultations. I know that you would agree with"—and blah, blah, blah about that. He said "I can assure," not "maybe," not "I will speak to the minister," and he was speaking for the government members that day. He said, "I can assure the member opposite that our"—and he called it—"draft legislation will go through consultations."

We took the government spokesperson of the day, the head of the government that day, at his word that there would be—well, what does "consultations" mean? It doesn't mean just speeches in this House, which these guys don't listen to anyway. It means consultations with the public so they have an opportunity to express their concerns about this bill directly to government members on a government committee. That is what we expected.

The other reason I expected some hearings on this, albeit not enough, is that I, as the whip of the NDP, sit in the meetings that take place weekly between the House leaders and the whips of all three parties, where we sit down and to the best of our ability try to negotiate how this place is run, while recognizing that the government holds all the cards, especially since they've changed the rules to the point where the opposition's role has been reduced to very little, with very few tools left for us to show the truth of what's happening in this place and the content of bills.

But there are some opportunities for us to sit down and negotiate. One of the things we talked about was hearings for this bill before us today, the closure bill. Let me remind people again what that means. It means that they're going to shut down debate on this bill before us today and that there will be no public hearings. In the House leaders' meeting, I had made it very clear that I wanted some days of hearings. I knew I wasn't going to get a lot so I didn't push for too much. I said I'd like a couple of days, with a day for clause-by-clause. We left it with the possibility that the best I could get was a day of public hearings and a day of clause-by-clause. It was left up in the air, and no agreement had been made, because the House leader said he would talk to the minister about it.

What he came back with today was this proposal. There was no discussion about it, no negotiating. The heavy hand of the government once again came back and said, "No, there will be no hearings whatsoever." Clause-by-clause: I assume that's because the government must have some amendments, and we will see if some of the

urgent matters our caucus brought up about the flaws in this bill—if the government will bring forward those amendments.

The bottom line on two occasions—I negotiated in good faith on behalf of our caucus and on behalf of the groups that have an interest in this bill. I know the whole world is not paying attention to this bill and some people might wonder why I'm kicking up such a fuss about it. On the surface, in the whole scheme of things that are happening to our province under Mike Harris's watch, this either seems, I'm sure, to most people, if they're paying attention, insignificant, or the way the government talks about it, like a good thing.

1540

Let me tell you and remind you again why it was so important to have a proper, full debate in this Legislature about this bill, and why it was critical that environmental groups and perhaps community folks would want to come in and express their concerns, or maybe even some big business might come in in favour and say, "Yes, increase the penalties on us." There are a lot of problems with this bill, and the increase in penalties is something we're going to hear the government brag about time after time because their environmental record is so weak and so embarrassing to them.

What this will do is they'll be able to stand up, as they've done repeatedly in this Legislature, and say, "Hey, we're great. We brought in the toughest penalties in Canada." The penalties are pretty tough right now. They're pretty high and nobody objects to making them higher. It's a good thing. The bottom line, though, is that somebody's actually got to enforce the law and they're not enforcing the existing law.

Let me remind people again of what has happened with enforcing the law under this government's watch. This is just about water pollution, which for obvious reasons folks are paying attention to right now because of what happened in Walkerton. Let's talk about water violations for a few minutes.

This is from a report—give them credit for it—Ontario's Environment and the Common Sense Revolution: A Fifth Year Report, put out just recently by the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. These are experts and their research is impeccable. Nobody can argue with it. "Increased violations of water pollution standards: Violations of water pollution standards increased between 1996 and 1998. A total of 167 companies and municipalities violated water pollution standards, guidelines or regulations in 1998, with a total of 3,363 violations, up from 1,013." That's up from 1,000 violations in 1996.

Now get the second part to this, and this is what makes such a mockery of the bill that we have closure on today: "An analysis of water-discharge violations by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund found that from 1996 to 1998 there has been a tripling of water pollution standards violations by companies and municipalities in Ontario. In 1998, the last year for which data is available, there were more than 3,000 violations.... A total of 167 companies violated

water pollution standards in 1998.” Two thirds of those were repeat offenders.

Since 1998—remember all those numbers I just read to you, some of them being repeat offenders—there has been only one prosecution for a breach of waste water discharge laws. This is what we really should be dealing with in this Legislature. The horse is already out the barn door.

There is no problem with making the fines higher, but it doesn't make any difference, partly because of what I said—they're not prosecuting and they're not inspecting and enforcing. They don't have the staff to do it. Furthermore, I believe this government believes they should let these folks off the hook. They are their friends.

I think the proof is in the pudding. One of the second major reasons we object to this bill, and I ask the minister to make an amendment to actually bring in a law—I'd do it by a private member's bill but it would be a money bill and the opposition isn't allowed to do that by a private member's bill—is that there was a Supreme Court decision made just last year, I believe, which actually allows companies to write off fines. It doesn't matter if it's \$500 or \$5 million, they can write off a fine on their income taxes. So it's just a matter of doing business. They can claim it on their taxes no matter how high the fine is. They can claim it, write it off on their taxes.

Think for a moment about what that means to the taxes that we pay. It means that those corporations, if they're fined, can write the taxes off. They actually save money and we, the taxpayers, through the back door, end up paying the bill for the violations of a company polluting the environment.

Those are two very major flaws in this bill. One of them is at the government's own hand. They are actually removing a piece of legislation that one of their own ministers brought in some time ago. Now why? You have to ask yourself. This government brought in something that I applauded, and I don't get the opportunity to do that very much because of this government's record on the environment. But I said that was a good thing. I was pleased to see that.

Why would the government remove it and hide it? They didn't talk about it. We discovered it. We discovered it was hidden in the small print and not a word about it in the House. It was a strong aspect of the existing law where corporations, where the CEOs, a director or an officer of a corporation could suffer administrative penalties. That's gone now, so this bill is actually weakened.

We're in a real dilemma here. There's reason to support the bill on the surface because it's raising penalties, but then we would also be supporting a bill that's actually weakening the law, supporting the government on something that they talk about as though it's a major piece of environmental protection when, in fact, they're weakening the law and they're not enforcing the existing law.

What did this government do after the terrible tragedy in Walkerton? We kept waiting for them to come forward

with some real, meaningful responses to the terrible wake-up call, the deaths of people in Walkerton. Finally, my colleague Mr Bradley, the member from Niagara who is the Liberal critic for the environment—he and I both came out to the announcement.

I have a press release that the NDP put out that day: “Tories dribbling out dollars for clean water.” I remember the press, in fact, picked up on that line and it was all over the media that day, that they're dribbling out dollars where a flood of investment is needed.

I remember that day very well, because I was thinking that the government is going to make a reasonable investment today in sewer and water, and I was prepared—sometimes the opposition actually are prepared and should be prepared when something good is done—to congratulate the government.

You know what? I went that day ready to congratulate the government, because I fully expected a real investment. To my shock—it really was unbelievable; it was wasting our time; it was smoke and mirrors which fortunately did not work with the media or anybody else—what they did was reannounce a health and safety program, \$240 million over two years, which already existed. No new funding whatsoever was announced to bring sewer and water treatment systems up to standards. As well, that \$240 million could also be used for projects—

Mr Bradley: For bridges.

Ms Churley:—such as bridges and road repairs and things like that instead of dedicated solely to clean water.

This was such a feeble and inappropriate response to the tragedy of Walkerton, and it continues to be smoke and mirrors. We have not seen any real, serious action from this government since the events in Walkerton, except these kinds of announcements that are simply smoke and mirrors. That's what this bill is all about.

As I said, I think it's up to the opposition whenever the government does something good on the environment and in many other areas. I can assure you, I can look all I want and it's hard to find something. Sometimes it's just because we disagree on the right approach to the same ends, but quite frequently it's because this government repeatedly, in every area, is tearing down what successive governments of all stripes have built up over the years, and that is particularly true in the environment.

1550

The funding for the Ministry of the Environment right now is at about the same level or perhaps even lower than the level of funding when the Ministry of the Environment was started under a Tory government in the 1970s. That's how far backwards we've gone. We now have, when you combine what's called operating and capital, a whopping 60% cut. We've been talking about a 30% cut in this House for some time, but again, in this latest report—and the numbers are good, they're clear, adds it all up—in fact it is a 60% cut. Staffing has gone way down, by about a third. Let's get our number straight here: we're talking about 1,000 staff laid off, not 900,

and we're talking about a 60% cut to the Ministry of the Environment.

The staff aren't there to uphold our environmental laws any more and that's what makes me so angry about this. The staff are not there and they keep standing up saying, "We're doing more with less." They keep standing up and saying—

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Much more.

Ms Churley: "Much more," says the member from Perth. Nobody believes you, nobody. It's ridiculous. When you all stand up and say, "Under the NDP you had all these staff and you didn't need them and they weren't doing do anything," nobody believes you. People are very well aware that even in a deep recession, we made a decision to continue to invest in environmental protection. We did that knowing we were getting a lot of flak; in fact, from that party, many of whom were sitting right here then. For every dollar spent on important investments in our health and in our environment and other areas—

Interjection.

Ms Churley: We saw what happened when this government came into power and started deregulating like crazy and cutting the Ministry of the Environment. We've got a crisis on our hands. Their own draft cabinet document, which was leaked to us and the NDP released it, said very clearly—it is not just the opposition saying this; it is not just the previous Environmental Commissioner and now the present Environmental Commissioner; it is not just the auditor; it is not just all kinds of environmental groups—their own government officials who worked for the Ministry of the Environment said in this document that there is a problem. This came out. This document was clearly rejected. It said there is a problem. Less than 10% of all sources of pollution in this province that are affecting our health and our environment are being inspected. This document recommended that up to 500 new staff be rehired to deal with these problems. But it was very clear that they knew this government wasn't going to do that, so they came up with a compromise: 139, I believe it was, a SWAT team.

The document also said that there was a perception that the government wasn't protecting the environment. They had to make sure that perception was dealt with, so they came up with this idea of a SWAT team of 130-odd people who—and the document said it very clearly—could not deal with over 90% of pollution sources which weren't being inspected, but there would be targeted areas. What the government did in September was bring in half of what was recommended in this document, 65 or something like that, and they are only on an 18-month contract. Then we find out that there was an internal document in the Ministry of the Environment saying that some of these folks would just be transferred from other areas. So another piece of nonsense brought before us when we have an environmental crisis in this province.

I have tried and my caucus has tried, the few days and evenings when we've had the opportunity to debate this, to repeatedly point out the problems with this bill. We are

not opposed to making the fines higher. Why not? But if you're going to make the fines higher, it's got to be meaningful. You've actually got to hire the staff. I believe the public will support me in this and will support others in this who are calling for a reinvestment in the environment.

When the government stands up—and they will do it again today; I can see it coming. They may not use the words "more with less" any more. They don't need all this new staff, they've got new technology—blah, blah, blah—to get this thing done. It isn't true. It isn't correct. You're not protecting the environment.

The evidence is all right in your hands, even from government documents, but you're all sticking your heads in the sand and not paying attention to the warnings that are out there. It's true that you're not paying attention to warning signs, and you're playing with people's lives. It's a very dangerous thing you're doing.

Interjections.

Ms Churley: You are. It's true. Unfortunately, it's one of those "I told you so's" you wish you never had to say.

After the Walkerton tragedy I dug out Hansard. To people watching who don't know it, Hansard is the record of everything that's said in this Legislature. From things I and my leader Howard Hampton have said, that Eva Ligeti, the former Environmental Commissioner, has said, and things the auditor has said, from as early as 1992, there were dire warnings about drinking water and groundwater in this province.

The warnings became increasingly alarming, because they were put in the context of staff and budget cuts. Nobody was there any more to mind the store. We all know there were problems and issues around our drinking water and groundwater for some time. Once again, other governments, including the NDP, were moving forward. We set up OCWA. We had a municipal assistance program for sewer and water. We set up what we called Clean Up Rural Beaches, which was specifically to deal with agricultural manure runoff. I could go on and on, which we have done in this Legislature before, about the things we did, even in a recession, to move forward, because we knew there were problems.

The reason these warnings were so alarming was because they were put in the context of staff cuts and deregulation. Suddenly it became clear that without the staff to enforce what already existed and without the money being put into new sewer and water projects—all these things were cut. The CURB program, the agricultural runoff program was cut. All these things were cut. There weren't—aren't—enough staff there to enforce the existing laws.

There were warnings. That's what I'm trying to say to government members who still don't want to listen. There were actually warnings that there could be dead bodies as a result. I'm sorry to say that. I pointed it out in the House before. The warnings were there, and again, just like now, we were being laughed at and told, "You

don't know what you're talking about. We're doing more with less." All the usual—

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): All the doublespeak.

Ms Churley: Yes, doublespeak. After what happened in Walkerton and all the information we now have about water problems across this province—old infrastructure which is going to cost up to \$9 billion to correct and rebuild—all the information we now have about air pollution and the fact it's literally killing people and that so many sources of pollution aren't even being inspected, and after we've had a situation where people died, you would think that when the opposition and others stand up and say to the government: "This bill means nothing. You're actually weakening a law. You're trying to pull the wool over people's eyes once again. It's not going to work, because what we need is real protection here."

1600

The technical standards division—I'm going to bring this in because it's relevant as well. I used to be the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. That's a ministry that deals with safety laws and consumer protection and also regulates a lot of industry in this province. A very important part of that ministry used to be to protect people. Think about bungee jumps, amusement rides at the CNE, elevators and leaking underground storage tanks—there's another area. When I was the minister I was responsible for that. It's a little-known fact, but I was aware that leaking underground storage tanks in the US—we don't have comparable statistics here—are the number one source of contaminants of groundwater in the US, and there's no reason to believe it's any different here. They are everywhere. Our government brought in the toughest regulations around leaking underground storage tanks, I believe, in all North America. That too comes under the technical standards division.

Recently, we had a bit of a filibuster in this House over that bill, because the government has transferred it all to the private sector. It's now a private entity out there that's in charge of all our safety laws. We pointed out in committee—and I made some amendments—that there was a problem with this bill. I think that was the wrong way to go in the first place. Our party did not support it when they brought it forward, and I made amendments that would at least make this body accountable to the public: to the government, to the Ombudsman, to the auditor. It's not accountable to anybody. I'm not saying there aren't some good folks over there, but the board is mostly made up of industrial types. We need accountability when it comes to our safety laws.

It seemed like we were getting somewhere with that, because they were forcing this bill through in the middle of the Walkerton crisis. In the debate, Mr Runciman, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, was here one day and told me he was listening and that we had raised some very important points. Suddenly, they didn't try to get the bill through any more before the Christmas break. It felt like a minor victory at the time,

that the government did take our concerns seriously. In all sincerity, I believed that Minister Runciman did, but he must have gotten overruled along the way. I believed he was at least going to bring in amendments to include the accountability structure. In other jurisdictions across the world, in a few other areas that have done this, they do at least have this entity accountable to the government and various overseeing bodies. But no. We came back and it was shoved right through.

I bring this up in the context of what we are talking about here today, because we are talking about health and safety. When you start fooling around with the laws and regulations that have been put in place over the years to protect people's health and safety, then you've got a problem. We've got a very big problem here in Ontario.

We have seen environmental laws treated like red tape. In fact there's a Red Tape Commission, and a lot of the changes made to environmental law in this province have been made under the Red Tape Commission. Do you know that because of the way that body is set up, they are not what we call FOIable? Did you know that? It's amazing. It's the same thing with the technical standards body that was set up to oversee our safety laws. That's why I brought the two up together. There's no accountability. Anything the Red Tape Commission decides on, any change, whatever they consider red tape they can just pluck out. It's gone, and we don't have access to freedom-of-information documents on that. That's pretty scary, and that's not what government is supposed to be all about. The government is supposed to be accountable to the people of Ontario.

Mark my words, when it comes to their safety and their health, to future generations, to environmental protection, to protect our natural heritage for our children, our grandchildren and beyond, they want our government there to protect that.

I'm distressed by this today, and again I'll be the first one to say that I don't believe there's going to be a huge amount of public attention to this. There's a federal election going on. My deputy leader of the NDP today pointed out to the Minister of Health that there's a lot of interest in that, and so there should be, with nursing homes, frail seniors. There are education problems, there are problems in health, there are problems across the board, and this seems on the face of it as the government presents it, while deliberately not telling people—we discovered that they're actually weakening the law here and making it easier for corporations to pollute. That this is a good thing here, that we're going to have the highest fines in Ontario, sounds good. But what people want in this province is to see a government that is actually enforcing existing law.

I want to say again in closing, because I want to leave some time for my colleague, who is actually on House duty today and I'm sure wants to speak to this before the end of the day, that when you stand up—and I listened to some of the debate last night and I heard again the member for Beaches-East York give a very good account, as we've been repeating over and over again, of

our concerns with this bill. I listened to some of the members respond and I was really disheartened, because I believe that there have got to be some intelligent members over there—notice I said “some”—who actually do get it. But they all stood up and mouthed the words they’ve been given by the Ministry of the Environment folks—I guess the minister’s staff—and the Premier’s office, I’m sure, and said the same things again, very clearly not listening to the areas, the issues that we pointed out are extremely problematic.

I’m hoping, even though there’s not a lot of attention being paid to this bill and the fact that the government brought in closure today—and I wonder why they did that and why we can’t have committee hearings, because the government sees this as a good-news story, and what we are pointing out repeatedly every chance we get, and now we are being shut down, is that this is not a good-news story, that in fact you’re weakening the existing law and you didn’t tell the people or the opposition about that. We had to ferret that out for ourselves. We had to take the opportunity to tell people that the government isn’t even enforcing existing laws—as I said earlier, over 3,000 last year in the water area alone and they only had one prosecution. I’m talking about 3,000 violations here and one prosecution. How can they seriously stand up and say that increased penalties—the toughest penalties in the whole world, they seem to be saying—are going to make any difference? Anyway, it’s up to the judge. You’ve got to inspect, you’ve got to enforce, you’ve got to prosecute, and then the judge makes a decision based on whatever the highest penalty is. So again we have no objections to higher penalties, that’s a good thing, but it doesn’t mean anything in the context of your governing and your lack of protection of the environment.

I’m sick at heart about this today because I have to admit that I don’t believe there’s a whole lot of public attention being paid to this yet, and I believe that’s why the government is forcing closure today, bringing in closure. I believe that’s why they are not allowing even one day of public hearings so that those with concerns about the bill could come in and tell the government what changes they’d like to see. Why would they be closing the debate on this, shutting it down and denying us even one day of hearings? I can tell you why. This bill was supposed to be nothing but good news, was supposed to have the opposition parties standing up and saying, “Finally you’re doing something good.” When we dug deep, we found out the problems with the bill and the fact that there’s still no new money for enforcement, for inspections in this province, that it means nothing. They want to shut that debate down as quickly as possible so that hopefully people aren’t paying much attention and they can get away with yet again another smoke-and-mirrors announcement.

1610

In closing, let me say to you that this government has been warned in the past about dire consequences if they did not staff up the inspections, the enforcers, and not only that, but the people who prevent pollution in the first

place: scientists, the others who are out there trying to keep the pollution from going down the pipe in the first place. Those people are all gone. They don’t want to talk about the real issue, the demise of the protection of the environment in this province. They want to talk about increased maximum fines. Thank you very much. It is absolutely meaningless.

I would love for one of the members sitting over there today to stand up, to take a stand—I don’t expect anybody to say, “You know what? You’re right,” but to take a stand on this and say that there are clauses in this bill that we are going to make amendments to, particularly the one that we keep pointing out is a problem, and that they will be the one person in that caucus who is actually going to stand up for the environment for a change. There is not one of them over there willing to do that. I don’t know, maybe they all think they have a chance to get into cabinet. Who knows? But wouldn’t it be nice? I can assure you I can name some of you who won’t, but if just one person in that caucus would actually stand up for the environment, for environmental protection in this province, and say they’re going to be the one to urge their own government on to hire back at least 500 staff out of the 1,000 they fired and to reinvest to protect our air and our water and our children’s and our grandchildren’s health.

That is what this is all about. This is not about smoke and mirrors, this is not about pulling the wool over people’s eyes and pretending that they’re doing something good; we’re talking about life and death here. We’re talking about what governments are supposed to be all about. My heavens, if there’s one time, one area where people actually want governments to be in their face, where people want money to be spent, where people want the staff to be there to uphold the laws, it is when it comes to protecting their environment and their health.

I would urge the government today to rescind the motion put before us and allow some public hearings on this and allow us to fix this bill so it actually has some meaning.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Speaker: There’s great interest over here in those comments and I’d like to ask if we have a quorum, because I think I’d like to have as many people here as possible to listen to the members’ comments today.

The Acting Speaker: Is a quorum present?

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

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

The Acting Speaker: The member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I’m pleased to have this opportunity to recap some of this government’s actions and achievements which demonstrate our commitment to strong environmental protection and enforcement.

The legislation we're debating, the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, builds on a strong record of environmental accomplishment. As you're aware, we've taken many actions as part of Operation Clean Water to ensure that Ontario's water supplies are safe and clean. All members are aware of our tough new drinking water protection regulation, which for the first time gives the force of law to tough standards designed to ensure clean drinking water for people in Ontario.

Protecting drinking water throughout Ontario is a key goal of Operation Clean Water. Environment Minister Dan Newman and I are now consulting on what small waterworks can and should do to safeguard the drinking water they provide to the public. Essentially, the next step under Operation Clean Water is to continue consultations. We have held consultations in Peterborough, Thunder Bay and Guelph. The last one will be held in Toronto this evening.

Mr Agostino: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think we have a quorum. Can we ask to have a count?

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

Mr Barrett: As I was saying, the reason Minister Newman and I are conducting these consultations is that small waterworks are not covered under the new regulation. Therefore, it's vital that we seek public input about how best to ensure drinking water protection in these small systems. There's a small waterworks discussion paper. This lays out key requirements for such a system and answers frequent concerns raised by owners of bed and breakfasts, gas stations, restaurants in rural areas, and rental cottages. I will mention that the deadline for submissions for this discussion and consultation process is November 15, 2000.

Never in our history has the government of Ontario undertaken such a broad review of the province's drinking water supply. As a regulator of public water systems in Ontario, the provincial government is working closely with owners and operators of waterworks to ensure that the public's health and safety remains a top priority.

Most recently, Environment Minister Newman has announced the formation of the SWAT team as well as legislation introducing the toughest fines and the longest jail terms in all of Canada for major environmental offences. The SWAT team, by the way, is a highly mobile unit. It's there to find companies and individuals that systematically and flagrantly defy the law by engaging in practices that pose a risk to our environment and to our public health.

We have invested in other initiatives aimed at protecting Ontario's water supply. We're providing at least \$240 million in OSTAR funding. I'd point out that OSTAR stands for the Ontario small-town and rural initiative. This money is to help smaller municipalities upgrade their water supply systems and to help pay for sewage treatment projects.

With respect to intensive farming, last winter Dr Doug Galt and I chaired province-wide consultations on nutrient management. As we all are aware, life in rural Ontario has changed significantly over the years, forcing agriculture and agricultural operations to change. In the past there have been some concerns, and in some cases conflicts, between farming and non-farming interests. Our government has made it a priority to find a way to address these concerns and determine balanced solutions that would recognize both the productivity of agriculture and the needs of rural residents and of our rural environment.

In recognition of these trends, ag minister Ernie Hardeman appointed this task force, as I've mentioned. Throughout the months of January and February we travelled the province and consulted with hundreds and hundreds of people in rural Ontario, with the goal of developing legislation to balance agricultural productivity, environmental concerns and rural community needs.

1620

I own a farm, and I stress that no one has the right to pollute, including farmers. No farmer has the right to pollute. Farmers are the best stewards not only of their land but of rural property across this province. Everyone is subject to the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act. We have heard from the large Ontario farm organizations that they support this legislation, which would enforce standards for all agricultural operations. Our government has been working with these stakeholders for some time now to limit any negative effects on the environment and any negative or overly stringent impact on their book of business.

As well, we've invested \$6 million in a groundwater monitoring network to help ensure the sustainability of Ontario's water resources, and over the next three years we'll be working with municipalities and conservation authorities to install electronic monitors to measure groundwater levels across Ontario. Some of these ideas have come from a task force that was formed this year, co-chaired by myself and other parliamentary assistants, that's developing a long-term strategy for our water resources. I will mention that our government is providing help to dig retention ponds along Big Creek in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant to make sure that water is available for farmers for irrigation during times of low water.

We have accomplished and achieved many things in addition to Operation Clean Water. We are continuing the momentum we have developed in other areas of environmental protection.

I would like to turn my attention to the area of air and air quality. Ontario is a leader in attacking air pollution. We've announced unprecedented initiatives to clean up Ontario's air and to address the issue of global climate change. This year alone, we announced strict air emission limits and mandatory reporting requirements for the electricity sector. A freeze, or a moratorium, has been placed on the sale of all coal-fired generating plants pending an environmental review, and the new Air

Quality Ontario initiative ensures that all Ontarians will have early and improved access to air quality information.

Ontario is developing emissions caps and is developing mandatory reporting requirements for other industrial sectors. As well, emission performance standards are being developed for electricity generators from outside Ontario. Those neighbouring states that may well be selling electricity in this province will have to adhere to the same tough environmental standards that our Ontario producers follow.

I'd like to mention Drive Clean. Drive Clean is well on its way to meeting its goal of reducing smog-causing emissions by 22%. Drive Clean is complemented by the smog patrol. Many of these people are from a former enforcement background. Smog patrol continues to target the most grossly polluting vehicles on our roadways; for example, out-of-province tractor-trailers.

We have kept our promise to strengthen our regulation governing the management of hazardous waste. This strengthening of our rules will ensure that all hazardous wastes, whether generated in the province or generated outside the province of Ontario, are managed in an environmentally sound way.

We've announced a policy review and expert panel on the redevelopment of old industrial lands. This presents a great potential for both cleaning up contaminated sites and spurring economic growth, something this government is all for. An issue I've specifically been involved with is developing approaches to a number of brownfields in the city of Brantford.

In conclusion, we have set tough rules to protect Ontario's environment and we're committed to backing them up. The vast majority of people and companies in this province do care. They care about our environment and they comply with the rules. Tough penalties will give us a greater ability to deter and punish those who choose to flout these rules and pollute our soil, our air and our water.

We are taking strong and appropriate action to provide the best possible environment today for future generations. I believe the tough penalties we are proposing—for example, a polluting corporation on a subsequent offence will be subject to a maximum fine of \$10 million a day—are part of the best possible environmental protection system for people within our rich province of Ontario. These tougher penalties will help ensure compliance with Ontario's stringent emission limits and mandatory reporting requirements and compliance with hazardous waste rules, as well as with drinking water protection rules, and I'm very proud of these concrete action steps.

We have set ambitious environmental goals and we are taking unprecedented action to achieve them. We are proud of what we have accomplished and we remain committed to ensuring that this momentum continues.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I usually stand in my place and talk about how honoured and privileged I feel to speak to the motion that's before the House for con-

sideration, but I have to say I can't say that today. We are again participating in debate on a closure motion. When I was elected a little over a year ago, I didn't think I would have to spend so much time and fight so hard for the opportunity for the people of Ontario to have some meaningful input into the laws that are made on behalf of the people.

Here we are again, as a Legislative Assembly, considering legislation that's going to stop debate on a very important bill.

Mr Bisson: That's a trend with this government.

Mrs Dombrowsky: My colleague has indicated that it seems to be a trend, and I think it's a very disturbing pattern, that we've seen manifested by this government, that on any substantive bill there are few days of debate. It would seem that once we meet those minimum required hours of debate, we are hit with a motion to close debate. It's really unfortunate, because it would suggest to me that perhaps the government is not especially willing or open to consider some of the very valid points that are raised during debate on these key issues.

I stand in the House when I participate in debate to bring forward perspectives from my riding and from my party to present what our leader, Dalton McGuinty, represents in the Liberal Party. We believe the environment is certainly an important issue, and I believe this caucus has done very well in terms of highlighting some areas of this bill that need some attention—or some areas, period, that need attention—that might be incorporated in the bill that are not there already.

More specifically with regard to Bill 124, and I think I indicated in remarks when I was participating in the debate on Bill 124, any piece of legislation that is going to improve the environment for the people of Ontario, that is going to be punitive to those people, companies and agencies that would not have regard for the well-being of our environment, any piece of legislation that will address that in a serious, meaningful and punitive way, I will support.

I have some concerns, though, that the government would present to the people of Ontario that this piece of legislation is going to solve the problem of polluters in Ontario, because when you look a little more deeply into the issue, there are some facts that come to light that I find really quite disturbing. We as a caucus have done our very best to have the people of Ontario understand that we believe that if you want to determine the priorities of a government or an individual or a country, simply look at how it or he or she chooses to spend their money.

1630

If you look at this government, if you at how it has directed resources to the Ministry of the Environment—perhaps it would be more accurate to say how they have redirected funds away from the Ministry of the Environment—it's most disturbing to understand that since the Tories came into office in the province of Ontario, the budget of the Ministry of the Environment has been slashed by 40%.

Interjection.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It's 60% if you include the capital, 60% if you include what it put toward capital in the environment, and upwards of 1,000 people have been cut from that ministry.

It's really hard for me to understand how the minister very regularly stands in his place and talks about how the government places such priority on the environment, when one very meaningful way to judge that, to gauge that, is, how much money are you spending there? They've made some drastic cuts in terms of the support to that particular ministry.

Following from that, of course if you don't have the dollars, you can't hire the people. We look at those numbers: upwards of 1,000 people. Specifically related to Bill 124, we know there were 141 compliance and enforcement positions cut. Those people who would work for the Ministry of the Environment, who would deal specifically with compliance and enforcement, going out and checking industries and businesses and people who might be polluting the environment, those very people who are hired by the ministry to do that—there are 141 fewer of those people than when Mike Harris took office. It really begs the question, why tougher penalties? Why not more people in place to work to bring more polluters to justice?

You can have the strongest, the most punitive laws in the world on your books, but if you don't follow through and enforce them, it's really pretty meaningless. If you look at the record of the government in that area—it has been brought to light by almost every member of the opposition and the third party who have stood in their place to speak to this issue—there has only been one conviction. That is very disturbing. It really begs the question, why? Surely, knowing that we are the third worst polluter in North America—I'm sure it has come from more than one polluting agent—why has there only been one conviction in this area?

I would say that while the intent of the legislation is perhaps noble and worthy of support, I have serious questions about its enforceability, given the fact that there is nothing within the body of the legislation that's going to address supporting the ministry to allow them to hire more staff.

In his remarks the minister has made reference to a 65- or 66-member SWAT team. First of all, just the straight number 66 is less than half of those people who have been fired out the door at the Ministry of the Environment. What is also important for the people of Ontario to understand is that those are not 66 new positions. Many of those positions are redeployments from other parts of the Ministry of the Environment, a ministry where the people are working so hard and are incredibly taxed. They are doing all that they can, they are pedalling as fast as they can and they still can't keep up. There are lots of examples in the media these days where that can be demonstrated. In fairness to the people at the ministry, I think these are very worthy and noble civil servants offering their very best service to the people of the province, but the reality is there are just not enough of

them, and now here is some more weight to the burden on their shoulders.

Not all 66 are new, and those that might be new are not new to the government, but they're contract positions. So they're contracted for a period of time, perhaps 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, and at the end of the contract, who knows? I've got to think that if the government was really serious about keeping people in place they'd give them a full-time job and say, "It's your job." That's not what they're doing; they're giving them a contract. So at the end of the contract the government, and the employee of course, I suppose, has the option of opting out.

These issues I've touched upon and that other members of this House have touched upon in debate I believe deserve attention by the government. If there were more time allowed in the House for some meaningful discussion about the shortcomings of Bill 124, perhaps the opposition would have the time and the resources to, at the very least, convince the government that there is a need for some significant amendments and an opportunity for the public to participate in a meaningful way on some more intensive debate on Bill 124.

But here we are today. This afternoon we're going to close debate on this and then it will be called for third reading. It's really too bad. When I told the people in my riding that I wanted to run and be their voice, I didn't realize it would be so curtailed in this Legislative Assembly. I thought it was a place where we would come and, in a very open and welcoming way, listen to what the representatives of the people would have to say. But that's not what I'm experiencing. I think it would be interesting to look at the numbers in terms of how many bills before this House have had closure motions or time allocation motions placed along with them. It is sad for me as a legislator that I've had to stand and speak to yet another closure motion.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): First of all, I'd like to thank the member for Timmins-James Bay, who should have been speaking now, but I'm sure he still owes me one. We were at an event in Kapuskasing recently and I happened to draw his name, so he's still quite owing. Although I must say, I am surprised that the member is allowed to have his cellphone in the House on his belt and it hasn't been withdrawn. So we do owe him one, but I do appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important bill today.

As a father, it's very concerning to me to every summer have to watch the UV ratings and put all that goop on my kids. Twenty years from now we're going to find out that all that sunscreen will cause something else. So anything we can do along these lines I very much appreciate, and I think this is one of the strong steps.

But I must admit that there are a number of issues this government has already taken forward and achieved great success with. The anti-smog bill was one that was very interesting to me, and when the bill was first being discussed I had some strong concerns about it. So, as I'm sure most members did, I talked with hundreds—and that

was hundreds—of individuals in my riding about that bill. At that time I only had two individuals in my riding who were actually opposed to the anti-smog bill: Wayne was adamantly opposed to it and the other one really didn't care about it at all. It was good to see. I know the impact of that on society as a whole is very significant, reducing the smog that's polluting our atmosphere and also the environment. I think everybody would agree with that.

There are a number of other things. The member for York South-Weston spoke about future technologies. There are a number of examples I have been working on, as I'm sure other members do in their ridings. It all spurred from when I first met with General Motors—being from Oshawa, I regularly meet with General Motors, both the people on the line and management—and one of the issues of concern was the sulphur content in gasoline. So we did bring a resolution forward to discuss the sulphur content in gasoline. I might add that a couple of months after that the federal government followed our lead here in the province of Ontario and did reduce the sulphur content.

General Motors's premise on this is that they're reaching a point where their vehicles are maximizing the output of contaminants into the environment. Unless they get better quality gas, they can't reduce it any more. The SULEVs, the super low-emission vehicles, and the very low-emission vehicles will require better quality gas in order to produce fewer pollutants. That was one of the reasons we brought forward the sulphur reduction in gasoline, and it was very successful.

1640

As well, I know that General Motors has been dealing—quite frankly, I think all the major car corporations are very much ready and could be ready to produce completely energy-efficient vehicles out there, with the solar vehicles and the natural gas-powered vehicles and so on. However, the infrastructure in society is not quite ready for that. In other words, if all of a sudden General Motors produced nothing but electric cars, where would people get them fixed? Who has the experience at your local garages? I know that Paul Beatty in my riding does a great job, but where is he going to get the expertise and the equipment to handle all those repairs?

The technological change is slowly coming forward. The new gases that are available—currently in Japan there's a company called GAI Fuels. Essentially it's almost a non-polluting fuel, depending on the base again, whereby the emissions coming out are substantially reduced. We're currently looking at bringing it into the province of Ontario. The big concern was, would it fit into the current vehicles out there? Yes, this new fuel reduces the NO_x chemicals by virtually 50%. What that means to General Motors as an industry is, can it fit in these vehicles? Quite frankly, yes, this new fuel will fit directly in the vehicles, old and new ones, without any modification at all.

Not only that, but a formula currently being developed—as I mentioned, the member for York South-

Weston did mention the need for future technologies. Ontario is planned to be the distribution centre for North America for these. Right now they have a formula that's 90% completed whereby it will use all plastics, including PVC piping and those sorts of things, in a diesel fuel. It is non-polluting, the process by which they turn these plastics back into a petroleum base and utilize it for diesel fuel. This will substantially reduce the amount of pollutants going into the dumpsites and the garbage.

Those are just a couple of the technologies out there. Personally, I've worked on these with the General Motors corporation and have seen the benefit to the future of this province.

As well, some other issues have been brought forward, and I'm personally very concerned. I gave some of the reasons why.

Mr Agostino: On a point of order, Speaker: Do we have a quorum?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Is there a quorum?

Clerk at the Table: Mr Speaker, a quorum is not present.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

The Acting Speaker: The member for Oshawa.

Mr Ouellette: I was speaking about the impact on the environment regarding new technologies and what's taking place. When we speak of fuels, there is always a strong concern about the price of fuels and what is taking place in that area. In Ontario we have a tendency to think of the immediate impact here, but from a world perspective—I mentioned the fact that electric cars are coming forward, that new environmentally friendly fuels are being developed out there that are going to affect the environment. The gas companies, I believe, are seeing this trend coming forward. Because automobiles are the number one consumer of gas, their position would be, "If we don't make our profits now"—I can't remember the company exactly, but I believe the profits from one company went from \$2.4 billion to \$6.2 billion in the same period of time that the gas prices went up.

From a gas company's perspective, if these new technologies come forward and all of a sudden everybody is using electric vehicles, where are they going to sell the gas? More important, where are they going to get the deposits? How much does it take to put a Hibernia on line and how long will that last? So for the future of that industry, I think what we're seeing now is an increase in profits for future development within the gas industry. Once cars stop using gasoline—petroleum-based materials—as their main component for combustion, gas companies are going to be looking for other markets to sell to. If the price didn't come out at this time, 10 years from now when we're looking at new deposits, how much is it going to cost then to do the research and development to find those deposits at that time?

I was also mentioning some of the other initiatives. Personally, I mentioned that my kids have a very strong concern with the environment as well.

One of the other bills I brought forward, which I received support for, was ballast water discharge. Essentially, to protect the environment, that bill would stop ocean-going vessels from coming in and dumping new species. The difficulty with that was that Ontario is a single jurisdiction on the Great Lakes, and all the other jurisdictions would have to have individual legislation. Since then, I know of five US states that are now proceeding with ballast water discharge legislation in the same fashion we have here. As a matter of fact, while that legislation that I brought forward was going on, I was actually asked to present to a US Senate committee on the same piece of legislation because they were very interested.

I think the result of that, very much as the sulphur issue that was brought forward, was that we need a piece of legislation that will take into account all jurisdictions on the Great Lakes. Otherwise a vessel coming into the United States would be able to discharge those foreign species there, which will eventually migrate into Ontario, in the same fashion as the gas and sulphur issue. If Ontario were to pass the sulphur reduction laws, the difficulty is that once a vehicle takes one tank of gas from another jurisdiction where those sulphur levels have not been changed and reduced, the complete environmental system there that reduces the pollutants that come out is completely destroyed and there is no advantage to it at all. So we did need a Canada-wide basis for the reduction in sulphur.

I should also mention the fact, as the PA for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, that we see a large number of other areas come forward that are rather unique. I know up in Hearst, for example, the mills used to take all the scraps and shavings from their wood and it would cost them between \$10 and \$20 a tonne to take it to the dump. What they've done now in Hearst is use a cogeneration plant whereby all that waste wood material that used to go to the dump at \$10 and \$20 is now used in a cogeneration plant, in conjunction with natural gas, and produces energy in Hearst. That's a great thing. That's one of the new future technologies, which the member from York South-Weston said wasn't happening, that are taking place and are already in place in Ontario. Those are a number of examples.

I believe that Bill 124, the bill we are debating today, is a bill all members should support. It's going to do great things. I know the increase of the maximum fine for a first conviction for a major offence by an individual from \$100,000 to \$4 million a day, and for subsequent convictions from \$200,000 to \$6 million a day, and for a first conviction for a major offence by a corporation from \$1 million to \$6 million a day, and for subsequent convictions from \$2 million to \$10 million a day, are just perfect examples of some of the very specific things in this legislation that we need to get through to help our environment.

I know that I am to leave time for my seatmate, the member for Brampton Centre, so I will close at this time.

1650

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's an honour and a privilege to be speaking here this afternoon in favour of the Toughest Environmental Penalties Act, Bill 124, designed to toughen our environmental laws. I'd like to start off my thanking Minister Newman, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk and the member for Oshawa for their comments and opinions on this bill. I'd like to thank all the members of the opposition for their opinions as well.

With this regulation we're keeping our promise to get tough on polluters. This legislation, if passed, will ensure that Ontario has the toughest fines and jail terms in all of Canada for major polluters. In our election platform, Blueprint, we promised to create a cleaner Ontario, and we're keeping that promise today.

I know that everyone in this House understands the importance of protecting our environment and the importance of legislation to protect it. Our government is firmly committed to safeguarding our environment and ensuring that Ontario's communities are healthy, safe and prosperous. We are just as firmly committed to legislation that helps us achieve these ends.

The Toughest Environment Penalties Act, if passed, will introduce a number of penalties against polluters. Those penalties include the following, and we've heard them a few times but I will repeat them again:

It increases the maximum fine for a first conviction on a major offence for a corporation from \$1 million to \$6 million per day, and for subsequent convictions from \$2 million to \$10 million per day.

It also increases the maximum fine for a first conviction for an individual from \$100,000 to \$4 million per day, and for subsequent convictions from \$200,000 to \$6 million per day.

It increases the maximum jail terms for a person convicted of a major offence from two years to five years.

It increases the cap on administrative penalties from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

As well, the penalty structure in the Ontario Water Resources Act will be amended to ensure that these new tough penalties apply to the most serious offences under the new drinking water protection regulation. The new regulation is part of Operation Clean Water, a comprehensive action plan to give Ontario residents the safest drinking water in Canada.

Over the next three years, the government will invest \$6 million to steer the establishment of a groundwater monitoring network. We will select several hundred monitoring sites in consultation with our partners. I am particularly interested in this program myself. I have an area of my riding called the Oro moraine which is going to be under tremendous pressure for growth in the next few years; in fact, it's under pressure right now. The Oro moraine is a very valuable aquifer; it's part of the Alliston aquifer. A lot of the city of Barrie water comes from this moraine. There's certainly a lot of pressure on

this piece of property for future development, and I'd like to see some monitoring take place on that.

Monitoring will include water quality parameters of concern as well as water levels to give us information on groundwater conditions throughout Ontario.

We have committed to provide at least \$240 million, through the OSTAR program, to help Ontario's smaller towns, cities and rural areas to upgrade their water systems to comply with the new drinking water regulations, and for sewage treatment projects. All small towns, cities and rural areas are eligible to apply to this fund. I don't know how many other members have found this out, but I've been working with most of the municipalities that I represent in the riding, and a few of them are taking the opportunity to upgrade some of their water systems to the new regulations.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to once again tell the honourable members about the SWAT team that was announced at the introduction of this bill. Again, this was a Blueprint commitment.

The vast majority of people and companies in this province care about our environment and comply with the rules. I take note of a company in Simcoe county called Honda Canada. If anyone ever gets an opportunity to visit their plant and see how they handle their waste and their recyclable materials, it's something to see. It's a phenomenal plant, and I wish every company in the word could follow the example of Honda Canada.

The SWAT team is a major component of our four-point action plan to crack down on those who do not care about the environment and deliberately and repeatedly defy our environmental laws. The team is a new group of environmental officers with an innovative approach to identifying new and emerging problems, a group with a mandate to act quickly. The SWAT team, together with the tougher penalties outlined in this bill, will give us greater ability to deter and punish those who choose to operate outside the law, threaten our health and threaten our environment.

The SWAT team will aggressively pursue companies or individuals that deliberately and repeatedly defy the law by engaging in activities that threaten public health and the environment. The SWAT team will complement the Ministry of the Environment's environmental protection activities by focusing all its efforts on inspections and enforcement of specifically targeted sectors.

Existing ministry district staff will continue to handle most of the enforcement needs of this province. Existing district staff will continue to do baseline inspections and respond to pollution reports. To put ministry activities in focus, I want to remind honourable members that existing staff respond to more than 22,000 notifications of spills and potential pollution reports, assist with more than 16,000 certificates of approval and complete about 4,000 inspections on an annual basis.

A more aggressive and targeted team approach is required if we want to better address special problem areas in a strategic way. The SWAT team will enhance our environmental protection goals by targeting areas of

greatest concern: water quality, air issues and hazardous waste management. The SWAT team will be a highly qualified and specialized group. By putting all their efforts into compliance inspections and enforcement activities, the team will be able to focus on specific targets and conduct inspections, enforcements and follow-up activities in a much shorter time frame.

One of the more important aspects of the SWAT team will be mobility. The ministry will be able to quickly deploy the team to swiftly and effectively address immediate threats to our environment. As well, the SWAT team will use innovative approaches and technological support that will provide leading-edge environmental compliance. The field units will be equipped with state-of-the-art communications technology to draw on broader resources without leaving the field.

The team will identify new and emerging trends, and ensure that all necessary actions are taken to protect our environment. The SWAT team will increase the odds that polluters or potential polluters will be caught, and that they will face convictions and pay significant penalties for their actions, including the penalties outlined in this bill, if and when this bill is passed.

We want to continue to build on the increases in the number of charges laid and convictions and fines issued in 1999. The number of charges laid in 1999 was 51% higher than in 1998. Convictions rose by 49% during the same period. All told, there has been a 200% increase in the number of orders issued from the period between 1996 to 1999 to this year. During the same period, the number of tickets issued has increased even more, by 225%. It goes without saying that we want to have the best possible system of environmental protection for Ontario. Compliance and enforcement are the main components of this system. It only makes sense that we take strategic aim at those activities which pose the greatest threat to our health and our environment.

Once again, the SWAT team's strong enforcement presence will also act as a deterrent and encourage compliance with our environmental laws. It may also result in business developing and implementing more innovative technologies to deal with environmental challenges. The SWAT team will level the playing field. Those who defy the law will not benefit at the expense of good corporations and individuals who are in the majority and comply with the laws.

The SWAT team will help the ministry achieve its mandate of environmental protection by effectively and visibly bringing polluters into compliance with Ontario's environmental laws, regulations and standards, and by deterring potential polluters. I repeat: the SWAT team, together with the tougher penalties outlined in this bill, will give us greater ability to deter and punish those who choose to operate outside the law, threaten our health and pollute our environment.

Our government understands that cutting taxes and creating jobs are important to helping provide opportunities for the people of this province. Protecting the

environment is equally important, and we have taken a number of steps to protect our environment.

At this time, with just 11 minutes left and a couple of other speakers, I'd like to say that I hope everyone will support this bill. It's been a pleasure to speak to it this afternoon.

1700

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):

I'm certainly pleased to join in the debate with respect to Bill 124, An Act to Amend the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Pesticides Act in respect of penalties.

Certainly this is major environmental legislation for this province. If passed, this bill would give Ontario the toughest fines and longest jail terms in the nation for major environmental offences. The proposed bill would do the following: increase the maximum fine for a first conviction of a major offence for a corporation from \$1 million to \$6 million per day, and for subsequent convictions, from \$2 million to \$10 million per day, and also increase the maximum fine for a first conviction of a major offence for an individual from \$100,000 to \$4 million per day, and for subsequent convictions, from \$200,000 to \$6 million per day. It will also increase the maximum jail term for a person convicted of a major offence from two to five years, and increase the cap on administrative penalties from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per day.

I want to also make very clear that if this bill is passed, officers and directors of companies convicted of an offence under our laws would be subject to the toughest fines and jail terms in Canada for major environmental offences. These are very substantial increases. In one case, that of an individual convicted of a major offence against the environment, the penalty goes from \$100,000 to \$4 million per day, a forty-fold increase.

The proposed penalties I just outlined would apply to offences under the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Pesticides Act. In addition, the penalty structure in the Ontario Water Resources Act would be amended to ensure that these tough new penalties apply to the most serious offences under the new drinking water protection regulation dealing with failure to report samples that exceed standards and failure to ensure minimum levels of water treatment.

It's obvious that the vast majority of individuals and companies in this province care about the environment and comply with the rules. They care, first, for the sake of the environment and health. They realize that their long-term well-being and that of their children and the generations to follow depend on well-protected air, water and land. The people of this province also realize that a clean environment is the cornerstone of economic growth. They understand the concept of sustainability. Often this belief in sustainability has been made to them because improved environmental performance has reduced the bottom line of their business—and that's the balance we have to achieve in this province—or they have seen what has happened in other jurisdictions where

environmental degradation has gone hand in hand with economic stagnation. For these people—and again they are the vast majority—the penalties we are proposing are great news. They will help level the playing field by taking away the incentive to pollute.

It's difficult to see where that incentive is. It's difficult to see how anyone could put short-sighted economic interest above the interests of the environment and of a healthy, prosperous and safe community. But let's face it: there are those people. They are the people who wilfully, stupidly and arrogantly turn a blind eye to the law and to the health and well-being of their communities. Of course, their behaviour is the very antithesis of good community spirit. It is true that sometimes they have made short-term economic gains by cutting environmental corners. The bill we are debating today is bad news for them. Polluters will not prosper in Ontario.

We are sending a message of deterrence. If you get caught committing an environmental offence, you will face much greater fines. I know this is a goal shared by all members of this House. I urge all colleagues in this Legislature to support an important piece of legislation which is an environmental milestone.

The legislation itself is very clear with the areas that it wants to deal with. It amends the Environmental Protection Act to increase the maximum penalties for the following offences: (1) an offence of contravening the act or the regulations, if the offence results in an adverse effect; (2) an offence in respect of hauled liquid industrial waste or hazardous waste, if the offence may result in an adverse effect; and (3) an offence of failing to comply with a stop order.

The bill amends the Ontario Water Resources Act to increase the maximum penalties for offences that impair the quality of the water of any waters and certain offences that relate to water treatment or distribution systems. The bill also amends section 28 of the act to ensure that it applies to all provisions of the act that relate to offences.

The bill amends the Pesticides Act to increase the maximum penalties for offences that cause an adverse effect.

Certainly the legislation is very broad-reaching.

It also deals with our source of water supply—I want to deal with that specifically—in addition to having already set out tremendous amounts in terms of dollars which would affect polluters in this province in the penalties they will face on each and every conviction.

The act also deals with the Ontario Water Resources Act, as I've indicated, and in particular "water distribution system" has been defined. It "means a part of a water treatment or distribution system that distributes water, if that part of the system includes one or more water works," and "water treatment or distribution system" is defined—

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): On a point of order, Speaker: Is a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

Mr Tascona: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again in the House on this particular matter.

I'm going to close and allow one of my colleagues to continue in this debate. But I want to say that certainly the measures taken under this act are an environmental mandate to make Ontario the toughest province for polluters to be in. I think it's worthy of all members' support.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bisson: In the 10 minutes that I have I want to say a couple of things in regard to this particular bill. First of all, do you realize how many closure motions the government has brought in since coming to power in 1995? They broke all—

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Not enough.

Mr Bisson: He says "not enough," but they broke all the existing records. This government has brought in more closure motions than any other government at any time in the history of the province of Ontario; this from a Mike Harris party that ran in 1995 on the basis that they were going to open the process of government and make it more democratic. What a farce. This government goes out of its way, when it comes to whatever bills they're bringing forward, to move closure, to limit debate in the House, and more important, Mr Speaker, and you would know this as I do, they limit the opportunity for the public to comment on bills at the committee level. This bill was supposed to allow for committee hearings. As it stands now, the government says, "Oh well, we've changed our mind. It's not important for us to hear from the public through the committee process."

1710

I've got to say that if people out there are cynical of politicians and political parties, it's because of the Tories and parties like Mike Harris's. These guys speak a good line when it comes to democracy, but when it comes to actually showing people where the beef is when it comes to democracy, they're nowhere to be seen. They're going in the opposite direction. That's why, as a New Democrat, I believe that one of the things we need to do in this province is revitalize our democratic system. We have to augment ways to allow people to participate in our democratic system so that they can see themselves in it and have respect for the decisions that are made by Parliaments.

There are ways of doing that, which I know we'll get an opportunity to talk about later. I'll only say that one thing is for sure: the British parliamentary system in this province, which is a good system based on many years of tradition, has to be modernized. We have to find a better way to allow people to participate. I would suggest as a member that we should take a look at the possibility of

proportional representation to make sure that any government elected that doesn't clearly have 50% of the vote at the general election doesn't have a clear majority in this House, because that's what's happened over the years. We've got the Mike Harris government, which got elected at 43% of the vote—and they won the election fair and square; that's called democracy—and Bob Rae before that, who got elected on 37%. In both of those cases, and even before that, where we had David Peterson elected in the 40% range, they all ruled under a majority scenario because this antiquated system of democracy we have in this province rewards the party at the end with the most seats and does not reflect what the majority view of the population is.

I argue as a New Democrat that we should be looking at moving toward something like proportional representation to make sure that a party like Mike Harris's, which got 43% of the vote in the last election, would not end up with 60% of the seats in this House and come in and stymie the political process by doing what they're doing today: putting in closure on a bill; limiting the ability of the opposition to debate; limiting, I would argue, the ability of their own backbenchers to debate these bills; and, even worse than that, limiting the ability of the public to take part in the process of being consulted.

It's ironic that the government's parliamentary assistant to, I believe, the Minister of Agriculture, earlier said, "We're going to be consulting. As a matter of fact, on this bill we're going to accept submissions on this bill to a deadline of November 15." They bring closure today, on October 24. Then they come in and tell us, "Oh, we'll be listening till the 15th." What's the point? This government has already decided by way of this closure motion that it doesn't want to hear anything when it comes to what's going to happen with the environment and what's going to happen to this bill.

Sure they talk a good line. Sure this government says, "We're going to have tougher fines because of this bill. Look at us. We're going to be the toughest jurisdiction in North America." What a joke. There were 3,000 people who got caught last year, but there was only one conviction. We've already got the laws. Why don't you guys do something about it—actually go out and follow up on the charges that are laid by the Ministry of the Environment to ensure that those people who are caught end up having to pay the price?

I listened to the government members across the way, and the other parliamentary assistant who said, "Oh well, we don't have to worry in Ontario because we've got the SWAT teams. The SWAT teams are going to be running into the province of Ontario. They're going to be charging everybody under the sun when it comes to the environmental mishaps they've created by their processes of managing issues that end up becoming disasters in the environment. We don't have to worry because this is a really good thing."

Well, the government talked at first about how they were going to hire a hundred people on the SWAT teams.

They've ended up hiring, I think, 55. I have here a cabinet document, a cabinet analysis of the SWAT teams when they were looked at as an idea. It's interesting what it says here because the government was given different options by the bureaucracy within the Ministry of the Environment, and the option that was the least favoured was the particular option called the "low impact team," which "would provide for a small but focused team consisting of approximately 55 new staff (of which 30 would be inspectors, 12 investigators, seven technical staff ... four lawyers and two support staff)." This low impact team would basically be responsible for taking a look at some of the issues and they can go out with their SWAT team to try to find harm being caused by environmental polluters.

What did the government do? They went with the lesser of all options. They could have decided to rehire the 1,000 workers they fired at the Ministry of the Environment, but no. What did they decide to do? They took the option that says "low impact team." It says in the title that they don't have enough people to do anything, even if they chose to do something, when it comes to the Ministry of the Environment.

I say to the government across the way, you speak a good line. Boy, you guys are full of good lines. You guys have got a great communications machine. The problem is, that's all it is. It's bafflegab; it's discussion; it's another press op for a minister that at the end of the day basically means nothing. This government is speaking a good line when it comes to charging people and fining them and increasing the fines, but if you haven't got the people out in the field, it's a joke.

Imagine, Mr Speaker, if we were to say in Ontario, as we do, "The speed limit on our highways is 100 kilometres an hour"—as posted on Highway 11 or Highway 17, up by your neck of the woods—"but we're going to reduce by two thirds the policemen who are out there patrolling the highways." What do you think would happen? There would be more people speeding, because they know in the end there would be no consequences for their action. That's exactly what is happening in the environment. You have a government that, yes, has legislation in place—because of legislation that exists, even though they've gutted most of it—but we don't have the staff to go out and enforce the legislation. I say that the government speaks a good line, but it's a sham.

Here's the part that really takes the cake. You weren't here earlier, Speaker, because you were dealing with other matters in regard to your constituency. I know you were at another meeting that I wish I could have been at, but unfortunately I had to be here. But you're here now and I know you want to hear this particular stat.

There was a Supreme Court decision some months ago that basically said that if a company is charged with an offence, for example, because of infringing on environmental legislation, and has to pay a fine, they can write the fine off on their income tax at the end of the year. You can do what the heck you want now in Mike Harris's Ontario. You can increase the fine, and guess

who is going to pay? You and me, Mr Speaker, the people out there, the taxpayers that Mike Harris is so proud to defend. It's going to be the taxpayers of Ontario who are going to be the ones footing the bill. At the end of the day, company X goes out and gets a fine of \$1 million under this legislation, and (a) there will be no way to enforce it because there is nobody at the ministry to monitor what's going on, and then there is very little staff to enforce the actual charge and bring it to court, and (b) in the end, if the company is made to pay, guess what? They get to write it off on their income tax at the end of the year. It means that it's the taxpayers in the end who pay. So I say, Mike Harris speaks a good line, but I'll tell you, it's a very poor record when it comes to the effect of this legislation.

I can tell you that this is going to be an issue in the federal election. This weekend I was out canvassing with Len Wood, who is a New Democratic Party candidate in Timmins-James Bay, and I know, when we were knocking at doors around the riding, people were saying that they were tired of the doublespeak of the government when it comes to talking one line and doing the other. I, for one, am going to do everything I can to make sure that Len Wood is elected in the riding of Timmins-James Bay to represent the people of that riding.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this closure motion. As was mentioned by my colleague just previously, it appears as though we're in record mode in this Legislature in that this government likes to bring in closure in record numbers, and what it does, in plain English as we all know, is just simply choke off the rights of members of this Legislature to speak to any issue.

1720

The thing that I believe the government members should take into consideration is, every time they shut down debate it's not just the opposition that you're shutting down; you're losing your own opportunity to speak on an issue. I don't know what your constituents say to you when you don't have the opportunity to speak to an important issue. I know what they say to me. They say, "What's that government doing, just simply choking off debate when we send you down to Toronto and pay you a tidy sum of money to do your job, and this government simply shuts you down?" My constituents can't understand it, and I don't know how these members explain it to their constituents.

For those of us who have a family and who have had children—and we've got our pages here today—it's like when a parent says something to a child in answer to a question, and the child says, "Why, mom?" or dad, and the parent says, "Because I told you so," and that's all they get. That's an example of what we're getting here. We say to the government, "Why can't we debate this important legislation?" because they've stood here for the afternoon and told us how significant it is, how important it is, what it means to the province of Ontario, what it means to our environment. Yet when we ask, "Why are

you shutting the debate down?" and it's, "Because I told you so," that's not much of an answer.

It also reminds me of when you're trying to debate with someone and you get that interjection, "I don't care what you say." You kind of stand back and say, "Well, if you don't care what I say, why did you ask me in the first place?" Again, that's an example of what happens here. Legislation is brought to this House and it's important legislation, I'll agree, and yet what do they say to us when we want to debate it? They say, "I don't care what you say. We're going to shut you folks up."

But I remind you, at the same time you're shutting the mouths and the democratic right that your own members have. I don't think that we want to do that on this side of the House, and I'm surprised that government wants to do it on that side, because if we've learned anything from Walkerton, I think what we've learned is that we have to take time to make sure that things are right, and that's what debate in the Legislature is.

Often bills come forward where we agree with the intent of the bill. Few of us, if any, will argue that any legislation that is on the good side of the environment in this province we're all in favour of. Will we be totally in favour of how it's done or what's in it, or should something be added to it? That's what this forum is for. That's why we send it to committee, and that's why we take it to the public for public meetings.

In this case, not only are they shutting us off, not only are they choking off our debate, but they're not even going to let the public have any input. Can you believe that? I don't think you can, and I think most would agree with me that the very least this government can do with an important piece of legislation is take it out to the public. Let the public have some input, because part of what I think the public would want to remind the government is that you can have all the fines, you can increase fines to the heavens; it means absolutely nothing unless they're enforced.

I would reinforce what some of my colleagues have said: there were some 3,000 events in the past year where the Ministry of the Environment felt that there was a contravention of the current act, and we end up with one conviction. Fines aren't going to scare anybody if that's the conviction rate you have, and part of the reason that the conviction rate is so low is that you've gutted the Ministry of the Environment. You don't have any police out there. What these police should do is be available to look into every event and do the right inspection, so that when the government decides that they should charge someone, you have the evidence to take it all the way. If you don't have the staff to put the evidence together, you're not going to have any more success than they've had in the last year.

Why has it been so difficult? I'd like to summarize for you. There have been huge cuts to the Ministry of the Environment: 880 jobs, 36% of all staff have been laid off; 42% of the budget slashed; and they've been left without the resources to even enforce the act that they have today. How are they ever going to be able to enforce a new act, one that they say has more teeth?

You know, folks, the new act isn't worth the paper that I have in my hand unless you do something with it. We all know that all legislation does, all laws do, is lay in binders until somebody decides they should be enacted. I'm afraid this government is going to continue to not have the resources they should have in order to enforce these laws.

I think, to some extent, the public has lost faith in the government's ability to clean up its drinking water. We've had the tragic example of Walkerton as being the most obvious horrific story that could ever come under our current laws. After Walkerton, and when we were more aware of what was going on, we even had boil-water orders in my riding, and we don't take well water down our way for supplying municipal systems; it comes from the lake. So it isn't only groundwater that we have to be concerned about, I guess, although fortunately it was found in our case that when the water left the filtration plant it was good, clean drinking water. The event occurred somewhere else in the system.

But the example I'm trying to point out is that when we become more alert we then take more action, and that's what I hope this government is going to do, although they haven't given me any confidence to this point. I think there are many in the province of Ontario who agree with me.

I don't have much confidence in this government taking the legislation that we're talking about today in this closure motion and doing anything with it. I use the phrase that my colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex said one time—I believe it was to the Minister of Agriculture, and it applies here—that what's happening with this government is that they're starting the spreader before it's out of the barn. We're going to want to see, once they get out of the barn, if they really walk the walk and talk the talk.

Mr Bradley: I find it most unfortunate that I have to rise to speak on yet another closure motion, a time allocation motion which chokes off or ends debate on a very important piece of legislation. This happens time after time after time with this government, and that is most unfortunate because I think a lot of people out there who watch are not aware of just how this government has affected the democratic system in this province in adverse ways; certainly one of them is the constant limiting of debate in this House on important pieces of legislation.

Frankly, when there's a piece of legislation which is non-contentious, you tend to find the debate to be rather short and to the point and the bill passes. When there's important legislation, I think it's important that we have a lengthy and thorough debate canvassing all of the issues.

If you put it in a nutshell, with this government and the legislation before us, there aren't many people I can find in the province who are going to object to increasing the fines and penalties for those who violate the laws of this province. I can't think of any reasonable person, except a person who was going to break the law, who would be opposed to that.

I think what people who are objective observers are saying is that this government has no intention of enforcing those laws. If it had that intention, I think they'd be much more enthusiastic.

You have to remember that the government did two things when it came into office and has maintained that operation. First of all, it made drastic cuts to the budget of the Ministry of the Environment and drastic cuts to the budget of the Ministry of Natural Resources. About 45% of the budget of the Ministry of the Environment has been cut, and one third of the people have been fired out the door and are no longer with the ministry. In the Ministry of Natural Resources, I think about 50% of their staff has gone. The conservation authorities were virtually annihilated with cuts by the provincial government. These are all branches of the public sector which had a significant role to play, first of all in preventing the contamination and pollution of our air and water and soil and, second, they had the responsibility for investigations and prosecutions taking place.

1730

That's the first thing we look at: taking away the necessary staff. Certainly the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, in its report that was put out earlier this week, indicated that. I remember one of the officials saying that this government is all bluster, that indeed they are all sizzle and no steak when it comes to enforcing the laws of the province. That's our concern, that the enforcement activities will be limited. There is evidence of that.

We have to know that one of the first things said to Ministry of the Environment officials across the province was, "You are to be business-friendly." They can translate that very easily. They were told by previous governments that they were to aggressively, thoroughly, comprehensively, fairly and toughly apply the laws of this province. It's a big change when somebody comes along and says, "You are to be business-friendly." The same crowd who told them to be business-friendly promised their polluter friends that they would get the Ministry of the Environment "out of your face." That was the quote: "Don't worry, we'll get the Ministry of the Environment out of your face." Indeed, that's a promise they have kept. The Ministry of the Environment has been out of the face of the polluters, not because of ministry officials and employees but because of the direction of the government.

The previous speakers, particularly the member for Essex, made reference to a report that was put out by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund which said there had been 3,500 violations of the water pollution laws of this province through program approvals. That's where the provincial government nods and winks and turns its head the other way as people violate laws. There has only been one prosecution under that provision dealing with water in this province. That's an abysmal record. We're going to see an increase now. After the tragedy of Walkerton we're going to see some prosecutions, we're going to see some activity, because the government has been embar-

assed into it, not because they want to but because of the adverse publicity out there.

We have to know as well that there is a provision—other speakers and I made reference to this earlier—for the major polluting companies to write off their fines with their income tax. In other words, if they get a fine of \$1 million—and presumably they made a profit of \$1 million—they can write off that fine. So in fact the taxpayers of this province end up paying the fine of the polluter.

There is a provincial remedy for that. The member for Toronto-Danforth indicated to us she had a bill, which I'm sure had been vetted through the people at the Ontario Legislature here, the legal staff who look at it, which would disallow that. I urge the government, as a companion piece of legislation, to remove the provision which allows polluters to write off their fines so that all of us end up paying those fines when they're in violation of our laws.

We know as well that the morale within the Ministry of the Environment has not been particularly high. Our friend Bill Murdoch, when making reference to ministry employees and some problems they felt had happened in Grey county and Bruce county, said, "They fired the wrong ones. They should fire the other ones." You don't know how that affects people out there who are daily doing their job as well as possible, within the confines of the restricted budgets and diminished staff, and told to be business-friendly; how those people are supposed to do their job. Then they have a member of the Legislature say, "They fired the wrong ones. They should have fired different ones, the ones who are there today."

That's disheartening when you are committed to protecting the environment. We have had, over the years, so many top-notch people who have been employees of the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources and conservation authorities, who had a commitment to protecting and cleaning up the environment and preventing pollution, who feel, I think, rather hurt by the kind of criticism that's been directed to them by members of the government itself and certainly by the enemies of the environment.

I look at the laws as they write them. You will recall, because you've been here a while, Mr Speaker, the issue of CFCs, chlorofluorocarbons. They are substances which, when released, go up into the atmosphere and erode the ozone layer. The ozone layer up top up there protects us from radiation—radiation which can cause various forms of skin cancer. It can be difficult for crops, for our water, for all kinds of life. We know that there's a hole in the ozone layer and a significant contributor to that are CFCs.

So I was very concerned when I asked the minister a question the other day because another report had come in from the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy saying there's a provision out there for extending the use of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons. It was all done quietly, no announcement of that, I can tell you—done behind closed doors. You put it on a Web

site somewhere and hope nobody looks at it and away we go.

So when you see the government taking those kinds of steps, or not implementing steps quickly, you're a bit suspicious that this bill is all public relations and not much substance.

Another example of that is the hazardous waste regulations. I recall going to Hamilton and listening to a former Minister of the Environment, Mr Clement, with a lot of fanfare, making an announcement about new regulations related to hazardous waste. I thought I'd missed something, that they'd been implemented, because it seemed to me it was back in February he was talking about them.

A lot of fanfare, as I say, a big press conference, and I've asked people, did I miss something? Surely they're implemented now. Surely they're in place. And everybody says they're not in place. They haven't been approved yet. They have not passed cabinet. And here we are approaching November. I can't believe that to be the case. Is somebody in cabinet blocking them? Surely the minister would want these through. I hope nobody in the Premier's office, or those who want to be Premier some day, are not using their authority to block these provisions.

I found very interesting a document here—

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): What was the name of that lottery? Greensweeps?

Mr Bradley: Well, I say to the minister who intervenes, he's destroyed more lives—or his government; I don't want to accuse him personally—through the expansion of gambling opportunities in this province than anybody I can think of, through the expansion of gambling into casinos and into charity casinos through the back door, into racetracks. Daily I get people phoning my office. It's pretty sad—I don't repeat them because they're private and they don't want their families to know—embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars so they can go down and blow it at the racetrack on the slot machines.

Anyway, I digress, as we say. It was only because I was provoked by the member from Victoria that I did so—Victoria and environs.

There's a cabinet document called A Cleaner Ontario: Toughest Penalties Legislation, Environmental SWAT Teams, and it's March 14, 2000. Now you remember when this was raised in the House. The Premier called it a phony baloney document, and yet it was accurate. The Premier then would be doing an impersonation of Pinocchio if he did that, if he were to say it was phony baloney when he knew that it was.

But let me quote from it. Some members of the cabinet will be interested in this. Here's parts of what the cabinet document says, to show you how much is public relations and how much is substance. It says, "There is a growing public perception that the government is not protecting the air, water and land. Public surveys have consistently shown that the public equates the health of

the environment with their own health. Based on an Angus Reid poll"—that's obviously how the government governs—"from August 1999, '60% of the Ontario public rates the government's performance for environmental protection as fairly poor or very poor. Consequently, 60% agree that the Ontario government should take serious action'" against the polluter. I agree with that poll. If they had phoned me, I would have said that. But they didn't phone me on this one.

1740

It goes on to say: "The inconsistency between public perception and demonstrated environmental improvements is partly the result of a perception that Ontario is not enforcing its environmental laws. This perception is reinforced by the release of reports such as Environment Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory and the NAFTA Commission for Environmental Co-operation's Taking Stock report, the latter which rates Ontario as the second worst polluting jurisdiction in all of North America."

It goes on to say, and this is interesting: "Less than 10% of sources of pollution in the province (those most likely to cause health or environmental problems) are inspected in any one year." You must be shocked to hear that. "The capacity for inspection and investigation activities needs to be increased and the compliance and enforcement approach needs to be toughened so that the ministry can effectively and visibly deter those who choose to operate outside of the law and threaten public health and our air, land and water."

It goes on to say—this is typical of what this government's been doing; this is a secret government document. "Historically, the ministry approach of working cooperatively with industry to develop workable solutions to reduce their pollutant releases has been only moderately successful. The existing low inspection rate referred to above, allows numerous industries the opportunity to break the law." There is it, right in the government document.

They go on to say, "The Ministry is currently drafting an administrative monetary penalty regulation which will form the basis of consultation in early spring 2000." I'd be interested in seeing how that affects things. I have a suspicion that makes things weaker. They've taken out something in a previous bill that weakens this legislation. If we had hearings, I would know. I could ask the experts.

It says the following in the document: "The citizens of the province have voiced their dissatisfaction with the current environmental situation and want to see stricter enforcement and better environmental protection." So they have some options.

It says right in this document: "Existing MOE inspectors and investigators are fully committed to their current work plan activities. Through these activities approximately 10% of current known sources of pollution are inspected annually. Taking staff away from these activities would result in slippages which would negate

the positive impacts of the new program. Therefore new staffing will be required for this new program.

"The option of increasing the existing staff, using the existing structure and delivery approach, to get to a level where all sources of pollution are inspected annually would require in excess of 500 new staff." That's the 500 people they fired out the door. They say they need them back to do the job properly.

Then they said, "Well, let's have a SWAT team. That's a good public relations exercise." They had a choice. They could have one that had 55 members or one that had 138 members. They chose one that had 65 members. It was much ado about nothing when the press conference was held. Let's look at why they chose this option, for any reason. They said, "There is a need to increase the potential for polluters of being caught. Our review of the option of increasing the existing staff, using the existing approach is estimated to require in excess of 500 new staff...." They chose 65 staff. Some people tell me they're only there for 18 months, and then they could be out the door sometime.

There are other things of concern in here. The communications message. Remember they hired Paul Rhodes, the guru who's made hundreds of thousands of dollars from this government in public relations payouts. They hired him to make the minister look good. It says, "Communications Goals and Messages:

"To achieve widespread and positive media coverage.

"To announce each initiative separately to extend positive coverage over several weeks/months and to ensure each receives full attention.

"Ensure that, in both the short and long term, the public is aware of how these initiatives are contributing to a cleaner Ontario."

It says, "Environmental groups may be critical of the government's intentions and claim that current budget constraints make it difficult for MOE staff to deliver on the present enforcement mandate and that an increase in fines and jail terms is merely window-dressing." They've certainly come to that conclusion. Then they go through and look at the possible responses.

Here's what I like. This is what this legislation is all about. The reason I'll support it is that I think subsequent governments may actually take it seriously and implement it. I don't think this government has much intention of doing so, because on page 18 of the document, this government secret cabinet document leaked to the public, to the opposition, under "Media" it says, "Media will likely scrutinize the ministry efforts to improve enforcement. The picture of a uniformed SWAT team will appeal to the media. A major event when the team is in place and ready to proceed is recommended." That's what it's all about: a big show. That's Paul Rhodes. "Province-wide news releases and support material for all" of these initiatives.

Here's another provision of it, on page 19 of 28, again showing that it's all about public relations, it's all bluster and bluff and it's not substance: "Staging SWAT photo opportunities, encouraging feature stories on the team's

enforcement efforts with targeted sectors, and issuing periodic news releases at the onset, during and following special investigations will ensure that public awareness of SWAT team, its achievements and activities remains high." So "staging SWAT photo opportunities" is what it's all about. It's your own document. It isn't something somebody made up. I know the Premier said this is a phony-baloney document, but of course now he's had to accept the fact that it isn't.

Here's something key on page 28: Ministry of the Environment "work with the Premier's office and cabinet office, and consult with other affected ministries on the communications strategy and on the timing and location of announcements." That's Guy Giorno. That's Guy Giorno, that's Paul Rhodes, that's the whole team that will be there for the public relations exercise.

But it is the view of objective observers, not just the opposition, because as members opposite would know, the opposition is not an objective observer; we're a subjective observer—any objective observer recognizes that the government has no intention of being serious, that it's only going through an exercise, that it wants to get a lot of publicity.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): Don't be cynical.

Mr Bradley: The member for Oak Ridges says, "Don't be cynical." I want to tell him there is a value to this legislation, and that value is, if it's on the books, that a subsequent government that has a genuine commitment to the environment will actually use the provisions of this legislation. I think that's where it can be helpful.

I don't have time to quote the Environmental Commissioner or extensively from this latest document. I commend it to people. I think it's on a Web site somewhere. It's the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy's Ontario's Environment and the Common Sense Revolution: A Fifth Year Report, executive summary. I recommend that to the people of Ontario.

Mr Gilchrist: There are just a couple of minutes remaining, but I wanted to get on the record a couple of thoughts. We've certainly heard some very interesting comments from the members opposite, very little about the bill before us, but that's not surprising.

I was glad to hear from the member for Timmins-James Bay that they believe in recycling and they've found a new home for Len Wood. Most of his speech was preoccupied with the idea of proportional representation. I suspect that if we were really to get fair in this chamber, you might not like the result, Mr Bisson, because, roughly speaking, you have nine members and we have 58, but you get one third of the speaking time. Where's the fairness there to all the voters who elect Tory members? How about the budget you get from the Legislative Assembly? Roughly \$2 million. This is the kind of story you don't like telling—\$2 million allocated for nine members. That's \$210,000 per member. What do the Tories get? About \$2.8 million divided by 58 members, or roughly \$41,000. So every time you cry poor, every time you try and get the sympathy vote across

Ontario, make sure that the voters out there know that you're paid over five times as much money for research and other staff. That, sir, should be changed too, if you want true proportional representation in here. I'd vote for any bill that trims you back to the appropriate amount of speaking time and the appropriate budget.

Applause.

Mr Gilchrist: I see we have strong support from the official opposition.

The time allocation motion is necessary again, because as debate goes around and around on this bill as with so many others, we have nothing but rhetoric to show for it. We don't hear substantive, productive and positive suggestions from the opposition; we hear rants. We hear all the things they think are wrong with the bill, but never a suggestion that any clause in any act actually moves forward.

The idea of tougher penalties is long overdue. That's why I'm supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Newman has moved government notice of motion number 67. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker: We are voting on government notice of motion number 67 moved by Mr Newman. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Ouellette, Jerry J.

Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Hodgson, Chris
Clark, Brad	Hudak, Tim
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart
Flaherty, Jim	Mazzilli, Frank
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn
Guzzo, Garry J.	Newman, Dan

Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte
Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Lankin, Frances
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	Levac, David
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Smitherman, George
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 48; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock this evening.

The House adjourned at 1804.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
93A	4895	2	51	provision does not state that the member has a right to speak

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Brian (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Willowdale	Young, David (PC)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 24 October 2000

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Health care funding	
Mrs Pupatello.....	4955
Officer of the Year award	
Mr O'Toole.....	4955
School extracurricular activities	
Mr Gerretsen.....	4955
Defibrillation equipment	
Mr Galt.....	4956
Parental leave	
Mrs Bountrogianni.....	4956
Labour dispute	
Mr Christopherson.....	4956
Promenade West	
Mrs Molinari.....	4956
Government advertising	
Mr Bradley.....	4957
Mike Lazaridis	
Mr Arnott.....	4957

FIRST READINGS

Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000, Bill 133, Mr Tsubouchi	
Agreed to.....	4958

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ambulance services	
Mr McGuinty.....	4958
Mr Harris.....	4958
Control of smoking	
Mr McGuinty.....	4959
Mr Harris.....	4959
Nursing homes	
Mr Hampton.....	4960
Mrs Witmer.....	4960, 4961
Ms Lankin.....	4961
School extracurricular activities	
Mr Hampton.....	4961
Mr Harris.....	4961, 4962
Mr Marchese.....	4961
Mr Kennedy.....	4962
Mrs Ecker.....	4962
Highway improvement	
Mr Chudleigh.....	4963
Mr Turnbull.....	4963
Social assistance	
Mr Gravelle.....	4963
Mr Baird.....	4963
Community safety	
Mr Stewart.....	4964
Mr Runciman.....	4964
Waste disposal	
Mr Hampton.....	4965
Mr Harris.....	4965
Ms Churley.....	4965

Cancer care

Mrs McLeod.....	4965
Mrs Witmer.....	4965

Young offenders

Mr Galt.....	4966
Mr Sampson.....	4966

Recycling

Ms Di Cocco.....	4966
Mr Newman.....	4967

Education reform

Mr Gilchrist.....	4967
Mrs Ecker.....	4967

PETITIONS

Northern health travel grant

Mr Gravelle.....	4968
Ms Martel.....	4968
Mr Bartolucci.....	4970
Mrs McLeod.....	4970

Paper sludge

Mr O'Toole.....	4968
-----------------	------

Carmen Road overpass

Mr Cleary.....	4968
----------------	------

Agricultural land

Mrs Munro.....	4969
----------------	------

McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Ms Di Cocco.....	4969
------------------	------

Registration of vintage cars

Mr O'Toole.....	4969
-----------------	------

National child benefit supplement

Mr Gerretsen.....	4969
-------------------	------

Farmfare

Mr Christopherson.....	4969
------------------------	------

Occupational health and safety

Mr Christopherson.....	4970
------------------------	------

Investigation into child abuse

Mr Cleary.....	4971
----------------	------

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Time allocation, government notice of motion 67, Mr Newman

Mr Newman.....	4971
Mr Cordiano.....	4973
Ms Churley.....	4974
Mr Barrett.....	4979
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	4981
Mr Ouellette.....	4982
Mr Dunlop.....	4984
Mr Tascona.....	4986
Mr Bisson.....	4987
Mr Crozier.....	4988
Mr Bradley.....	4989
Mr Gilchrist.....	4992
Agreed to.....	4993

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

Mr Levac.....	4957
---------------	------

Visitor

The Speaker.....	4957
------------------	------

Erratum	4993
----------------------	------

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 24 octobre 2000

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu, projet de loi 133, M. Tsubouchi	
Adoptée.....	4958