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Thursday 26 October 2000

Jeudi 26 octobre 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 October 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 octobre 2000

The House met at 1000.
Prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HIGH-TECH CAPITAL OF ONTARIO ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA CAPITALE ONTARIENNE DE LA HAUTE TECHNOLOGIE

Mr Coburn moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to proclaim the City of Ottawa as the high-tech capital of Ontario / Projet de loi 126, Loi proclamant la ville d'Ottawa capitale ontarienne de la haute technologie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Brian Coburn (Ottawa-Orléans): I'd like to share my time with the members for Ottawa West-Nepean, Kitchener Centre and Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. They're kind of anxious to speak to this bill.

On January 1, 2001, by virtue of the City of Ottawa Act, 1999, the Ottawa-Carleton region will become the new city of Ottawa. On that same day it would be appropriate to officially recognize and designate the new city as the high-tech capital of Ontario. Over the past few years a huge transformation has taken place in the Ottawa region. The federal government's role as the major employer will be replaced by an exploding advanced technology sector. Indeed this is an event in itself that is worth celebrating.

The transformation of Ottawa's dependency on government employment to private sector employment has resulted in an exciting, bustling, multicultural city known worldwide for its quality of life. This did not happen by accident. Rather it's the result of implementing and acting on a vision and a plan created by leaders and residents of our community—a plan that capitalizes on our strengths of a well-educated, young, dynamic workforce; a plan that capitalizes on forward-thinking educational institutions such as Carleton University, the University of Ottawa, la Cité collégiale and Algonquin College; a plan that capitalizes on the leading-edge technology generated not only by world-class private sector high-tech companies, but also by partnering with a knowledgeable and innovative organization whose primary business is research and development, namely, the National Research Council.

This is an organization that partners with innovative companies, universities and research organizations worldwide, where they build on the research strengths and technologies that advance our economic growth in manufacturing, information and communications technologies, as well as biotechnology.

This growth in the advanced technology industry in the Ottawa area has been a steady, long climb to the point where the new city of Ottawa in the province of Ontario is recognized worldwide as Silicon Valley North. A steady growth began in 1948 with the emergence of Computing Devices Canada, which is still a major force on the world advanced technology scene; a steady growth on into the 1970s and 1980s, where a broad range of multimillion-dollar firms burst on to the Ottawa scene, firms such as Digital, Nortel Networks, Newbridge Networks Corp which is now Alcatel, Corel Corp, Mosaid Technologies and JDS Uniphase.

This explosive growth provided the nucleus and the very foundation and the very ingredients of future success. Quality of life, research facilities, educational institutions, the presence and support of the federal government and the province of Ontario and a well-educated workforce became the magnets that justified Ottawa as home to industry giants such as JDS Uniphase, Mitel Corp, Cognos Inc, GSI Lemonics, EDS/SHL Systemhouse, JetForm Corp, SimWare Inc, Alcatel, Nokia. In fact, Ottawa is home to over 1,000 advanced technology companies, the largest such concentration in Canada.

Employment in the advanced technology sector has grown by a whopping 809% since 1976 and currently totals over 74,500 employees. We expect that number of high-tech jobs to surpass the federal government jobs by the end of this year.

Since the time of drafting Bill 126, the numbers on employment have already changed. As of June 2000, there were 70,000 high-tech jobs in Ottawa. As of the end of September, that number has climbed to 74,500, an increase of 6% in just three months. I challenge anyone to demonstrate a faster-growing high-tech centre in the province.

A statistic that is vitally important to the new city of Ottawa, the province of Ontario and indeed Canada is the fact that the high-tech sector generates sales in excess of $17 billion annually and over 90% of this amount is exported out of Canada. The export of such a significant amount opens up countless additional opportunities for

other communities in Ontario in the advanced technology sector, such as Markham, Kitchener-Waterloo, London and Toronto.

Another important aspect of the high-tech sector—in fact it is an essential ingredient to the success of developing a leading edge technology—is the research and development capabilities in the new city of Ottawa. Over $3 billion annually is spent by publicly traded companies on research and development. This figure excludes the research and development expenditure of privately held firms, which would add significantly to this amount. In addition, the federal government spends almost $700 million annually on research and development in Ottawa.

For comparison purposes only, the total per capita research and development expenditures are three and a half times higher in Ottawa than Toronto, as per Statistics Canada data. Further, in the computer and electronics industries specifically, per capita research and development expenditures in Ottawa are 13 times those in Toronto. In fact, the Ottawa area captures 38.9% of the research and development expenditures in Canada.

There are a number of elements that make the new city of Ottawa an attractive place to invest, work and raise a family: a well-educated workforce with a combination of university degrees and college diplomas well above the national average, and over 9,000 residents with PhDs.

A rich advanced learning environment includes the University of Ottawa's school of medicine and school of information technology and engineering, Carleton University's leading microelectronics program, Algonquin College and la Cité collégiale, two community colleges that have developed innovative partnerships with the high-tech community, and of course the National Research Council headed by Dr Carty and the Communications Research Centre headed by Gerry Turcotte.

There are a multitude of networking forums such as OCRI—Ottawa Carleton Research Institute—headed up by Bill Collins, Zone5ive Technology Marketing, New Media North, Ottawa Capital Network, which matches emerging companies to a network of potential investors.

Ottawa CAP Consortium is a network of public Internet access sites located in schools, libraries, community locations and municipal offices throughout the city.

1010

The quality of life is enhanced by our countless parks and nature preserves that offer over 300 kilometres of bike paths, over 200 kilometres of cross-country ski trails and 150 kilometres of scenic recreational paths that run parallel to the Ottawa and Rideau rivers and the canal, which becomes the world's longest skating rink in the winter months.

The Greenbelt is the emerald necklace, some 49,000 acres of protected farmland, wetlands and forest which surround the inner city. World-class cultural facilities and festivals are in abundance. The National Arts Centre, the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canada Aviation Museum and the Canadian War Museum complement our local cultural theatres such as Opera Lyra, the Ottawa Little Theatre, the Great Canadian Theatre Company and la Nouvelle Scène, to name a few, and the world-class Corel Centre, home of the Ottawa Senators, and of course the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum.

Entertainment and dining choices are generous: over 1,600 restaurants to satisfy your particular taste on any given day.

The Ottawa International Airport, which is experiencing tremendous growth, is announcing today a $300-million expansion, to be completed by the year 2004. They are a significant economic player contributing to the economic growth and development of Ottawa. It is complemented by the Carp airport, which has evolved into a conveniently located commuter airport for the high-tech industries.

In fact, the aviation sector has grown by 40% since 1995. Our government has enhanced access to the booming Ottawa economy by completing Highway 416. This is just a snapshot of the ingredients that provide a quality of life for residents, businesses and in particular the high-tech sector that is the envy of many communities in and outside of Canada.

The characteristics I have mentioned are indeed many of the reasons for tremendous growth in the high-tech sector. The advanced technology community in the new city of Ottawa has many facets which make it such a dynamic centre of excellence that is recognized around the world. Excellence in research and development, manufacturing and information technology has resulted in leading-edge technology that is marketed to the world; excellence in software and hardware development, the telecommunications industry, semiconductor industry, the new media industry, the life sciences industry, environmental technology, Internet technology and the defence and aerospace industries.

Allow me to reinforce my belief that the new city of Ottawa deserves provincial recognition as the high-tech capital of Ontario with some quotes and observations by investors and employers in our city.

"Choosing Ottawa as the place to develop Silicon Access Networks' chipset for terabit router line cards was no accident," said John Vincent, senior director of the application-specific integration circuit development. "When we were looking to extend our product line into networking, Ottawa was one of the places we looked to first. With so many established ... companies here, Ottawa provides a rich skill pool of top-notch people with proven expertise and system knowledge that many chip manufacturers don't have. Ottawa has one of the highest densities of the skill sets we need."

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm pleased to speak on Bill 126, which has something to say about the city in which I reside and which I represent a good portion of.

I'd like the member from Ottawa-Orléans to know that I truly support the spirit of his intent in this bill. I've received a number of letters from other parts of Ontario,

especially in the Toronto area, contesting the moniker that is being recommended by you.

But I think we can all agree, and the member from Ottawa-Orléans has put out a number of statistics, there has been an absolutely explosive growth that has taken place in the Ottawa area, primarily driven by what's euphemistically called the high-tech sector. We have probably seen this sector surpass the volume of employment, and it is the single largest employer in the Ottawa area now, I believe. It definitely has the single largest employment-growth percentage in all of Canada. That's quite impressive. The employment numbers for the sector are expected to grow another 10% to 15% in the next couple of years, as well. Ottawa has the fastest-growing economy in Canada, it has been pointed out, and, as many of you know, Ottawa is the fourth-largest regional economy in all of Canada.

So it has been exciting times. I believe, though, that we all have to be supportive of this particular industry throughout all of Ontario. In Markham, Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, there are aspects and there are centres, although they may be somewhat smaller or larger, depending on how you assess this. We should be cognisant of the fact that there are lots of exciting things happening throughout Ontario.

I received a letter from Mitzie Hunter, the president of SMART Toronto, and she says, "Rather than appointing"—or I was going to say "anointing"—"one city as the high-tech capital of Ontario, the province should look at itself as a 'SMART' province, celebrating the achievements of individual cities and encouraging these high-tech centres to work together toward the growth and development of the province as a whole as we compete in the global marketplace." I like the spirit of that, and I'm sure the member who proposes this bill would certainly agree with that as well.

I have an amendment, and I consider it a friendly amendment, and what I would recommend to the member is that if this bill moves forward and passes today and goes to committee, the committee would entertain the idea that this would go forward as a recommendation to the new city to entertain, whether they would choose this moniker or another.

As the member knows, when it came to the province dealing with bilingualism, it's suggested that the city itself should make that decision; it was a local decision. In describing oneself as a city, I believe that should be a local decision, as well. So I would be prepared to support this with that amendment, that this goes forward to the new city as a particular consideration, as they would consider other things.

The member would know that there is underway a $200,000 study in marketing and branding that the city is going through—it's the region at the moment—with the high-tech business and with some money from the federal government. I think it would be premature for us to pre-empt at this particular time and impose a particular title, from on high in Toronto here at Queen's Park, to Ottawa. It would be more appropriate if it came in the form of a recommendation for, truly, consideration.

I'm going to stop here because I have two other colleagues who would like to speak to this. With the amendment that I suggested, if the proposer will speak to that in his wrap-up comments and entertain such a friendly amendment, I'd be very happy to support this bill.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Are you not out campaigning for Len Wood?

Mr Bisson: I'll be out campaigning for Len Wood tomorrow. Today I'm over here doing my Legislative duty. But thank you for reminding me of that, Mr Bradley.

I'm in a bit of a quandary over this particular bill, because I understand what the member is trying to do. He's trying to advocate for his region of the province, which is Ottawa, which we all know, which is an important sector when it comes to the electronics industry in Canada. We've known for many years that Ottawa and the region have done a lot of work to attract the excellence in technology that has made part of what the Ottawa economy is today, and we recognize that. It is one of those places in Ontario that does quite well when it comes to the electronics industry. But on the other hand, I'm in a bit of a quandary because you look at communities such as Kitchener, Markham and others who have also been doing the same types of things for a while, so which one do you pick? Which one do you say should be the centre of excellence or the high-tech capital of Ontario?

I know, for example, because I've dealt with Mr Cousens, who is now the mayor of Markham but was a member of the assembly here from 1990-95, when I was first elected—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: In fact, I got his package, as Jim is saying over there, which talks about what has happened for them in Markham. I just have to say, when you take a look at it, that what was the most telling—if I can find it; of course I can't find what I want now that I'm on my feet. There's a picture of the signs going into the town of Markham that basically say—here it is. It says, "York region, town of Markham, population 190,000, Canada's high-tech capital." It's already marketing itself and already seeing itself as a high-tech capital of North America.

He is concerned that if we were to take a legislative step to recognize the city of Ottawa, in doing with the region of Ottawa what the member suggests, it would be in some sort of competition.

1020

I guess I want to hear a little bit more of what members have to say before I decide which way to fall on this. I tend not to vote for it, to be quite honest, because I think once we get into—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: We have to hear from Tsubouchi before we do anything. Exactly.

When you start getting into trying to name one community over another as the high-tech capital or whatever capital of Ontario or of Canada, you're playing one com-

munity against the other. I would much rather see the municipalities themselves or the regional government decide how they want to brand themselves.

For example, where I come from, the city of Timmins, we call ourselves the city with the heart of gold, in reference to the gold mining industry that has been there for a long time, but we also recognize that there are other communities across northern Ontario that have a very strong gold industry. For Timmins to say, "We are the capital of the gold industry of North America," or of Ontario, we probably can get away with that to a certain extent, but what would it say when it comes to those other communities out there that are trying to market themselves and attract investment and people into their communities on one type of slogan or other?

I have a bit of a difficulty with what the members suggest, and I look forward to the comments that are made by members of the Legislature. In any event, if it does pass, I guess we will get to debate this a little bit more at the committee level. But my guess is that even if we did adopt this bill, it probably wouldn't get very much further than where it's at right now. I don't think the government wants to put itself in a position of adopting this bill as a piece of government legislation or allowing it to move forward as private member's legislation, because I don't think the Minister of Economic Development and Trade or the Premier or others want to get into this particular argument.

We need to view this for what it is. It's a private member, in this case the member from Ottawa-Orléans, who brings forward a private member's bill, as he has the right, on an issue that's near and dear to him. I respect that and understand that as a person who's been involved with municipal politics for a long time, he understands this issue quite well. What he is trying to do by way of this bill is to give his community a bit of an edge when it comes to marketing itself.

I respect what the member is doing. I'm not opposed to his attempt to do this, but I wonder how it's going to stack up in the face of other communities out there. I look forward to the debate of other members and want to listen to debate. We will see which way it goes.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Let me express, if I might, my thanks to the member for Ottawa-Orléans for bringing forward this piece of legislation. I want to commend my colleague for his commitment, for his foresight. I know now that he's correct in doing this, because if there was any question or any hesitation in supporting it in the last eight or nine days, it has been eliminated with the outcry of people who have come to criticize the action that he has taken.

They don't argue on the merits. They don't criticize the position that has been advanced for the city of Ottawa. They come with an argument of "Me too." Five other cities have forwarded me copies of documentation in support of their positions.

Interjection.

Mr Guzzo: St Catharines is not one of them. I suppose like everything else from your area, sir, it will arrive a couple of days late, but I'm expecting it.

These other five cities, these other five jurisdictions, showed no leadership. They had no vision and they had no commitment until the member from Ottawa-Carleton.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Mr Cousens won't like this.

Mr Guzzo: Yes, let the record show that Mr Cousens will not like this. Let me warn you in advance. Let me also tell you that my colleague the member from Kitchener Centre will not like it—if he understands it.

In all seriousness, I have to tell you, a couple of the people, a couple of the areas who have criticized and have come forward with the "Me too" argument have factors to recommend. They talk about improvements in the Ottawa-Carleton area in things like transportation facilities and airport facilities that were subsidized by all the taxpayers in the province of Ontario, including those in Ottawa-Carleton. I point only to the existence of Highway 401. After 30 years of desperate attempts on the part of the citizenry of Ottawa-Carleton, in 1998 we opened a four-lane highway to intersect with the 401 at Prescott, connecting Ottawa on a four-lane strip.

Interjection.

Mr Guzzo: It's a sad commentary on the education system in Kitchener when the member from Kitchener can't find the national capital. Any ability to read a road map would be testing the IQ of the member.

During the same 30-year period as we struggled to master and construct that four-lane highway, we watched the 401 across the city of Toronto go from eight, to 16, to 32 lanes, all being subsidized by all the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. It's interesting, not one of the naysayers deals with the issue. No one stands up and suggests where the member for Ottawa-Orléans is wrong in advancing this proposition.

The biggest joke of all has to come from the city of Toronto, a city that wants to be a state, with a mayor who wants to be a premier or a governor. I find it most interesting that His Melness writes to me—and I have a copy of the position that he put forward this morning. Here's a man who can't clean up his own waterfront—two other levels of government this week coming to the table. He can't pay for his own Olympics. He's looking for support, but he wants to be a separate state. He can't pay for his own garbage, he can't handle his own garbage and he's going to be an independent state. Then over a neighbouring state, he'll run the trucks down the 401 at no cost.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is this not about the high-tech capital designation, not about bashing the city of Toronto? Why must he be bashing the city? Let's talk about—

The Acting Speaker: It's not a point of order. Sit down. The member for Ottawa West-Nepean.

Mr Guzzo: I wondered how long it would take for the campaign manager for His Melness to get into this debate in support of the situation.

The argument that has been put forward this morning by my colleague the member for Ottawa-Orléans has to be studied in its entirety. One has to look at what has

developed and supported the growth of the high-tech communities across the province. What is it in Kitchener-Waterloo, what is it in Toronto, what is it in Markham and what is it in Ottawa-Carleton? What is going to continue to grow? What areas are going to continue to provide the incentives and the jobs? What areas have the infrastructure and the background?

Everyone has equal opportunity in terms of the job creation and in terms of the capital infrastructure, but Ottawa possesses something that has gone much further. The Ottawa growth has been as a result of the people involved, the people who have come here, the people who have chosen to stay in the Ottawa-Carleton area and who have laid the groundwork and the framework.

I commend my colleague for having the foresight and commitment to bring it forward and, again, I underline the fact that the people who fail to deal with the issue, but only argue on the me-too basis, support indirectly that argument and that position.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to it today.

1030

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I'm delighted to be able to speak on this very important bill, Bill 126, An Act to proclaim the City of Ottawa as the high-tech capital of Ontario.

The eastern Ontario people, starting from Kingston down to the Quebec border, are under the impression that the city of Ottawa is already the high-tech capital. This morning I was over at the Integrity Commissioner's. I was telling him I was coming over here to speak on this bill and he said to me, "Is the city of Ottawa not already known as the high-tech capital, not only of Ontario but of Canada?" I said, "To be official, we have to come up with a bill," and this is what my friend from Ottawa-Orléans riding has come up with.

When we are questioning why we should have the city of Ottawa known as the high-tech capital of Ontario, it should really be known as the high-tech capital of Canada.

When I look at the population, there's another place around Toronto that is saying it should be known as high-tech. When we look at the number of jobs high-tech has created in Ottawa, 10% of the jobs in Ottawa are in the high-tech industry; when I look at Toronto, 3.7% of the people are working in the high-tech industry.

I was reading the Ottawa Citizen yesterday. There was a very important article in it: "Ottawa 'Not a Difficult Sell': Mission to area has Silicon Valley reps impressed." These people came from San Francisco Bay.

"Business leaders visiting Ottawa from the San Francisco Bay area have deemed their mission a success.

"Officials with a few of Silicon Valley's elite high-tech companies were wandering the streets of Ottawa yesterday, and will continue their tour today, in order to get a feel for what the area has to offer their businesses….

"The Bay group is a not-for-profit organization with the mandate of promoting growth within the California region's technological community and expanding that growth, through various relationships, around the world."

When we're talking about having the city of Ottawa known as the high-tech capital of Ontario, there shouldn't be any question because we have everything to prove it. The city of Ottawa—at the present time the Ottawa-Carleton area—is part of my riding and I'd be happy to see every one of us support this bill today because it means that this will also be good for the Ontario economy. People from outside North America are coming to visit Ottawa.

Also, we are discussing more and more that the city of Ottawa should be declared officially bilingual. We have to remember that 54 countries in the world work in the French language. They speak French when it comes down to discussing business.

I support this bill with the right of the municipality to adopt whatever title it deems appropriate to ensure that it is identified as the leader in the high-tech industry.

I could go on and on to prove that the city of Ottawa should be known. When I look at the population of Markham, for example—they say they want to be known as the high-tech capital of Ontario—the population is 190,000 and they say they employ 155,000 people in the high-tech sector. The high-tech sector that employs 155,000 people covers the whole greater Toronto area. This is why it comes down to 3.69% of the population. In Ottawa, with a population of 750,000, 10% of those people, or 74,500 people, are working in the high-tech industry.

For this high-tech industry in the Ottawa area, as we know, we have the two colleges, Algonquin and la Cité collégiale, and also the two universities that are developing and training our people to become high-tech operators, to work in the high-tech industry. We have a shortage in Ontario; we have a shortage in Canada. I'm looking at some real innovators in my district. They developed the Amphibus. We know the Amphibus is the only one in the world, and that is in the capital city of Ottawa.

Just to show that we do have everything in Ottawa at the present time, why not officially declare it the high-tech capital of Ontario?

Interjections.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Yes, we're the high-tech capital of the world. We make high-tech steel up there.

The most interesting part about this bill is the competition it has generated, the activity it has generated, the interest it has generated across Ontario in this whole issue of who's the high-tech capital and leader in Ontario. I have to tell you it disturbs me somewhat in that I thought that as a jurisdiction, Ontario as a whole should be working together to develop a high-tech industry that would service everybody.

Right now, even though the economy is doing well in places like Ottawa, and probably Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto, some of the places where the high-tech industry has taken hold, there's a whole whack of Ontario—north-

ern Ontario and rural Ontario—that's still struggling, trying to find their place, trying to find their niche, trying to find their piece of this action so they could provide opportunities to the people who have lived in those areas for such a long people of time, who have invested in those areas for such a long period of time, and are finding that because they for the most part belong to what is referred to these days as the old economy, or what some of us like to refer to as the real economy, they are being ignored, are being pushed to the back burner, aren't being appreciated and valued any more in the way they used to be.

We have a focus on high-tech that I think is very good, and I think the city of Kanata needs to be commended for some of the excellent work it's done over a period of time to establish itself. I had a group in from Ottawa about a month ago speaking to me about some of the things they were excited about and some of what they needed. They weren't saying to me that they needed a designation as the high-tech capital of the world. What they needed was more infrastructure, what they needed was this government to come to the table to help them with roads and water and sewer, and to quit downloading on the municipality, which is trying to help them, because the municipality is already overburdened in that area.

If you talk to probably any of the groups that have written to us here today regarding this bill and that are very concerned re what it says about one community versus all the others, they would probably tell you the last thing they need is a designation. Markham has already claimed that designation: Canada's high-tech capital. It's on their sign as you drive into their community.

But that's not what they really need. What they need are senior levels of government that really understand what they need and what it is that will support them in beginning to organize the common life of this province in a way that recognizes that there other things that are necessary, that there are resources that are necessary, and that there's the provision of health care and education for their population in a way that reflects the very important contribution that makes to any economy, and actually establishes Canada as a leader in the world where developing a good economy is concerned and sets us up as a place where more high-tech might come and want to invest.

This bill this morning does nothing more than attract attention from some communities that perhaps feel that some of their thunder may be stolen here. It does nothing to focus attention on the need for us to get our heads around what it means to do community economic development, where all parts of this province benefit and gain and where all parts of this province are encouraged and given the resources they need to build on the industries that are already there so we can all become part of the success story that places like Kanata are obviously enjoying at the moment.

1040

I have to say this morning that I won't be voting for this bill because I think it moves us away from some of the real issues we should be dealing with where the economy is concerned and even where Kanata is concerned and where places like Markham and Toronto are concerned, and particularly where places like northern Ontario and rural Ontario are concerned. If we could have a fulsome discussion here this morning about the economy and how we have to be doing some things, taking some leadership, putting some resources into some of those areas of the province right now that aren't enjoying the same good fortune that specific areas are, then I think our time would be better spent and perhaps I'd be more supportive of the initiative of the member for Ottawa-Orléans.

What this does this morning is steal the thunder from other Ontario communities such as Markham, Kitchener-Waterloo and Burlington, which have made remarkable strides within the high-tech sector. It rankles the city of—

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): And Toronto.

Mr Colle: How can you leave out Toronto?

Mr Martin: Toronto has enough champions out there talking about it. Toronto doesn't need me standing up here. Toronto has His Melness out there around the world promoting Toronto. Toronto doesn't need me.

I want to talk about Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury and Chapleau and Wawa and Burlington and Kitchener-Waterloo and Markham and all of those places. It rankles these cities that this morning we're centring out one particular area of the province and saying that's the high-tech centre. We all want to be part of that action. We all want to take advantage of some of the spinoff that comes from that. We feel that by focusing on one place here, we're leaving everybody else out. By branding one city alone as having the capacity to bear this title, it fails to appreciate the rapidly changing nature of the high-tech sector. It's a frivolous waste of legislative time.

Rather than waste our time debating which city deserves the title, the Ontario government should be focusing on strategies to grow a high-tech sector in communities where high-tech industry is already established, and in communities in the north and rural Ontario where high-tech industries should be fostered and encouraged. But they're not, because the provincial government is absent; it's not there. I've been at tables over the last six years in rural and northern Ontario talking about economic development, and the group that is most noticeable by its absence is the provincial government. We don't know where they are. We can't find the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade any more. We think perhaps it's in a phone booth someplace in downtown Toronto.

Mr Colle: What's wrong with downtown Toronto? What have you got against Toronto?

Mr Martin: I'm telling you this is an opportunity to talk about the NDP's desire for true economic development, where not just Toronto and Ottawa are concerned but where the rest of the province is concerned, where Sault Ste Marie and northern Ontario and rural Ontario are concerned. We're very happy that Toronto is doing

well and we think it needs to do well because it's the engine of the province, but let's not put all our eggs into one basket. Let's not focus totally and completely on Kanata or Toronto or even Kitchener-Waterloo. Let's talk about the whole province here as a community. Let's do community economic development. Let's make sure everybody's able to take advantage of the new and exciting opportunities that are out there where the high-tech sector is concerned.

I think the member for Dufferin-Peel even agrees with that. His area probably needs some of that too.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): I agree with you this morning. I think you're doing a great job.

Mr Martin: The only problem is, the two senior levels of government out there today, the federal Liberals and the Ontario Tories, don't seem to understand that. They don't seem to understand that they have a role to play, that they need to be putting their resources into community economic development, that the tax breaks they're giving are not in fact supporting or helping industry. What they're supporting and helping are those people who invest in industry. That has nothing to do with the actual day-to-day of whether an industry is going to be successful or not. It has nothing to do with focusing attention on parts of the province that could be helpful in the further development of some of these opportunities.

I was listening to the folks who came in from Ottawa. I hear every time I come down to Toronto about the problems those communities are having with infrastructure and overpopulation and the effect on the environment of placing everybody in the one geographic area. If senior levels of government would put some thought into how you might take some of that and share it out there with the rest of the province, with places like Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay and Sudbury, then we might have an economic development model that helps the whole province. Then we might all be better off and be able to deal with some of the problems that are presented in so many important, interesting and challenging ways in this province.

I say to you that we need to be, in this House, telling the provincial government and the federal government to put their money where their mouth is, to begin to invest in economic development that will really affect and help communities get a handle on some of the challenges they face; to put some money in the pockets of those real investors who actually live and work in communities so they can participate in the overall economic activity of the business they work in.

This bill does nothing to advance that agenda, and I won't be supporting it here this morning.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I am pleased to be able to speak to Bill 126, but the one thing I've noticed this morning is that something that has never happened before in this House—in the last five years, certainly—is happening this morning. There are members from all parties aligned on one side of the issue and there are members from all parties aligned on the other side of the issue. The NDP and the PCs are used to the Liberals taking both sides of an issue, but it's usually the same member who takes both sides of an issue.

I want to compliment the member from Ottawa-Orléans, Brian Coburn, for bringing this issue forward, not because he's promoting Ottawa—Ottawa is a beautiful city, mind you; I lived there for three and a half years in the mid-1970s and it is truly a beautiful city—but because it highlights the issue. It shows everyone in Ontario, it demonstrates to everyone here, how important high-tech is to the development of this province, how important it is to the economy of this province and how important it is for the survival of the economy of this province. We will not only survive because of high-tech, we will prosper in the new global economy.

I want to take the opportunity to speak on behalf of the member from Cambridge, the member from Guelph-Wellington, the member from Waterloo-Wellington and others in my area who are very proud of the development of the high-tech industry in Waterloo-Welllington, the region of Waterloo. We own the Appalachian Silicon North. We're very proud of the development of the high-tech industry in our area. We have, for instance, 409 technology companies right now, and it's growing by hundreds every year and a half to two years.

We have four world-class educational institutions. One of the premier technology universities in the whole world, and certainly the premier technology university in Canada, is the University of Waterloo. Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology is Ontario's number-one-ranked college. Wilfrid Laurier University, one of Canada's top business schools and arguably one of North America's top business schools, definitely ranks within the top five. The University of Guelph is a world leader in biotechnology research, and my alma mater.

We have a business environment in Waterloo region that is attracting California-based technology firms. We have a high-tech industry that is well established and growing rapidly in the region of Waterloo. We have companies such as Research in Motion, the darling of the Toronto Stock Exchange; Open Text; Mortice Kerns, which is one of the world's leaders in e-commerce; Descartes; and Intellitactics, which is a small company that is employing 14 people every two weeks right now.

I want to say that we stressed the importance of the high-tech industry in our budget this year. We provided more money to R&D, intensive research. We did provide incentives. We did provide capital gains freedom, not total freedom but some lessening of the taxable gains shackles for those companies that are high-tech research companies that want to provide stock options to many of their employees in lieu of a salary right away. We provided some freedom for those companies.

Do you recall what the Liberals did to the budget? They voted against it. They voted against the incentives for high-tech.

Mr Speaker, there isn't a lot of time left for me. Thank you for allowing me to have my say.

1050

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I must confess that this week has been such a dramatic one in terms of the topsy-turvy world of stock prices associated with high-tech companies, that I had written my speech on Tuesday and had started off with great fanfare, mentioning that Nortel Networks is a GTA high-tech company. It's still a very significant player, obviously, but as a result of yesterday they'll be less prominently featured.

I want to take up the suggestion someone else made. Next week perhaps I'll be introducing a bill that calls for Toronto to be named the engine of the Ontario economy, and we'll probably put signs up around the greater Toronto area.

I want to applaud the efforts of the member for Ottawa-Orléans with respect to this. His remarks clearly demonstrate the passion he has on behalf of his community. It started to sound a little bit to me like it was his maiden speech in the Legislature. I waited for him to talk about Ottawa and what it offers in terms of longer winters and extraordinarily quiet weekday evenings, which has been my experience in that place.

I want to say as well that we all recognize the importance that this sector is playing, not only in fuelling the Ottawa economy but indeed the economy of the province of Ontario and the country of Canada. As much as we may have some distinction about which municipality, or in fact whether any municipality, ought to wear that name, we applaud that good jobs are being created.

This debate has provided an opportunity to celebrate success, and we have many success stories all across Ontario. In the city of Toronto, Liberty Village, in Gerard Kennedy's riding, is providing new jobs, good jobs, for people. The buildings there, which are old heritage buildings, are coming to new life with companies in this sector. Similarly, in my own riding, in the King-Parliament area, FloNetwork and UUNET have made extraordinary new investments, and Indus Canada has recently offered up something of a new Canadian headquarters in the riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

The key point that needs to be made here is that I believe this is not an appropriate issue to be dealt with legislatively. We see municipal pride come forward, and I think it's appropriate for municipalities to participate in the debate around which municipality leads in what area, and I think also to go through a process of deciding how they want to be known, but I believe it is below us in the Legislature, frankly, to be dealing with trying to name one municipality over another.

The recommendation that was made in the letter from Mitzie Hunter, the president of SMART Toronto, which also happens to be located in my riding, is an excellent one. She suggests that rather than appointing one city as the high-tech capital of Ontario, the province should look at itself as a smart province, celebrating the achievements of individual cities and encouraging these high-tech centres to work together toward the growth and development of the province as a whole as we compete in the global marketplace. That is the notion I'll be using as I stand and vote against this bill, not because I don't recognize Ottawa's importance, but because I think we can do a better job of promoting Ontario as a whole rather than playing one part of against another.

I would like to echo briefly—and I hope infrequently in this House—the comments made by the member from Kitchener Centre. I think we may vote the same way on this, and that is a rarity in this place. I would say that this issue has brought diverse parts together. In the greater Toronto area, we can do a better job. We can follow Ottawa's example of doing a better job of marketing ourselves and talking about the extent to which these industries and this sector are fuelling economic growth.

I know that as a result of this, efforts will be made to try to bring those high-tech companies together in the five regions that make up the greater Toronto area so that we can bring forward, as the Ottawa—I can't remember what it was called, but earlier this year a team from Ottawa, led by Rod Bryden, a very passionate spokesperson on behalf of this sector, came forward. I think that greater Toronto area municipalities and high-tech companies will be working together to try to do the same thing.

I will vote against this bill because I don't think it's appropriate to recognize one municipality over another in legislation. I suggest to people that we embrace the notion that Ontarians and the Ontario government work to bring this kind of designation to the province of Ontario as we go forward to compete in the global marketplace.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I want to speak shortly on this matter by the MPP for Ottawa-Orléans, An Act to proclaim the City of Ottawa as the high-tech capital of Ontario. I want to laud the member for Ottawa-Orléans for supporting his area. I was struck by the remarks of the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. In substance they were very good, but at the end he said he's not supporting this, so it really didn't make a lot of sense to me in terms of what he was saying.

The preamble of the bill says, "The high-tech sector is an integral part of the Canadian economy. In the Ottawa-Carleton region, popularly known as 'Silicon Valley North,' over 1,000 high-tech companies generate revenues that total approximately $12 billion a year. Many of these companies have become major players in the global high-tech marketplace."

Mr Coburn: It's $17 billion.

Mr Tascona: It's $17 billion? I wish that was in my riding. I'll refer to a quote from Mr Louis Payant, VP of research and development for Nokia, our newest high-tech addition. He stated, "Nokia is growing at a rate of approximately 50 people per day and they have a huge requirement for skilled software engineers and high-tech engineers. Kanata represents a core of talent, particularly in telecommunications, and Nokia wants to be part of that."

"Ottawa will carry the mantle as the top job machine over the next couple of years, as it has over the last couple of years," says Mr Derek Burleton, an economist with TD Economics. This translates into 60,000 jobs over the next three years.

I think the facts speak for themselves.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Ottawa-Orléans.

Mr Coburn: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'll just finish out my time, and then I get a two-minute wrap-up, I believe.

I want to put the mind of the member for Sault Ste Marie to rest. The province of Ontario, this government, invests considerable financial resources in the high-tech sector. In fact, the high-tech sector is 6.6% of Ontario's real GDP compared to 4.7% in the rest of Canada's. The high-tech sector is one of the rapidly growing sectors and accounted for 21% of Ontario's economic growth in 1999.

I want to talk about the Premier's Research Excellence Awards. These are awards handed out on an annual basis to recognize excellence in research and development. The University of Ottawa has received 28 of those awards since the program started, second only to the University of Toronto. To recognize their excellence, they each received $100,000 from the province and $50,000 from the university: Dr Rob Beanlands, Dr Steffany Bennett, Dr Pierre Berini, Dr Quentin Grafton, Dr Alexander Sorisky, Dr Sylvia Vidal, Dr Valerie Anne Wallace, and Dr Phillip Stephen Wells, at the University of Ottawa. Dr Gilles Patry, the vice-rector of the University of Ottawa, is extremely proud to be recognized for the excellence that members of his faculty have portrayed and contributed to the province of Ontario.

This is a sampling. There are others where we have contributed greatly, and I'll get into them in my wrap-up.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. You have two minutes.

Mr Coburn: Talking about some of the exceptional programs we have in Ontario, we are involved in a program called CITO that works with members of our high-tech community, that takes advantage of their research excellence and their skills to promote the high-tech sector.

Some of the people who are pioneers in the Ottawa area: Denzil Doyle, who's recognized as the grandfather of high-tech and started Digital in Ottawa; people like Terry Matthews, Michael Coupland, Michael Potter and Dr Adam Choweniec of Tundra Semiconductor. These are the people who had a vision and a dream and the commitment and the dollars, and invested in our community and have worked tirelessly and supported and networked with young companies that started out in a garage and have grown into worldwide entities.

At the outset, when I introduced this bill, never did I have the intention to minimize the importance of high-tech in any other community, whether it be in Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, London or Markham. But I'm pleased this morning to have members from all sides of the House debating the bill and talking about the strengths of their communities.

The member for Ottawa Centre, who comes from the same community I do, recognizes the strengths we have in our community and has proposed an amendment to this. I'm not averse to that at all. I think that if it goes to committee we will have an opportunity to further discuss it, and with the branding that will come forward from the city of Ottawa, who knows? We may be able to work something out that we can all agree on.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for this ballot item. The question will be put at 12 noon.

1100

DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE MOIS DE SENSIBILISATION À LA SURDI-CÉCITÉ

Mr Young moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 125, An Act to proclaim the month of June as deaf-blind awareness month / Projet de loi 125, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois de sensibilisation à la surdi-cécité.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr David Young (Willowdale): I should say at the outset that I am honoured to lead off debate on my private member's bill, Bill 125, An Act to proclaim the month of June as deaf-blind awareness month.

About a year and a half ago I had the opportunity to visit the Rotary Cheshire Home in my riding, which I will talk about at some length over the next number of minutes. I was there in the company of the then Attorney General, Charles Harnick. It was my first visit, not his first visit; he had been there on many occasions prior.

The building itself is a fairly nondescript, handsome-looking low-rise apartment complex in the riding of Willowdale. It's situated in a fairly quiet residential portion of my riding. To anyone driving by or walking by, it doesn't stand out as being very different from any of the other buildings in that area. Inside, however, it's a totally different world. It's a place where with each passing day great progress is made and heroes are born.

Mr Speaker, with us today in the members' gallery are several tenants and staff from the Rotary Cheshire Home for the deaf-blind in the riding of Willowdale. With your permission, I would like to take a moment to introduce many of those individuals who are sitting in the members' gallery.

We have with us today Catherine Dominie, who is a tenant. Nazar Strejko, Wilfred Grieve, Doreen Duffney and Stephen Lindop are tenants in that home. Lorne Marin is here today. He is a consultant to the Rotary Cheshire Home. Cindy Babineau is housing manager. Dana Blais, Jacquie Lewis, Louise Lambert, Max Estay

and Gord Johnston are all interveners. I'll talk in a moment about what that job entails. Nancy Longo is the intervener manager and she is with us today, as is Jennifer Robbins, the administrative assistant. A remarkable woman, Joyce Thompson, is the executive director of the Rotary Cheshire Home.

For the last eight years this facility, which I will focus on for reasons that will become apparent in a moment, has made an enormous difference in the lives of tenants and a difference in how our community operates. I am very pleased and honoured to have with us today the individuals I have just mentioned, and I thank them for joining us.

I also think it will be of benefit to the members present, in understanding some of the unique and great challenges that are faced by Ontarians with deaf-blind problems, to have our guests in the gallery today because, as I speak, there are a number of different forms of translation underway, a number of different forms of interpretation underway. You will see very clearly just how labour-intensive, how detailed and at times how difficult it is for this communication to take place, but take place it does.

Rotary Cheshire is a world-class facility, and I want to emphasize it is one of a kind in Canada. Funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Rotary Cheshire is the only service provider in Canada, regardless of which province and which party's in charge, that is solely focused on adults who have acquired the disability of deaf-blindness.

This home provides daily access to intervener services and housing in a physical and communication-barrier-free environment, resulting in high-quality living conditions for its tenants. Rotary Cheshire is planning a major expansion that doesn't only relate to the residents and the tenants in its house; it is an expansion to reach out further to Ontarians and to Canadians, as this facility has done in the past.

This expansion is going to be largely funded by private donations. I should point out to you that at the present time Rotary Cheshire is a remarkable example of an effective, meaningful, private-public partnership. We need more facilities like Rotary Cheshire assisting people living with deaf-blindness all across this country, not just in Ontario.

The willingness of the board of directors and the staff and tenants of Rotary Cheshire to undertake this major fundraising initiative, which they are in the midst of, to expand their services further, the willingness of these individuals to not rely only on government funding, the willingness to undertake this major expansion is not only commendable, it is entirely in keeping with the spirit of locally based grassroots support of worthwhile community projects that this government has attempted to promote.

I'm hopeful that this bill, which is a very straightforward piece of legislation, will raise public awareness of the extreme challenges and disabilities of those afflicted with deaf-blindness. If passed, the bill will designate June as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month. With that designation, it is my sincere hope that it will bring much-needed attention to the disability of Ontarians and Canadians with these challenges. It'll bring much-needed attention to their special needs and it'll bring much-needed attention to the efforts that are being made to expand opportunities for these Ontarians living with this disability.

The exact number of deaf-blind Ontarians is difficult to determine, because there are differing degrees of deafness and blindness that might qualify one at any given time for this designation. There are at least 3,000 Canadians; most estimates put the number considerably higher. So that we are clear, a person living with deaf-blindness is an individual with a substantial degree of loss of both sight and hearing, the combination of which results in significant difficulties in accessing information and in pursuing educational, vocational, recreational and social goals.

Deaf-blindness is a unique and separate disability from either deafness or blindness. An individual with the combined losses of hearing and vision requires very specialized services, including access to highly trained interveners and adapted communication methods such as tactile sign language and finger spelling.

I should point out there's no single cause for deaf-blindness. Some are born with these challenges. Some acquire it later in life either through trauma or aging. It is very important to recall that when one is faced with these challenges, depending upon where they are in life, the challenge of assisting them is that much greater.

I talked before about intervener services. We have many interveners here with us today. It is telling that in the province we have an intervener course that finds many of its spots unoccupied year-in, year-out. In talking to Joyce Thompson earlier, I was told that this year alone there are spots for young people or older people that simply haven't been applied for. It's clearly a very challenging profession, but it is my sincere belief that with the passage of this bill and the added attention that will be brought to the wonderful work that can be done, those positions at George Brown College will be occupied in coming years.

1110

I'm very proud to state that the government of Ontario has been recognized as a national leader in providing services for its deaf-blind citizens. Some of the Maritime provinces provide absolutely no support, but there is no province that provides greater assistance than this province, and I'm very proud of that. That said, I believe this legislation is a step in the right direction to further improve the lives of deaf-blind Ontarians. With June declared Deaf-Blind Awareness Month, it will appear on every politician's calendar and many will make that extra effort to promote this cause in their communities. Why? Because it is the right thing to do.

I am confident that the media will focus greater attention on the wonderful activities going on at places like Rotary Cheshire and the challenges deaf-blind Ontarians

face each and every day, and that they will spread this message and the importance of the cause. This is a bill; this is a cause we are supporting. With the support of this House, I am hopeful that June 2001 will be the first of ficial Deaf-Blind Awareness Month in Ontario's history.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I'm certainly going to support this bill, and if it is a step in the right direction, which I think it is, it's about 1% or less of the way we need to go. Everyone will support this bill because it's meaningless; it does not do anything other than appear to address the needs of the deaf-blind.

Everyone in this Legislature, I believe, knows somebody who has a disability. As an engineer, I tend to take and break down into components, so I thought about the issue of deaf-blind and tried to put myself in the place of one and the other, and then I'd like to look at it with the two together. I have no vision in my left eye. I have superb vision in my right eye. I tried to negotiate with the right eye closed, to try to experience in a small, awful way what blindness would be like, and I couldn't do it. I cheated. I simply couldn't do it, and I opened that eye.

I drive here to the Legislature. I come from my riding of Prince Edward-Hastings, and I see the beautiful colours of the autumn leaves. People who are blind miss that component in their lives. I know a gentleman who is blind, who told me he lost his sight when he was about eight and cannot remember all the colours any more. I tried to visualize and think of what that actually means. He can't visualize all the colours, and he is forgetting them one by one.

What are we as a province doing for people who are blind, to try to level the playing field? The Legislature did a study of upgrades that were required to this building. It was obvious that we needed an additional washroom. That was indicated in the report and it was funded and it's being done. Also we needed better cleaning.

One item in there was that we should have Braille on the elevator buttons. That was the only item in the report that actually had a figure on it. The figure was $15,000. It was deemed to be too expensive; it would be done at some future date. The Whitney Block was refurbished not that many years ago. No Braille was put on the elevator buttons there. Words are wonderful, but it's actions we need to do.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has a staff member here who is blind, and being blind involves some extra costs. Approximately $2,000 was needed, over and above a person who did not have a visual impairment, to do the job. The Board of Internal Economy turned down the request for $2,000 to make it possible for that blind individual to work here.

I have an extremely bright gentleman in my riding who is blind and was set for a job in the computer field, for which he was uniquely trained—it is not usual for a blind individual to be offered a job such as that. He lost it because of having to need a guide dog and that was denied.

My wife, who is here today, has a hearing impairment and requires hearing aids. She said to me that one of her challenges is to explain to people that because she is deaf, she is not stupid, she is simply hard of hearing. The ODSP funds extremely poorly for hearing aids. They will pay $500 for a hearing aid, which, in today's modern world, is an absolute, basic model unable to address a wide range.

We have 85% unemployment among the deaf in this province, not because they can't do the job, not because they are not capable of contributing to our society and contributing themselves. But I know that in my riding, when they apply for a job and require someone to sign for them at the interview, there is a three- to four-week waiting list because there is only one individual to do the signing for four counties. They are capable of doing the job. This government is not prepared to fund sufficient signers to do that translation for them.

In my riding and in two other ridings, we have schools for the deaf. I have a relative with no hearing whatsoever, and I've realized from her that her fear wasn't going off to school and being away from home. She found it fulfilling to be part of the deaf culture, to be part of her culture. They are unique, and they have special needs. What is this government doing for the deaf? We're selling off the one playing field the deaf community has in Ontario. We're going to sell it off to a private developer to make some money at the expense of our deaf athletes in this province.

Interjection: Where is that?

Mr Parsons: At Milton. In fact, even before this government declared it surplus, they already had an offer to purchase on it, though it was not yet advertised.

The deaf-blind face the two challenges together that I've described. We need to do far more for them than simply emotion with hollow words to it. The deaf-blind aren't looking for a handout. Our Premier has said at various elections that people receiving welfare don't want a handout but a hand up. I suggest that our deaf-blind community wants a hand up. We have the obligation to provide it.

It is ironic that as we are debating this bill to name a month for the deaf-blind, in all the other legislation we deny they exist. I suggest that a very meaningful way to assist the deaf-blind would be to educate the public about them and their uniqueness. In the new curriculum the government is so proud of, there is no reference to people with disabilities. We should be starting in grade 1 to make people familiar with all our citizens. It's not in the new curriculum.

What we need is a meaningful People with Disabilities Act to alleviate them of the need now of going through a two- or three-year process under the Ontario Human Rights Commission. They should be entitled to the same rights and privileges as every citizen in Ontario. We need a People with Disabilities Act and we need it now.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Right at the outset, I want to offer my congratulations to the member for Willowdale, Mr Young, who brought this piece of business before the House today. I think it is a most appropriate use of our time, to concentrate on something

that often doesn't get a lot of air time in this facility, which is the needs, the challenges, the aspirations and the opportunity out there, if we would put attention on it, for those who have disabilities; in this instance, those who are challenged with the disability of deaf-blindness.

I think it's a good thing to set aside time in the year when all of us, for various reasons and in various ways, can focus on an issue such as this. It's a wonderful educational opportunity, a wonderful learning opportunity and a wonderful opportunity for all of us who have an interest, and those of us who should have an interest who perhaps don't because we're too busy or whatever, to focus on the challenges out there for some of our fellow citizens as they try to participate in the everyday life of the communities in which they live, and in fact to capitalize on the potential they have to participate in a very constructive, positive and exciting way, if only we could get our heads around exactly how that happened, if only we were willing to put the resources into making sure accessibility was dealt with, and all that comes with that.

1120

I know that Mr Young, who brings this bill forward, has done a lot of work with the Rotary Cheshire Home. They need to be commended for the excellent work they've done over a long period of time now in an area that continues to need their attention and their inclusion and their involvement.

However, having said all that, and being willing this morning to support the bill the member has brought forward, I think we need to expand this discussion to focus for a time on the lack of activity by this government where accessibility is concerned and the introduction and passing ultimately of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act is concerned. I think this government's record where that work is concerned is abysmal and disappointing, to say the least.

I don't think we have to look very far to understand and realize how important it is that, in a jurisdiction as progressive and well-off and forward-looking as Ontario, we do everything in our power to make sure that those who are citizens, those who are members of that society, that jurisdiction, are allowed to participate to their fullest capacity.

Many of us know, by way of the inspiring Helen Keller story, that deaf-blind persons can gain and maintain their independence through teaching and facilitation. There is a broad range of communication languages and services to help deaf-blind persons learn to communicate with other people, but resources are needed to make sure they're put in place, not just in the Rotary Cheshire Home but in every office and every facility across this province, particularly where the delivery of public services is concerned, so that people with disabilities can participate, can get the information they need and can take advantage of those opportunities that are out there to maximize their potential and their capacity to be a major player.

I don't think there is any of us in this place who doesn't know somebody in our life, whether it's in our family, in our neighbourhood or in our community, who has risen above or perhaps even built on the challenge they were given, whether it was something they were born with or that arrived later by way of perhaps sickness or accident, to contribute in a very meaningful and important way to the life of those around them, whether by way of being a conduit for communication, by way of being an organizer of various and sundry events, or by way of some of the very particular skills many of us have that a disability does not impair in any way but that sometimes seems to loom so large. When we get it out of the way, we realize that these folks have as much, and more, to contribute as anybody else.

I know people who are labelled primarily by their disability who, if you can move that aside, are actually quite brilliant in particular areas and sometimes aren't given the opportunity to develop that brilliance and contribute that brilliance to the overall well-being of the society we're in. That's unfortunate because in my view, when that happens, we all lose. We lose the contribution those people can give and can make to the overall betterment of our society, of our economy, of our community and of the personal lives we all live.

It's quite unfortunate, I think, that we, on the one hand today, focus on something that is very right, that is the right thing to do and that we should be doing and will be doing it, because I don't think there's a person in this place who won't be supporting this bill, yet on the other hand, not to be doing as government everything that is possible to make sure that people with disabilities can participate in the overall life of a community so that they're not singled out so often, so that they can contribute and participate with the gifts they have, in spite of the challenge they confront each day. This government hasn't been willing to speak directly and forthrightly with the disability community around the question of why it is and when it is we might expect to have before us an Ontarians with Disabilities Act that would open the doors and throw open the offices of government and society so that folks could participate in that way.

I want to share with the people here today a little piece of my life where I struggled with my own place in society and life. I'm not particularly disabled, but certainly all of us at some point or other in our lives struggle with things that come at us. It was through an introduction to a very well known Canadian, Jean Vanier, who at one point in his life turned his attention to living with a number of disabled individuals and through that experience discovered that these people, in many significant and important ways, weren't disabled at all.

If we could get past those things that so often get in the way of our getting in touch with the very real and precious and positive and exciting person and opportunity that is there in each person, we discover that everybody has something to offer each one of us and has something to offer the larger society, if we would only take the time, make the effort and have the patience to work with that and get the job done.

We have an example in some of the work that Jean Vanier has done of how we as a society, simply by changing our attitude, by learning some more, by actually committing ourselves to be involved in a more meaningful way with all those folks around us, can discover that there are far fewer disabilities than there are possibilities for people, if we wanted to do that.

I'm here today, as I said before, to support this bill, but also to challenge the government and to challenge Mr Young, who obviously has a tremendous interest in this or else he wouldn't have brought it forward, to talk with his colleagues and particularly the ministers who are responsible in his government to make sure that some significant and important work is being done on the question of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, so that we can have it before us here before Christmas of this year so that we can deliver to the people with disabilities across this province a Christmas present that says to them, "We are going to do everything in our power. We are going to put all the resources available to us."

There are significant resources available. We are living in a time now in Ontario of unheralded surpluses in public coffers: surpluses at the federal level, surpluses at the provincial level, that are historically high, which this government sees fit to take big chunks of and turn back by way of tax breaks to those who really are participating to their fullest, who really have the maximum opportunity to participate and to even make more money.

In my view, a big chunk of that money should be taken and spent in ways that would allow more of the ordinary citizens and people with disabilities in this province to maximize their potential to participate and become full citizens and take advantage of all of the wonderful things that we can communally, as a community of people, afford for each other, if we only had the mind, if we only had the political will and the commitment to do that.

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I want to put on the record here this morning a number of questions that the community of people with disabilities and their leadership put before the Minister of Citizenship and Culture of this province only a short time ago and to which they still have not gotten an answer. They asked:

What will the government's action plan on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act contain when it is released? We have a pretty good idea now, given the document that was leaked and presented in this House just a week or two ago, what will be contained in this bill if and when it comes forward. I have to say, frankly, that we and the community of people with disabilities are quite disappointed. As a matter of fact we're not only disappointed, we're shocked and dismayed and angry about that.

Whom has the minister and the government specifically consulted with on the contents of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act?

What specific feedback and options for this legislation have the minister and the government received? If we look at the document that was released, not too much. Obviously it is becoming an exercise in spin and public relations: how do you get out from underneath this commitment you made, as opposed to, how do you take advantage of this opportunity to actually do something significant and important in the province?

What decisions about the content and timing of the enactment of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act have been made by cabinet or its priorities and planning committee? The member for Willowdale ought to be listening to these questions. I think these are questions he should be asking his colleagues if he's really, truly interested in improving the lot of folks with disabilities across this province, in this instance of course the people who are deaf-blind.

Why has the government been so reluctant to enact a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act? And why has it been delayed so long?

Will the Ontarians with Disabilities Act that you bring forward comply with the 11 principles which the Legislature, including your party, unanimously adopted in its October 29, 1998, resolution?

What is your approximate target date for introducing the Ontarians with Disabilities Act for first reading? And will you support the holding of open, accessible public hearings across Ontario on the bill?

Finally, what can you do to help us arrange a meeting with the Premier to move this act forward?

I say to the member for Willowdale that if he really wants to do something meaningful here this morning, along with what he's doing—I don't for a second suggest that this is not meaningful; it is tremendously meaningful to have a month dedicated to issues of blind-deafness. But will you speak to these folks and to the community of people with disabilities in Ontario and arrange for them a meeting with the Premier so that they can express to him in no uncertain terms the very immediate need for an act to deal with Ontarians with disabilities in this province?

Last but not least, I challenge all of us here in our own operations to take a look around at our offices and at the things we do and assess and analyze that and come to some understanding of how accessible we are as MPPs to all citizens in our communities. Ultimately, justice and fairness and an act like this start at home, start with us.

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): It's a pleasure to rise and speak in support of Bill 125, the Deaf-Blind Awareness Month Act, and I warmly welcome our special guests here in the gallery today.

I was interested to learn that the month of June was chosen because it's the birth month of Helen Keller. At the age of 19 months she suffered an illness which left her blind and deaf, and a few years later another great Canadian, Alexander Graham Bell, examined her and sent her to the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston. There she learned to recognize objects by touch, to communicate by having others draw in the palm of her hand and to read Braille. Later on at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf, she began the long process of

learning to speak. Her perseverance is a tribute to her character.

Later on in her life, through her books and through her lectures across North America, she inspired the deaf-blind community and raised awareness of this unique disability amongst the general population.

As my colleague mentioned, it's estimated that there are about 3,000 people across Canada who face the challenges of deaf-blindness every day. That's about one thousandth of 1% of this country's population, and it's quite likely that very few of us will have the opportunity to meet and learn from someone who is deaf-blind.

Clearly, an officially recognized awareness month will help all Ontarians learn more about the challenges of deaf-blindness. This bill, if passed, will help to carry on the legacy of Helen Keller and others who have sought to raise awareness of disability. It'll be a credit to this member, to this House and to the government of Ontario.

This is a government that has done a lot to assist the disabled in Ontario. We have removed disabled people from the welfare system and implemented the Ontario disability support program that eliminates financial penalties for those who are not successful in their attempts to enter the workforce. We spend nearly $6 billion a year on programs for the disabled. Since 1995, we've introduced more than $800 million in new spending on key disability programs. We're spending $45 million in developing housing spaces and supports for people with mental illness and providing an additional $70 million, on top of $1.2 billion, for protected special education each year; $35 million for improved employment supports for people with disabilities; $60 million to improve community and institutional mental health services; $18.7 million for attendant care, which is a marvellous program our government made permanent; $4 million for children's treatment centres that will improve access to health care services for special-needs children.

We are leading; we are doing a lot. I'd just like to specifically draw your attention to, the partnership incentive fund, which is a program that involves government, corporations and community organizations. For instance, the community access-ability program is a program of $200,000, and in the first year of this program 46 community projects across Ontario, involving 154 community partners and over 3,000 persons with disabilities, were funded, 34 events were held, over 600 workshops and 25,000 pieces of literature. These programs are happening, they are vibrant, they are responding to the needs of the communities, and we are proud to be leading in that.

As my colleague from Willowdale indicated, Ontario is recognized as a leader in initiatives for deaf-blindness. Those are just some of the things that we are doing in this particular file.

We have many new initiatives for the disabled in the province of Ontario, and we take these very seriously. Our government prides ourselves on keeping our promises and on doing the right thing. We take that to heart. The Mike Harris government is working to make this great province the best place in the world to live, to work and to raise a family. Thanks to this government, we do have a stronger economic foundation on which to build a brighter future for all Ontarians, and that particularly includes those who daily face the challenges of a disability.

My colleagues across the way say we have done nothing. In fact, I say to the Liberals and the NDP, when you were in government you did very little, for all your talk. We have done a lot, we know that there is more to do and we will do more. This is just the beginning.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate. I express a little bit of sadness in the previous speaker to say that I'll be supporting the motion. I do think it's a worthwhile step to proclaim the month of June as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month. It is a step forward. I think some good will come from it. I think, as we move forward on this, that the minister and the Premier need to re-examine their own priorities. I think the Ontarians with Disabilities Act is an extremely important act. Proclaiming the month is, as I say, a step forward, but the disabilities act is really what is needed.

I'll tell a very quick story. A good friend of mine with the Toronto police emergency task force about 12 years ago got into a car accident one evening and became a quadriplegic. That didn't stop him. He never lost his sense of optimism. Even within 24 hours of the accident he was looking forward to the future. To the Toronto police force's credit and to my friend's credit, about five years after the accident he was able to go back to work on the police force. He became probably Canada's expert on youth gangs. He then took the detectives exam and the Toronto police force promoted him to detective. He headed up a unit of about 14 people and now is heading up a brand new unit.

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The reason I mention this is that here was an individual whose life was fundamentally changed. He became a quadriplegic, but through his own perseverance, through an employer who understands that there is enormous talent available to them if they can provide some modest accommodation, and through technology—those three things meant that Ontario is taking advantage of an enormous talent at a relatively modest cost.

That's what the deaf-blind community needs and is looking for: for Ontario, all of us, to make those sorts of investments in them to help unlock the enormous talent that exists within that community. As I say, I know first-hand from my good friend what he has been able to do in spite of a disability.

So I say, certainly, that the month is a first step. Some good will come from it. But we need to take the next big steps. I do believe the disabilities act is an important step forward for the government to move quickly on.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to join in the debate with respect to Bill 125, An Act to proclaim the month of June as deaf-blind awareness month. I think the preamble of the bill speaks for itself about what the member for Willowdale was trying to accomplish here:

"Deaf-blindness is a unique disability that incorporates the sensory loss of both sight and hearing. Persons with this disability experience extreme isolation and the inability to access the services and information which most of us take for granted.

"June is the birth month of Helen Keller, a deaf-blind person known around the world for her perseverance and achievements, and an inspiration to the deaf-blind community. It is appropriate during the month of June to celebrate the achievements of deaf-blind persons, and to recognize that increased public awareness of this disability is crucial to increase opportunities for those who live with it.

"Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

"Deaf-blind awareness month

"1. The month of June in each year is proclaimed as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month."

Dealing with this legislation in its substance, children affected by deaf-blindness: approximately one third of all persons living with deaf-blindness were born with rubella syndrome. German measles, a contagious disease that affects the fetuses of women in their first trimester of pregnancy, results in many children born with hearing and vision losses.

The number of children affected around the world gained the attention of educators and service providers, who understood the importance of planning for this new group of students who would need services. This led to the creation and expansion of services for the deaf-blind. An example of these services is the Canadian National Institute for the Blind deaf-blind services department. This department receives funding from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

I participated in and supported the CNIB forum in my riding about a week and a half ago, which was attended by a number of stakeholders from the education community, to bring more awareness throughout my riding. It was very well attended. I want to congratulate the CNIB and also in particular a good friend of mine, Margarita Papp-Belyneh, who was responsible in great part for this event.

Also, the Canadian Hearing Society, an Ontario service for the deaf and hearing-impaired individuals: this group receives funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training to provide counselling, job search and access to technical devices.

The major issue for the deaf-blind community is the lack of interveners and intervener services. This is largely caused by the very small number of people who choose to make being an intervener their career. There is only one educational institution in Canada, George Brown College here in Toronto, that trains students to become deaf-blind interveners. Only 17 students have enrolled to train as interveners for the next year. By heightening public awareness of the disability of deaf-blindness and the needs of this community, perhaps more young people will choose a career as a deaf-blind intervener.

Adults affected by deaf-blindness: approximately two thirds of those persons living with deaf-blindness acquire deaf-blindness later in life through trauma and accidents or disease. There are many different causes of deafness and blindness. The age of the person when their vision and hearing losses occur requires very different approaches when they plan their education, training and rehabilitation. Also, the communication system they develop as their preferred communication method, their language levels and fluency in grammar and reading skills greatly impact on which social community they may associate with and their service needs.

I'll say this: our government has been working to make Ontario the best place in the world to live, to work and raise a family. With Ontario's economy as strong as it is thanks to the efforts of our government, we need all the skilled workers we can get to help us move forward.

The facts are that the government spends nearly $6 billion annually on services to persons with disabilities. That's an increase of more than $800 million since our government took office in 1995. In 1998 we consulted over 300 organizations in eight cities across Ontario. We received 260 written submissions from people who expressed their views on what should be in an Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Examples of what we've done in this area: we've removed disabled people from the welfare system and implemented the Ontario disability support program, which eliminates financial penalties for those who are unsuccessful in their attempts to enter the workforce. We've visited with the March of Dimes, our partner in the accessibility program, which works in partnership with the private sector to help make our world more accessible. The minister has met with kids who participate in the track 3 ski program, who work with disabled kids and teach them how to ski.

We have done a number of initiatives to reach out to the community, and I want to commend the member from Willowdale for this, another initiative with respect to bringing forth our approach to dealing with this issue.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I'd like to welcome our guests from Rotary Cheshire Homes here today. I had the opportunity to visit the facility this spring and was most impressed with the efforts taking place there.

It was very sad to hear the parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for persons with disabilities not mention once the need for a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act in this province. Promise made, promise not kept. That's a very sad day.

I had an opportunity to meet and listen to an individual. Her name is Penny Leclair. Penny is deaf-blind. Penny is a member of the Canadian Society of the Deaf-blind, Canadian Federation of the Blind Advocates for Equality, Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, Guide Dog Users of Canada, and Canadian National Institute for the Blind. I'd like to relay some

comments and some thoughts of what it's like for a person with deaf-blindness. I'm going to read from Penny's brief that she presented to me.

"I am an informed person who is deaf-blind. I advocate for changes that would have a positive impact for the majority of people who are deaf-blind. In general, it is my view that the recently proposed ODA"—Bill 83—"does not address the needs of disabled persons in Ontario and particularly the uniqueness of the disability of deaf-blindness....

"It is every deaf-blind person's right to have access to equal education, access to information, adequate housing and access to services. The resources to achieve these rights are lacking. In reality," Bill 83 "itself is meaningless without the provision of resources that would allow disabled persons to access these rights. For the deaf, blind and deaf-blind, information in a meaningful format is a must....

"Many deaf-blind people are unaware of most services available to them because of the lack of accessible information....

"Most deaf-blind persons receive less than six hours of intervention per week. (The intervener is a person who assists with communication.) We cannot achieve improvement in our lives, and have very limited independence with such inadequate communication assistance. Our ability to contribute to our community requires intervention, the personal assistance of a professional intervener.... The changing environment requires an ability to communicate. Deaf-blind persons need to know of changes and capitalize on new opportunities. This is not a reality at present....

"If the barrier of not being able to communicate continues, deaf-blind Canadians will become more and more isolated. People are meant to interact with other people. We are a society. If we are not given resources to communicate, other health problems arise, increasing the long-term costs for health-based support structures.

"Increase intervention services, equitably distributed to the level of daily intervention, not weekly. Even as little as two hours per day of the ears and eyes of a professional would overcome many of the communication barriers for deaf-blind persons.

"Businesses, especially legal and government departments, should be required to have all documents produced in a person's preferred method of communication: print, Braille, or with the use of an intervener.

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"If government has a responsibility for resources…. Currently, it is not understood which ministry has what responsibility, and one needs to be an expert in government politics and practices to know where and how to acquire a resource. This has to be addressed….

"Deaf-blind people require intervention as a unique service. Many of our basic human rights can only be achieved with more intervention services."

It's a sad day when a backbencher has to come forward to work for persons with disabilities in this province, and no initiatives from the minister. Yes, I support the awareness question. I think it's a very important step. But awareness doesn't pull down the barriers that exist in this government. The only way to fully remove these barriers is to pass a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Mr Brian Coburn (Ottawa-Orléans): I am very pleased to speak to the member from Willowdale's bill this morning, the Ontario Deaf-Blind Awareness Month Act, Bill 125.

The Rotary Cheshire Homes facility is the only service provider in Canada which is solely focused on adults who have acquired the disability of deaf-blindness. They provide daily access to intervener services and housing in a physical and communication barrier-free environment, resulting in quality-of-life living conditions for the residents.

This particular bill has certainly struck a chord with me, as my wife has spent a great part of her life working with individuals with disabilities. She has told me of the many challenges that individuals face when they are deaf. I can only imagine the tremendous challenge an individual would face with the additional barrier of blindness. I certainly understand the important role an intervener plays in the interaction of a person who is deaf-blind with other people and the environment around them.

Our government is working to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. In fact, the Ministry of Community and Social Services is providing funding to the Rotary Cheshire Homes. Our government spends nearly $6 billion annually on services to persons with disabilities, which I must point out is an increase of more than $800 million since we took office in 1995. We have created and expanded services for the deaf-blind, particularly the deaf-blind services department in the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Canadian Hearing Society.

We promised legislation to improve the lives of persons with disabilities and we are committed to passing new legislation next year, legislation that will be fair and reasonable for people with disabilities as well as those who are in a position to accommodate their needs. The legislation will have an action plan that will focus on changing attitudes, namely, helping those with disabilities to truly share in the opportunities of Ontario.

As members know, we have consulted with over 300 organizations in eight cities, as well as receiving over 260 submissions from people who have expressed their views on what we should do in an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I can tell you that Minister Johns continues to consult.

In my riding of Ottawa-Orléans, I have an exceptionally energetic and caring lady by the name of Marilyn Dow. Marilyn sees the challenges faced by parents who have a member of their family who has a disability day in, day out. She is one of those parents. But she has also seen a need for a service that shared expensive equipment for special disabilities, which many families simply could not afford. Eight years ago she started the special-needs equipment exchange, in her own home. Needless to say,

this was a service welcomed by families with disabilities across the entire city of Ottawa. No money changes hands. People bring equipment they no longer need or have outgrown and trade it in for better or more specialized equipment. Volunteers help to repair the equipment. It has outgrown her basement now and larger space has been donated, which is now not sufficient to handle the volume.

I told Minister Johns of this exceptional service provided by parents and volunteers under the tireless direction of Marilyn Dow. Marilyn and the parents were delighted to have Minister Johns visit the special-needs equipment exchange service. To my knowledge, it is the only service of its kind in Ontario. Marilyn and the parents had an opportunity to explain their needs and special circumstances to Minister Johns, who was extremely interested in having their concerns expressed to her first-hand. This is the personal touch that Minister Johns has brought to this issue, talking and consulting with individuals who can best suggest solutions.

I also have a constituent who is deaf-blind who visited my office with her intervener, where we talked about barriers and challenges she faces and how she might address them. Her input and suggestions were welcomed by Minister Johns. This additional information will help us develop legislation that will improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

I am sure that we all have stories which demonstrate the progress and assistance that volunteers and organizations such as the Rotary Cheshire Homes provide to Ontarians who have disabilities. It is their partnership and commitment, coupled with our government's initiatives, that will continue to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Bill 125 is an added initiative that will increase the awareness of the need for interveners, and perhaps more young people will choose a career as a deaf-blind intervener.

Mr Young: I thank my colleagues on both sides of the floor for participating in this discussion today. The very fact that the discussion took place is a positive step forward.

The passage of this bill, if it's the will of this Assembly to ultimately pass this legislation, will be another step forward. That's how one travels down the road, by steps forward. I'm very proud of the fact that the speakers to date have all indicated that they will be supporting this legislation.

I am also very proud of the work that has been done by this government. I indicated earlier in passing—I will expand now, if I may—that Ontario is the national leader in providing services for the deaf-blind in Canada. This is based on the number of services available to deaf-blind people, as well as the number of deaf-blind persons receiving these services. I challenge anyone in this Legislature to compare the services provided in this province to those provided in other provinces, whether they be governed by an NDP government or the Parti Québécois, or whether they be government by the Liberals in Newfoundland. In fact, I had the opportunity recently in the Rotary Cheshire Homes to meet a tenant who is from a maritime province who came to Ontario and whose life has been enriched greatly by reason of the services that are provided here.

So yes, there is more to do. There is always more to do. I have the utmost confidence that Minister Johns, with the assistance of her parliamentary assistant, the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, will move us forward in that direction, as they have in the past. This is a government with the wherewithal. This is a province that can further improve the lives of those with this affliction. I'm very proud to be standing today and I look forward to the passage of this very important legislation.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allotted for this ballot item.

HIGH-TECH CAPITAL OF ONTARIO ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA CAPITALE ONTARIENNE DE LA HAUTE TECHNOLOGIE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 43. Mr Coburn has moved second reading of Bill 126, An Act to proclaim the City of Ottawa as the high-tech capital of Ontario. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members after we deal with ballot item number 44.

DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE MOIS DE SENSIBILISATION À LA SURDI-CÉCITÉ

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Young has moved second reading of Bill 125, An Act to proclaim the month of June as deaf-blind awareness month.

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

HIGH-TECH CAPITAL OF ONTARIO ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA CAPITALE ONTARIENNE DE LA HAUTE TECHNOLOGIE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Call in the members for a vote on ballot item number 43.

The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Coburn has moved second reading of Bill 126. All those in favour will stand and remain standing until their name is called.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Guzzo, Garry J.	Patten, Richard
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Spina, Joseph
Boyer, Claudette	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Munro, Julia	Tascona, Joseph N.
Duncan, Dwight	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Gerretsen, John	O'Toole, John	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until their name is called.

Nays

Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	Kwinter, Monte	Tilson, David
Colle, Mike	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Brenda	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Ruprecht, Tony	
Gill, Raminder	Sampson, Rob	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 19; the nays are 22.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

All matters before the House relating to private members' public business now being complete, I will now leave the chair. The House will resume sitting at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1208 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SERVICES HOSPITALIERS
HOSPITAL SERVICES

M^me^ Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier) : J'aimerais, au nom de Dalton McGuinty et de mes collègues libéraux, parler des récentes annulations de chirurgie à travers la province, et surtout dans mon comté d'Ottawa-Vanier.

Many of my constituents have had their surgeries cancelled at the last minute because no beds were available to them, and these people have not been waiting for short periods of time. No, some have been on waiting lists for more than 10 months.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has promised to fix this serious problem, yet little has been done. We have heard announcement after announcement about how she is getting the job done, yet there is little evidence that this is happening.

I wonder if Maggi Baker of Ottawa, whose hip replacement surgery has been postponed twice, believes that this government is getting the job done. What about Douglas Forteath, who waited seven months for hip replacement surgery? What about Victor Woodward, whose prostate surgery, scheduled for October 10, was cancelled? I wonder if Allan McCulloch of Ottawa, who has been denied investigative surgery twice, thinks that this government is getting the job done.

The reason there are no beds available to these patients is because the beds are being occupied by long-term patients. Why doesn't this government provide separate facilities for long-term patients in order to free up hospital beds for people like those whose names I have given you?

Si la ministre pense honnêtement que le problème est sous contrôle, il me ferait plaisir de lui donner les numéros de téléphone de mes commettants et de mes commettantes qui sont encore sur une liste d'attente pour qu'elle puisse leur dire elle-même qu'ils n'ont rien à s'inquiéter.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): Mr Speaker, I have a matter of privilege I'd like to raise at this time.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I do have a reply to that. Maybe we'll do it after members' statements, if we could.

DIWALI

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Today over 400,000 Ontarians, including my family, will be celebrating Diwali. Diwali is celebrated by over one billion people throughout the world, including India, Europe, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia and Fiji.

Diwali is one of the most festive occasions for members of the South Asian community. Diwali, or the festival of lights, as it is popularly known, is symbolized by the lighting of innumerable lamps, or deeyas, in and around every home. On Diwali day prayers are held at homes and at temples. Feasts are prepared, sweets are exchanged and fireworks are displayed.

The festival of Diwali also commemorates the return of Lord Rama to his kingdom of Ayodhya after 14 years in exile, and the return of Guru Hargobind Ji to the city of Amritsar after his release from captivity by the Mughal ruler Jahangir.

On behalf of the South Asian community, I would like to extend an invitation to all Ontarians to join with us at 3 pm this Sunday at Queen's Park for the ceremonial lighting of a deeya and a parade from Queen's Park to city hall.

On this most auspicious Diwali day, I would like to extend greetings to all members of the South Asian community across Ontario and especially in my own riding. I wish and pray that we are all blessed with harmony, love and positive thoughts.

Happy Diwali to all. Namaste and Sat Sri Akal.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is really, where are the financial statements? Where are the audited statements for the last fiscal year?

I remember when Mike Harris was in opposition, he berated the NDP for not getting the statements out properly. When he got elected he said, "We'll have these things out in 90 days." Well, that was the end of June. Where are they? That's the question. We now are not three months after the year-end, we're seven months after the year-end. I always say to my business friends, "If you tried to run your company like this, you'd be delisted from the stock exchange." If you don't have your audited statements in within 140 days you get delisted. But not Mike Harris. He can take his own time.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Hiding.

Mr Phillips: That is the question: what are they hiding?

The Minister of Health had the embarrassment of showing up last week at estimates with a $2.5-billion mistake. They asked the minister one question and she said, "Oh, we're going to have to adjourn for a week, because obviously I've got some of the wrong numbers here."

So I say to Premier Harris, let's get on with it. Where are these audited financial statements? What have you got to hide? Let's see those statements. Why don't you live up to that promise of, "Within 90 days I'm going to have the audited statements"? We're still waiting after seven months.

LIBERAL PARTY OF ONTARIO

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): It must be very difficult to be a member of the provincial Liberals these days. Imagine the difficulty of rallying the troops when you find that the number one economic policy of our government, which they've attacked since 1995, is now the primary plank of the federal Liberal 2000 election campaign.

What do the provincial Liberals do now? Do they do what their federal cousins have done: admit through a tax-cutting platform that this government's economic policy has been right all along? Do they stand up in this House and apologize to the people of Ontario, admitting to the error of their ways?

There would be no snickering on this side of the House if the Leader of the Opposition were to stand on his feet and say something along the lines of, "I've decided to come clean. I've decided to let the people of Ontario know that, like my federal cousins, I now know that the economic policies of the Mike Harris government have been correct all along."

I don't expect that. It would be too big a pill for him to swallow. But I do want to thank the Prime Minister. It took only five years for Jean Chrétien to finally get an understanding of economic policies, and in terms of Liberal time frames, five years is record time. It took him only five years to finally figure out that if he wanted a chance to win the upcoming federal election he would have to follow the leadership of the Mike Harris government.

These are tough, tough days to be a member of the provincial Liberal Party. Who knows? Maybe Mr McGuinty will finally do the right thing: exhibit leadership. In the meantime, our government will lead the province toward continued economic prosperity.

POLICE JOB FAIR

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): On Saturday, October 21, I attended a recruitment and testing session conducted by the Toronto Police Service at the Downsview park lands. I was pleased to witness this initiative by our Toronto police force as part of their ongoing efforts to provide trained, qualified and much-welcome additions to our police force. It is most important to see that recruiting efforts are aimed at men and women from all backgrounds and walks of life, including people of various races, cultures and religions.

The intention of the police job fair was to provide information to candidates seeking the position of police constable. The Toronto Police Service strives to reflect the communities in which it serves. The Toronto Police Service needs include visible minorities, aboriginal peoples, females, second-language skills, and residents of Toronto and the greater Toronto area.

Hosting police job fairs aimed at promoting career opportunities in policing reflects the importance our police force places in seeking recruits who are committed to working in partnership with the community to ensure that Toronto is the best and safest place to be. And that it is.

We are truly grateful and proud that our neighbourhoods, our communities and our cities are always well served and protected due to the police service efforts to recruit and hire the best and most talented young people for their organization.

HONOURS IN HAMILTON

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise today to bring to the attention of the House recent celebrations in Hamilton, last month, of two outstanding Hamiltonians. On September 21, at Liuna Station, we had a celebration for Dermot Nolan, who received the Emilius Irving award, which was named after the first president of the Hamilton Law Society, who was elected in 1879. The Hamilton Law Association chose Dermot because of his outstanding contribution not only to law but to our community. In fact, he's only the seventh recipient to receive the award and the first since 1997. Dermot is probably best known in Hamilton for his tireless efforts in spearheading the creation of a new downtown Hamilton courthouse, which we are all so proud of.

The following night, September 22, at the Hamilton Convention Centre, we celebrated the retirement of Bill and Lynne Powell and their 25 years with creative arts. They're also best known for their creation of the Festival of Friends. As Jeff Mahoney, the reporter for the Hamilton Spectator, put it, "They brought Canada to

Hamilton." The highlight of that evening was the surprise arrival of their daughter Kim, who had been secretly flown in from BC to be there.

I would ask all members of this House to join with me in acknowledging and paying tribute to these fine, outstanding Hamiltonians.

1340

TAX REBATES

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to applaud our government's tax rebate of $200. I want to quote from an article that appeared in the local paper of a small town in my riding of York North.

The town is Georgina, with 20,000 tax dividend recipients. That means approximately $4 million will be coming into our town.

If the residents of Georgina choose to spend the money in Georgina, that is a major injection into the local economy. Some people think that it's about time the government gave taxpayers back some of their hard-earned tax dollars. Whatever your opinion is, it is your money to do with as you please.

There are plenty of worthwhile charities and organizations in Georgina that could use the money. The United Way, for example, has its annual campaign underway. They contribute to many causes in Georgina. Residents could save for a rainy day, put the money in an account for a child, or do something extravagant, like take in a Leafs' game. You might want to start your Christmas shopping early. Just be sure to spend some of the money in Georgina, where hard-working businesspeople do much to support worthy local causes like minor sports, the Sutton agricultural fair, and the Red Barn, just to name a few.

I will be contributing my $200 dollars to a charity in my riding of York North. Tax cuts stimulate the economy and create jobs. Let's hope this is the first of many such cheques.

SUTTON MEDICAL CLINIC

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): An interesting quirk of timing it is that I get to stand on the subject of the town of Georgina and the community of Sutton. The member opposite who just spoke has, for the 10th time since October 1, stood in this House and talked about her community, not once directing her attention to the closure of the Sutton medical clinic. You talk about where the money is going to go. The money is going to be forced to pay to keep the medical clinic in Sutton alive because the government opposite has failed when asked to do so.

Increasingly, municipal taxpayers are being asked to fund services which have historically been provided by the province of Ontario. The Harris government talks about tax cuts and the member opposite stands and talks about going to the Red Barn Theatre or going to see a Leafs' game when 8,000 of her constituents, patients who have been without a doctor as a result of the pending closure of this clinic, have been without leadership on the part of that member opposite.

We hear too much in this House about downloading and its impact. Regrettably, in this northern part of York region in the greater Toronto area we've got this incredible shortage of doctors being unaddressed by the government opposite, forcing the closure of the Sutton medical clinic, which has provided extraordinary services to people, including native residents of that riding. And the member opposite stands only to talk about going to Leaf games and the Red Barn Theatre.

It's about time that this government opposite, instead of directing its money toward things such as the member spoke about, directs its money toward funding adequate medical services for people in the greater Toronto area.

MUSICAL MEMORIES OF MARKHAM

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): Many of the members present may be aware of Markham's many attractions and accomplishments, but how many think of music when Markham is mentioned? Last Wednesday, I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a new book, Musical Memories of Markham. This book is a wonderful way to pay homage to the vibrant community of musicians and artists who have made Markham a very special place to live. It is also a perfect illustration of the rich musical heritage to be found in my riding of Thornhill.

Musical Memories of Markham highlights the talents of a number of local musicians. Some of the people mentioned in the book have created music in Markham's churches, choirs, orchestras and bands. Others have performed not only in the community but under the spotlights of Toronto, New York, Hollywood and Europe. They are Canada's true ambassadors, using the universal language of music to bring our joy in the arts to people all over the world.

The musicians include people such as Adelmo Melecci, to whom I paid tribute in this House recently, Phil Nimmons, John Allan Cameron and many others. Musical Memories of Markham contains many fascinating stories. I would like to thank the Markham 2000 committee and author Andy Shaw for their dedicated and creative efforts. They have done an outstanding job of bringing to life the unique personalities and talents of Markham's musical scene, and I am proud to highlight their work in the Legislature today.

VISITORS

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I am delighted today to introduce to you the mayor from the wonderful city of Montallegro; it's called "happy mountain." It's a wonderful city in Sicily. We have the mayor and other delegates accompanying him as well. The mayor, Signor Andrea Iati, is in the west gallery; and he's accompanied

by Mr Dominic Campione, the president of the Ontario Confederation of Sicily; and the local president of the St Joseph of Montallegro Social Club. I thank you, and I welcome our delegates.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Earlier today, the member for Cambridge filed written notice of a point of privilege which I am now prepared to rule on, pursuant to standing order 21(d), based upon the member's written submission. I'm going to rule on it now for the member.

The issue the member raises relates to disorder that arose in the west members' gallery last night during debate on Bill 132. As a result of the disorder, the Acting Speaker directed that the west members' gallery be cleared and that strangers be excluded.

I want to thank the member for Cambridge for raising the issue and want to assure him that it is indeed a serious matter.

Decorum in the chamber generally, and instances of grave disorder especially, are always of great concern to the Speaker. This relates, of course, directly to one of the principal functions of the Speaker in the chamber, namely, to preserve order and decorum. I note that the matter was successfully dealt with in an expeditious and decisive way by the Chair last evening.

The circumstances surrounding last evening's occurrence, however, do not constitute a matter of privilege. They fall within the Speaker's jurisdiction specifically, both as it relates to preserving order in the House and in my responsibility for the security of the parliamentary precinct. This is therefore an administrative matter that I will address directly with the member for Cambridge.

I also want to note that the security committee, on which all three parties have representation, is also an appropriate venue for this matter to pursued, and I will ensure that the member is invited to bring his concerns forward in that forum.

In conclusion, I also say to the member that the issue of security in the members' gallery has been dealt with, I believe, at one of the meetings in August, and we will be dealing with that. In the member's case, the member for London-Fanshawe is the government representative on that.

I do want to thank the member for Cambridge for bringing the point of privilege to my attention and assure him that we will indeed be dealing with that matter.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we go on to reports by committees, in the members' west gallery again, we have a distinguished former member, the member from London Centre in the 35th and 36th Parliaments, holding a number of cabinet positions, Marion Boyd. We are very pleased to have our honoured guest here today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption:

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

Bill 112, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act / Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien.

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

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF HOUSE OFFICERS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 25, 1999, Mike Brown, member for the electoral district of Algoma-Manitoulin, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the committee of the whole House; Tony Martin, member for the electoral district to Sault Ste Marie, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House; and Bert Johnson, member for the electoral district of Perth-Middlesex, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House.

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

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOME CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My first question is for the Minister of Health. You will remember that last night we were at estimates committee and we asked you to describe how it is that in this day and age, with all of the home care required across Ontario, you could rationalize having several lines in your home care page of estimates show us that you are spending even less money today on home care than you spent last year. We asked you that last night at committee and you had your ministry staff try to explain away the numbers. Even they were unable to explain what is so painfully obvious, and that is that the needs of people requiring home care today in Ontario are not being met. Even though there was money budgeted for them, that money was not spent.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member knows, this government has demonstrated a very strong commitment to expanding the long-term-care community services throughout the province. In fact, we have been moving forward with our 1998 commitment to provide $551 million in new funding to expand community services throughout the province. Just recently, in September, I announced $92.5 million to enhance and expand community care in Ontario. Since the announcement was made in 1998, we have made remarkable progress.

As the member well knows, we in Ontario are spending more per capita than any other province and territory; we are currently spending about $128 per capita.

Mrs Pupatello: Let me read from a line: for homemaking services it says the 1998-99 actual is $427 million and change, and then, for this year, it is $423 million. While you said just now that you're moving forward, in fact, the books are proving you're moving backwards.

May I ask you again how you could stand last night at committee to tell us that you're spending more money on home care? What are you saying out there? Is it that statement that's true or is it, in fact, the numbers that you submitted to our committee last night? Which of the statements is true: the numbers before us at committee, which your staff could not explain, or the speech that you give us that you're spending more in home care?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member knows, we are spending more in home care. As the member also knows, if the member would take a look at the funding that has been provided to each of the communities in the province of Ontario and if she takes a look at the CCAC budgets, each and every year we have been providing additional money to the CCACs. For example, in 1998-99, we were spending $995 million; in 1999-2000, $1 billion; and in 2000-01 we are projected to spend $1.1 billion.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, there is a difference between what you budget and what you announce and what you are actually spending. There is a reason why people across Ontario, whether you come from Wawa or Kingston or Thornhill or Windsor or Chatham, get different levels of service in home care. The reason is that you are spending less money today than you spent last year on home care. These are the numbers for your budget, your estimate or your announcement. You are saying one thing and you are spending something else.

Last night your staff could not explain the differences. You called them to the table to explain the difference, because we asked you. You've now had at least 12 hours to do a review, to be prepared to come into the House today and explain why in 1998-99 you spent $427 million, and last year, if these numbers you gave us are true numbers, you were spending less money. You've had time now to review. You asked your staff to explain and they could not. Now I'd like you to explain to all of Ontario how you could spend less money than you even budgeted for when there are needs in Ontario that are not being met in the area of home care.

Hon Mrs Witmer: We're very proud of the home care program that we have in Ontario. In fact, we're rather disappointed that the federal Liberal government had a plan to introduce home care across the Dominion of Canada, and as we go into another election, we not only don't have a home care program, we don't have a pharmacare program. We would very much like to see throughout Canada the same level of standard of care being provided from coast to coast, in every province and every territory.

Again, I would remind the member opposite that we have the most generous home care program, at $128 per capita. The next-highest spender is Manitoba, and they are spending only $97 per capita.

LIQUOR CONTROL

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My next question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Minister, last week you had a press conference and you made a great deal of fanfare about getting tough on clubs and bars and all that illegal activity that happens at those licensed establishments. We asked you that day how you could go about saying you are getting tough on this kind of crime while at the same time you are disbanding the illegal alcohol task force that currently exists under the LCBO, which is the only provincial body that has a mandate to deal with illegal alcohol and wine, with smuggling of wine, which your own LCBO annual report tells us is losing the Ontario treasury half a billion dollars a year. Please stand and tell us today why you are disbanding the force and how you can be tough on crime while we're losing half a billion dollars a year to the provincial treasury.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): At the press conference which the honourable member visited—she quite frequently visits my press conferences. I'm not sure why. Usually she comes with incorrect facts, and this was another example of that.

This unit is not being disbanded. I indicated at the press conference that that was not the case. She had factually incorrect information. What the LCBO has asked us to look at is a transfer of that unit, a transfer of that responsibility, either to the Ontario Provincial Police or to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. That conversation is occurring as we speak.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission only deals with licensed establishments, and you and I probably both know that most of the illegal activity occurs outside of licensed establishments.

Last night I decided to prove that it cannot be that easy to buy bootleg wine in this province—it just can't be. So off I went to a barbecued chicken place, just five minutes behind Queen's Park, and I bought some barbecued chicken. I spent more money on two legs of barbecued chicken than I spent on this bootleg wine for $4 and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Mrs Pupatello: I would beg the Speaker not to drink this sample, because it is in fact illegal wine.

The point is very clear: if I could go five minutes from Queen's Park and in a matter of minutes purchase this kind of illegal wine, when you say the Alcohol and Gaming Commission or someone—the truth is, there is no other mandate to take care of these kinds of sales right now, and we're losing half a billion from the treasury. We know that it's a wild, wild west out there. Not only do the bootleggers tell us but the small wineries are also telling us, because it's the small wineries in Ontario that are losing. They are losing sales and the Ontario treasury is losing revenue.

Minister, you want to be tough on crime. I am asking you now: will you either rescind the decision to disband that task force—and in fact I ask you not to disband it, but rather to enhance the task force to take care of—

The Speaker: Minister.

1400

Hon Mr Runciman: I guess the member doesn't want to listen to the answer. I said at the press conference that this unit is not being disbanded; it's a change of venue. We have not decided, indeed, whether we're going to remove it from the LCBO at this point in time. We're taking a look at a request from the LCBO to consider a transfer to the OPP or the AGCO. At the end of the day, that may not be the appropriate way to handle this. We have not made a final decision.

On a serious note, there is no question that smuggling of products like the one the member has tabled in the House today is a serious concern. We have been fighting against the smuggling of alcohol products very vigorously, under the LCBO and under this government. The Solicitor General, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and the LCBO are fighting this problem and doing, I think, a very effective job, but clearly there is more to be done.

Mrs Pupatello: I hope in that answer you just agreed that you were going to do something about the issue, unlike five and a half years of the Tory government, all talk on getting tough on crime and it takes Dalton McGuinty Liberals to put your feet in the fire to do something about a serious issue that affects not just the health and safety of the people who drink illegal booze but also the small businesses that are losing revenue; you are helping to shut their doors.

I would like to speak to you about one other new policy under the LCBO.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Order. The member for Windsor West may continue.

Mrs Pupatello: I would like to speak to the same minister about a new program under the LCBO called the supply chain management. Under this new policy, you have now instituted a quota, so that if small wineries are not able to sell a minimum of 1,300 bottles a year, you're pulling them off your shelves.

You just came back from Europe, and you were mad as hell. That's what the papers said, that's your quote. You said you were "mad as hell," and that's because you felt that Europe is not taking our wine. I'm asking you to explain why, in your government, you are instituting a quota system that is effectively shutting the doors on small wineries by having them delisted from the wine list at the LCBO. I have a list of six stores participating in your program where a local small winery has—

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

Hon Mr Runciman: That didn't sound like a supplementary to me. In any event, I think Ontario wineries are very appreciative of the support the Mike Harris government is giving them. They have not had a government stand up and fight for Ontario products, world-class products, like the Mike Harris government has.

With respect to this member talking about getting tough on crime, really, how much credibility does the Liberal Party of Ontario have when it comes to getting tough on crime? Absolutely zero. Why aren't they going after their federal cousins about Karla Homolka wearing an evening gown? Why aren't they going after—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I've always wondered what it looked like to see the member doing that from the front. I used to see it from behind, but I now see the front and see what it's like.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health and it concerns the emergency room crisis that she has created. Yesterday afternoon, 18 of 22 hospitals in the greater Toronto area were turning away ambulances. That's 80% of hospitals. Last Monday, 17 of 22 hospitals were turning away ambulances. By 5 pm on Tuesday, the number had climbed to 20 of 22 hospitals that were turning away ambulances because their emergency rooms were overflowing.

You announced the expansion of the St Michael's emergency room today, but while you were at it you forgot to mention that you're closing the Wellesley hospital and the emergency room. Minister, will you reopen the Wellesley emergency room and will you stop your wrong-headed scheme of closing emergency rooms and hospitals in the greater Toronto area?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm very pleased the leader has raised the issue of the celebration that was held this morning at St Michael's Hospital, one of our inner hospitals that has an outstanding reputation for dealing with some very unique populations. I am very pleased to say that at St Michael's Hospital they have a new state-of-the-art facility, and I would encourage the leader of the third party to personally visit it.

Let me tell you that they are able now to accommodate 60,000 visits a year. This is 23,000 more visits than the old facility and the Wellesley combined. They have more space now than the two hospitals had formerly, plus, what I was so impressed about was that they have a 24-hour transition—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'm afraid the Minister of Health's time is up. Supplementary?

Mr Hampton: While the minister boasts, hospitals in the greater Toronto area are on critical care bypass, in terms of their emergency rooms, six days out of seven. That's nothing to boast about. Meanwhile, you're closing Wellesley, you're closing North York Branson and you're closing Women's College.

This is a document you should become familiar with. It is a document that was filed at the Joshua Fleuelling inquest by Dr Michael Schull, a researcher with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences. It shows that the trend in emergency room overcrowding skyrocketed after your so-called restructuring in 1997. It shows that severe overcrowding and patient gridlock in Toronto are now more severe than ever since your so-called restructuring. It shows the problem is no longer seasonal, and the Ontario Hospital Association says it's going to get worse.

Minister, you're putting lives at risk. Will you admit that your plan is wrong and will you change your plan before more lives are put at risk?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The only thing that was probably wrong is the fact that the government of which the third-party leader was a member did not undertake the restructuring that was necessary to accommodate the increased and growing and aging population that is using our health system, that they did not undertake to restructure our hospitals and make them into modern, state-of-the-art centres of excellence, that they did not undertake, as we have, the construction, expansion and renovation of more than 50 emergency rooms in Ontario.

Let me read for the leader a letter we've received from Toronto Emergency Medical Services, indicating that every patient transported by an ambulance within the city of Toronto is found a medically safe and appropriate destination. "In general the entire system works well and we continue to work with the ministry and hospitals to better respond—

The Speaker: Order. I'm afraid the Minister of Health's time is up. Final supplementary?

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): Minister, yesterday, 18 out of 22 hospitals were turning away ambulances, and you're telling us it works well? Last week, 20 out of 22, the day before that, 17 out of 22. The charts from Dr Schull show very clearly that from 1991 to 1997 overcrowding was on a decline in Toronto emergency rooms, and then in 1997, after your hospital restructuring, the number shoots through the roof. We've got patients being shuttled from emergency room to emergency room. You are playing Russian roulette with the lives of Ontario patients.

Dr Schull's findings and his conclusions are contrary to everything you say. He says it is not seasonal; he says it is a new and distinct problem. Contrary to what you said, he says the problem is not due to increased patient demands on emergency health services.

Minister, this emergency room crisis needs emergency measures. Will you please, while you're waiting for all your long-term solutions to kick in, do something to help save lives now? Will you cancel the closure of the Wellesley and promise not to close any other emergency rooms in the GTA?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I wish the member had been there this morning to hear not only the hospital administrator but also the chief nursing officer, the individual doctor who's responsible for the emergency services, those representing the Toronto ambulance sector and also the patients speak to the improved access and the fact that at St Michael's Hospital not only do we have the capacity of Wellesley and St Michael's combined, we actually have more capacity than ever before.

There was conversation this morning about the co-ordinated manner in which all the partners are working together, the breakdown of the silos between the ambulance sector and the institution, and the fact that the providers of health care are working collaboratively together. It is unfortunate—

The Speaker: Order. I'm afraid the Minister of Health's time is up. New question.

1410

WATER QUALITY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Your own officials are now saying that you and your decisions and your government's decisions have put people's lives at risk in terms of drinking water. Philip Bye said that in 1997 he and other officials in the Ministry of the Environment warned your government that 36 municipalities, including Walkerton, weren't adequately testing their water. He pointed out that because of provincial downloading by your government, municipalities like Walkerton were in a financial squeeze and were cutting corners in terms of water testing. Why did you and your government ignore the urgent warnings of officials like Philip Bye in 1997? Why did you continue to put lives at risk in the province?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): The member opposite should know that I can't comment on the specifics of the inquiry. But at any given time there may be waterworks that may fall out of compliance, and that's why in August of this year we launched Operation Clean Water, which focused province-wide efforts to improve water quality and the delivery of water in this province. We have our tough, clear drinking water standards that now have the force of law, and we also have tough penalties for non-compliance. In June we announced an inspection blitz of all municipal water treatment facilities. We've completed nearly three quarters of the more than 620 facilities in the province to date, so far, and we're on target to have the rest of them completed by the end of December.

The most common reasons for not being in compliance are failure to conform with minimum sampling requirements, failure to adequately maintain disinfection equipment, failure to conform with minimum treatment guidelines, and failure to meet training or certification requirements.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Minister, listen closely to this question. It was you who closed the water testing labs. It was you and your government that hacked and slashed at the Ministry of the Environment. It was your government that downloaded half a billion dollars in new costs on to municipalities. Listen carefully: seven people died in Walkerton and 2,300 became sick. This was a preventable disaster. You were warned and you did nothing.

Minister, I'm going to ask you again: why did you think it was OK to put people's lives and health at risk? Why did you not listen to the obvious warnings?

Hon Mr Newman: I remind the member opposite that it was her government that began charging municipalities for the testing of water in this province. It was her government that first allowed municipalities to use private labs to have that testing done.

I say to this member, as I said to the member previous, I can't comment on the specifics of the inquiry. But we have taken strong action as a government. We've launched Operation Clean Water. We have a new drinking water protection regulation in place, for the first time in this province having the full force of law with respect to the standards in this province. We have annual inspections underway of the more than 620 municipal waterworks in the province. We have that ongoing. We have a consultation paper as well, dealing with smaller waterworks. We've taken strong action on the protection of drinking water in our province.

The Speaker: New question; the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. I hope the minister is monitoring very carefully the testimony coming out of Walkerton at the present time, because it's very condemning of this government. It has become very clear from that testimony that your government ignored warnings even from your own staff that tougher rules were needed for drinking water directly as a result of your decision in 1996 to get out of the water testing business. We didn't get those rules until seven people died from drinking water in Walkerton.

Minister, why did you ignore the warning of the Ministry of the Environment district supervisor for the Owen Sound office, Phil Bye, who in July 1997 wrote to top staff about the need for regulations that would allow a crackdown on municipalities that were repeatedly and perhaps deliberately violating water testing guidelines? "The current situation and lack of mandatory abatement tools has placed us in a difficult and embarrassing situation," he wrote. Why did your government ignore those warnings from Phil Bye, warnings that, if heeded, would very likely have avoided seven deaths and hundreds of sicknesses in the town of Walkerton?

Hon Mr Newman: The member from St Catharines would know that I can't comment on the specifics of something that is before the inquiry. As a former Minister of the Environment, he should know that.

At any given time, there may be waterworks that fall out of compliance. That's why we have inspections in place. That's why we have taken action to ensure the immediate safety of the province's water supply. We've produced a progress report outlining what we've done to date.

I just want to take a moment to highlight some of the facts. We launched Operation Clean Water in August of this year, which focused province-wide efforts to improve water quality and the delivery of water in this province. We also have a rigorous inspection program underway right now of all municipal water supplies in our province. By the end of this year we'll see that all 620 have been inspected. We have new consolidated certificates of approval for all waterworks, and on August 8 of this year I launched the large waterworks—

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

Mr Bradley: All this, of course, after the seven people died, not before they died.

You will recall that your colleague Bill Murdoch, the MPP for Walkerton, in a radio interview this summer suggested, much to the dismay of Ministry of the Environment staff, that in implementing your huge staff cuts—the one third of the people you fired out the door—the wrong people were fired. You can imagine how that affected the morale of the members of the Ministry of the Environment.

One of the good people, Phil Bye, noted that when Ministry of the Environment labs did the water testing—the labs the Harris government closed down—problems with water were relayed to the medical officer of health. That was before you went to the private labs. Then you moved to the private labs and left a void.

Minister, will you now admit that your government's ill-conceived decision to close the Ministry of the Environment labs and leave municipalities in the lurch, on their own, to fend for themselves, with little warning, little preparation and little direction, placed the drinking water supply of dozens of municipalities, including Walkerton, in jeopardy?

Hon Mr Newman: We have clear notification protocols in place now that have the full force of law in our province. I want to bring that to the member's attention. He would know that if a lab receives an adverse water sample, by law today they must notify the Ministry of the Environment, the medical officer of health and the owner of the waterworks. But we go beyond that. The owner of the waterworks must also notify the local medical officer of health, as well as the Ministry of the Environment as a secondary call.

I say to the member opposite, we have a review of the Ministry of the Environment underway at this time, headed up by Valerie Gibbons, who is a well-known and well-regarded former civil servant of the province of Ontario, reviewing all aspects of the Ministry of the Environment. I expect her to be coming forward with recommendations on all aspects of the Ministry of the Environment.

1420

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In my riding of Durham and throughout Ontario, lawn signs are cropping up everywhere. In fact, there are some new signs, and I'm not sure what they're about. Candidates are being prepared for the municipal election in November, as you know. In my riding of Durham, my constituents, like others in Ontario, want to ensure that councils are responsible and accountable and that they are providing quality service without raising taxes. Essentially, Minister, our communities want local governments that are accountable to them. Minister, can you tell me how Ontarians will be able to review the performance measures of their local governments?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member from Durham for the question. Indeed it is important that governments at all levels are accountable to the people who elected them to serve. Municipal governments must provide quality and valuable services to their constituencies and they must be accountable for the decisions they make.

Ontario municipalities have more authority than they've had in the past. With increased authority comes an increased need for accountability. We're aiming for better municipal services and clearer accountability.

On October 3 I was pleased to announce the introduction of the municipal performance measures program. Starting with year 2000 data, municipalities will measure their performance in nine high-cost service areas, including garbage collection, water and sewer, police, fire, roads, social services and land use planning. They'll submit their data to the province and inform taxpayers on how effectively and efficiently they're delivering these services. We expect the first report this summer.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that very thorough response, Minister. I know the students from Monsignor John Pereyma who are sitting in the west gallery today want to know that they're being measured. I don't think elected people should avoid that scrutiny.

I would say thank you as well for the public meeting you attended on October 17 in the village of Newcastle. I know the residents of Durham will be pleased that our government has introduced these measures you just described. Some of the representatives of Durham regional council meeting most recently—if I could describe an article in the paper that was very discouraging, Mayor Parish said, for instance, "Stuff it." I think the CEO said something even worse.

I believe they should submit these reports on accountability to the province. We want to ensure that quality, value and accountability are the foundation on which all governments conduct business.

Minister, could you tell me, my constituents and the House today if municipalities will have to report the collection-of-information costs to you?

Hon Mr Clement: In fact, the cost is almost nothing. The municipalities and local boards already collect most of these data. What we're trying to do, with 34 performance measures contained in the program, is further the development of these. A lot of them have been developed and tested already among a group of 55 municipalities that I believe represent about 80% of the provincial population to date. It builds on benchmarking studies already performed, already started by municipalities, in conjunction with the ministry of the Ontario government.

This is the first time, though, throughout all of North America, that the performance measure program has been jurisdiction-wide, Ontario-wide, province-wide, state-wide. We are the first in North America to have a province-wide report card. It allows municipalities to be accountable to their citizenry. We're proud of it. We know our municipalities can live up to this standard, and we expect them to do so.

McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. My question for the minister is regarding Bill 112, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act.

During committee hearings, we heard experts business organizations, artists, gallery owners, past deputy ministers and individuals who overwhelmingly opposed this bill.

On Tuesday evening, I received a draft audit prepared for the McMichael gallery for the fiscal year of 1980. It was presented to the general government committee. This report has evidence of unethical practices and possibly even fraudulent acts of the gallery while under the direct management of Robert McMichael.

You have said repeatedly that the government's purpose in putting forth this bill is to correct financial mismanagement at the gallery, yet this bill will restore undue control to the same people who, according to this document, unethically used their position of trust for self-interest.

In fact, this bill removes and alters the best accepted practices for management at art galleries and museums. The legal implications of your bill, Minister, have the potential to cost taxpayers millions and millions of dollars.

In light of the audit report, in light of the professional testimony, will you now withdraw the bill?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): If we listened to the member opposite, we would think that no one was in support of this bill. Let me say very clearly that a number of people came forward who spoke in favour, including Pierre Berton, Ken Danby, one the best Ontario artists, George McLean. We had a number of people come forward who said that this was the right thing to do.

The issue happened in 1980, and we still have controversy about it. It's time for government to do something about this. What happened was that governments in the past promised that we would make sure we listened to the McMichaels when it came to talking about art and what art should be held there. This bill, Bill 112, gives no ability for the McMichaels to spend money, to make decisions on what is purchased or sold; it just allows them to decide what the art should be in the gallery.

We've done a lot to be able to solve the financial mismanagement problem that happened in 1980 and now—

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

Ms Di Cocco: Minister, the role of government is to protect the interests of the public, and the McMichaels were asked to resign by cabinet under Davis in 1980. This bill will in fact directly jeopardize public interest.

The report is strong evidence that Robert McMichael's management style, particularly with acquisitions and selling of art work, was unethical at best and possibly downright fraudulent at worst.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Member take your seat. Order.

Ms Di Cocco: This bill has nothing to do with fiscal accountability. As a matter of fact, I put forth an amendment directly dealing with fiscal issues, and Mrs Elliott argued that the financial aspects did not need to be addressed directly in the legislation.

Minister, you're being warned. The ball is in your court. You have been provided with substantial evidence that this bill is wrong. Don't put the fox back in the henhouse. If you proceed with this bill, it is your stamp of approval to corruption and unethical practices in conducting the affairs of this province. Protect the interests of the people of Ontario and withdraw this bill.

Hon Mrs Johns: I'm always completely amazed in this House when someone goes after a person outside this House and basically does character assassination like we're hearing here. It's sad. I like to keep myself above that level, so let me just say that this bill is in the public interest.

Right now the McMichael gallery has lost money; they have a lesser membership than they did 10 years ago; they're short $1.6 million in their operating budget. It's in the public interest to ensure that this gallery stays so that our children and our grandchildren can see this.

I think we've done the right thing in making sure that we put in strong fiscal management. We've given it a strong board and we're going to continue to support—

The Speaker: Sorry, time is up. New question.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): My question today is for the Minister of Labour. When we were elected in 1995, one of our goals was to establish a climate in Ontario conducive for businesses. We've cut taxes, we've reduced the deficit, and over 750,000 jobs have been created.

In my riding, businesses have been burdened for years with excessive federal and provincial payroll taxes and we know that cutting taxes of those sorts helps create jobs.

We promised in 1995 that we would cut workers' compensation premiums by 5%. Since that time a number of changes have occurred in the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board but one thing has remained the same: cutting payroll taxes is a way to create jobs.

Minister, have you kept our promise? What is happening to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I will say that since this government came to power, one of the true success stories has been the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. I think even the most hardhearted and opposed to the operation of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board would admit that the management style and the changes of direction they have made at that facility have been nothing short of astounding. In the Common Sense Revolution—

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): What's the salary of the chair?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The salary of the chair is a lot of money, but if you hear this out, you might agree with it. We had promised to cut premiums by 5% when we came to office, and 5% seemed like a lot of money and the naysayers across the floor were saying, "You can't do it. It's not possible. It won't happen." Let me tell you we didn't cut them by 5%; in fact they were cut by 29%, not 5%.

Now, 29% means that those are payroll savings for the employer to hire more people, to create more jobs and to do the good things in Ontario that they're looking for. I understand the members across are still unhappy and still opposed, but this is a success story.

Mrs Elliott: Another number that was in our minds—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. The member for Hamilton East, come to order, please.

The member for Guelph-Wellington.

1430

Mrs Elliott: From 5% to 29% is remarkable and I compliment the minister. There was another number in our minds when we were elected in 1995, and that number was over $11 billion. That was the deficit we were facing, left over by the mismanagement of the Liberal and NDP governments, when we were elected. But it was also the number that was the unfunded liability at the Workers' Compensation Board, $11 billion. At that time the employers' council of Ontario demanded that we implement a plan to eliminate that unfunded liability. The year they suggested was 2014. Minister, how are we progressing on that? We've ended the deficit here in Ontario. We have turned our economy around overall. What's happening at the WSIB?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It doesn't stop there, the success story at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. I

know that in constituency offices around this province when the NDP were in power, seven out of 10 calls at your offices were complaints about the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. It was a disgrace. It was a black hole. It was the abyss. It was a problem erupting day in and day out, not any clue how to handle it.

When the NDP were in power, the unfunded liability went up to $11 billion. The constant refrain and the barracking from the member for Windsor at the time was the same, "Oh, don't worry, the employers owe the money," as if some magic fairy might come out with a wand and tap somebody on the head and—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Minister take his seat. Member for Windsor West, come to order, please.

Minister of Labour, sorry for the interruption.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Are you the fairy?

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, I am not, because we didn't use a magic wand; we used common sense. And the common sense was, we took the unfunded liability from $11 billion down to $6 billion. And what did that do? That helped create jobs for the private sector. It was a success—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Minister take his seat. The member for Hamilton West, come to order.

Ten seconds to wrap up, Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Thank you. It's a success story. I don't know what you're barracking about. Everybody knows it's a success story. If you'd just admit it, it might be better off because we're running a good show over there and it's an operation you should be proud of.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Last week we were led to believe that a compromise was reached between the independent truckers and shippers. This deal, which was accepted by both parties, was then recommended by representatives of the independent truckers to their members in good faith. We now learn that shippers, who agreed to this deal of yours, are refusing to insert fuel escalation clauses, which they agreed to, into their existing contracts.

Get this, Minister: They're refusing to insert your so-called deal into an agreement because there is no legislation to force them to do so. It's very clear, shippers are not prepared to insert anything into their contracts unless forced to do so. Are you now prepared to legislate or regulate a fuel escalation clause as you said you would at the outset of this situation?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): As I've been saying all along, the best solution is within the industry and making sure that the industry itself comes up with those solutions to make it viable. Legislation is not the answer. It's not the best answer we can presently bring forward.

I've also said in the Legislature that even if the province of Ontario were to legislate or regulate, it couldn't help all the truckers in Ontario. We would have to get the federal minister, the federal government, to regulate because they are the ones that represent, basically, 85% of the industry. Without them regulating it, whatever we would do here in Ontario just wouldn't work.

Mr Bisson: Minister, for Pete's sake, you're the guy who entered into this debate at the very beginning, saying, "Listen, I'm squarely on the side of the independent truckers." That's what you said. You said, "I'm going to fix it." You didn't say the federal government, you said, "Me, Al Palladini." You're the guy who was going to fix it. Your method of fixing this was to say that if the shippers didn't agree to a deal, you were going to legislate or regulate a solution.

I've got a letter here from the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association, which writes in a letter to you dated today that every time they approach a shipper to negotiate a deal, they say, "Hey, we don't have any legislation forcing us to do so, so why would we?" Minister, I'm only asking you to keep your word to truckers. Will you now accept to legislate or regulate a solution, as you said you would in the beginning?

Hon Mr Palladini: I have kept my word to the truckers. I have helped facilitate the required meetings. I have invited the federal government to come to the table, which they have, by the way. I have established a working committee. I have established an independent chair. We also established some common ground. We also knew from the beginning that this was going to be a very sensitive issue, an issue that basically says, "Let's calm down. Let's see how the industry itself can—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Hamilton West, this is your last warning. Yell or scream out like that again and we'll name you and throw you out.

Minister.

Hon Mr Palladini: The member doesn't have a clue what he's talking about, for God's sake. All you have to do is take a look at the industry and you'll know we're doing the right thing. At least we had the courage to put something on the table, to bring people together so something can be discussed and accomplished. And I am going to keep my word.

LANDFILL

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. What I am going to ask about is a very serious issue affecting residents in my riding of Hamilton East. There are two closed landfill sites, one on Rennie Street and one on Brampton Street in the riding. These two sites have had a long history of neglect and problems.

Last week I met with a number of residents because so many of them expressed concerns about serious health issues for themselves and their children. I'll give you an

example. On one street there are nine homes. Out of those nine homes, seven individuals are suffering from cancer. On the next street over, two individuals have lost a loved one in the last six months due to cancer. Shirley Bullock babysat her grandchildren for five years. Her daughter lives outside the area and used to bring them down. She feels guilty today because all of her grandchildren she babysits have asthma. She believe it's a result of exposure to the fallout from the landfill site. These are just a few examples of the horror stories that are starting to come to light in that neighbourhood.

Minister, I want to ask you, very sincerely and very clearly—it is a serious concern, potentially a dangerous concern to the residents of that area—will you today commit to appointing an expert panel to look into this very dangerous and potentially life-threatening situation for some of my residents?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I appreciate the question from the member opposite. He talked about asthma, and asthma is aggravated by air pollution. That's why we are moving and will continue to move very aggressively with the province's Drive Clean program, the smog alert program and the anti-smog action plan program. In fact, in previous estimates of the impact of smog, exacerbation of asthma—he talked about asthma—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member take his seat. Stop the clock. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, this is his last warning. You can't yell out like that.

Minister.

Hon Mr Newman: The member opposite was talking about the effect of asthma on children. I am simply pointing out to him the actions the government has taken. In our previous estimates about the impact of smog, the exacerbation of asthma, of manifested asthma symptom days in the asthmatic population—we've included both adults and children in that program.

Mr Agostino: I'm not sure what world this minister is living in. I tried very hard in the lead question to be non-partisan and to try to get a clear point to you. Minister, you give me some BS answer about asthma. Let's understand clearly: people in that area are dying, possibly as a result of exposure to the landfill sites, and you give me some answer about asthma.

In March 2000 your government, under Minister Clement, appointed an expert panel to look into similar concerns at the Taro landfill site in Stoney Creek. I think you owe the people of Hamilton East at least that same consideration. I don't know if that's exactly the problem; they don't know. But they're afraid for themselves, their spouses and their children.

1440

All I'm asking you today is to not treat them as second-class citizens, to give them the same treatment you gave the people of Stoney Creek, which they deserve. All I'm asking you, Minister, is not to give me some rhetoric about asthma and the cause of it but to appoint an expert panel to look into the situation in the two landfill sites in the neighbourhood and to see if there's a link between the dump and what appears to be an extraordinarily high incidence of cancer deaths, asthma and respiratory diseases.

I don't think it's unreasonable. I don't think it's unfair. Will you do that today?

Hon Mr Newman: I was answering the questions the member asked. But if this is a serious concern to him, if he has information he wants to bring forward, I'd be pleased to discuss it with him.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I'll start just as soon as the Minister of Natural Resources—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat. Stop the clock, please. The member for Hamilton East, his last warning; last warning for the member for Hamilton East. If he keeps it up, he'll be removed. The member for Peterborough has the floor.

Mr Stewart: This question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Hunting and fishing are traditional outdoor activities in many parts of Ontario. The fees paid by outdoor enthusiasts help to make it possible for us to preserve wildlife and their habitat. We support the proud and established Ontario tradition of ethical and safe hunting and fishing.

In the Blueprint, our government promised we would legislate and recognize heritage hunting and fishing practices in Ontario and acknowledge the role anglers and hunters have played in environmental conservation. We said we would legislate heritage hunting and fishing in Ontario with a hunting and fishing act.

I understand that some work has been done on this legislation. Could you please provide the members of this House with the current status of any proposed legislation?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member for the question. Indeed, we have been working for some time since our Blueprint commitment to make sure this legislation comes forward. I can tell the members that we have obviously introduced a special purpose account. That means the fees for hunting and fishing and any fines related to that go directly back into the resource, a major change during our government.

Also, I can tell the member that hunters and anglers around the province regard themselves quite proudly as the first conservationists of Ontario. Last week I attended the inaugural dinner for an organization called Fishing Forever, a group of people who want to help put money back into the resource and back into habitat and improve it for the future.

It is this basic record of conservation, a concern for fair chase, a record of hunting for consumption, that will be part of the first principles that will be in this legislation.

Mr Stewart: I'm pleased it is progressing. When can we expect this legislation to be presented? Will it adversely affect conservation and safety?

Hon Mr Snobelen: The community in Ontario is very proud of its safety record and the safety regulations regarding hunting in this province—and I can tell the member that they'd be, if anything, strengthened by legislation—and obviously very proud of the conservation record. That too will be a key component of legislation.

We are developing a set of draft principles. We will circulate those later on this fall and during this winter, talk with people about what needs to be in the legislation and present it hopefully next spring.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. You made an announcement earlier today about the opening of the new emergency department at St Michael's Hospital. In your press release, which I have in front of me, you say that the new emergency department will accommodate 60,000 visits a year, which you say is 23,000 visits more than the old facility at St Michael's and the Wellesley hospitals combined. That means, according to your own figures, there would have been only 37,000 emergency room visits between the two sites before you closed the Wellesley emergency last month.

Minister, we've confirmed that there were in fact 33,000 emergency room visits to the Wellesley site alone last year. We've confirmed that in 1998-99 there were 64,000 emergency room visits to the two combined sites of Wellesley and St Michael's. That, Minister, means that according to your figures there were 4,000 more emergency room visits to Wellesley and St Michael's before you closed Wellesley and opened your supposed new and expanded facility.

Minister, I have to ask you, have you in fact not increased the emergency room capacity as you claimed in your press release today? Have you actually reduced the emergency room capacity, as your figures would suggest, or are your figures simply wrong again?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm very pleased to say that the new emergency room facilities at St Michael's Hospital do and will accommodate 60,000 visits a year. This means there is going to be a much more efficient triage system; it means that there are opportunities for those who are less in need of service to receive service more quickly; there's going to be a new helipad there; and there's going to be a 24-hour transition centre for homeless patients—the very first of its kind in North America.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Madam Minister, by failing to deny what the member from Thunder Bay has said, you have acknowledged that the numbers that you said this morning were in fact wrong. They were misleading to the tune of some 27,000 visits.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. You can't say "misleading."

Mr Smitherman: Sorry, Speaker, I withdraw the word. Those numbers were wrong, Minister, and you have acknowledged this. Your approach is wrong and your numbers are wrong. Two weeks ago you said it was a mystery why there was an emergency room crisis in Toronto. Well, it's no mystery to my constituents. You have dramatically reduced services in the greater Toronto area, and particularly in the downtown.

Madam Minster, your math is wrong. You have bad math. How can you guarantee that your bad math is not going to result in a really bad health outcome for the constituents I represent?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member perhaps doesn't know, it's obvious that maybe he doesn't know, the types of patients who are coming to the emergency room today are in much more need. They have more complex problems than ever before.

Certainly, as I was at the hospital this morning, there was every indication from the staff, whether it be the physicians or the nurses or the administration, that they were pleased—in fact they were thrilled—about the enhanced capacity to treat more patients, that there was accommodation there for more patients, and also that the facilities had been designed to move people through the emergency rooms more efficiently and effectively.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. On Monday of this week the Leader of the Opposition accused you and the government of stealing $240 million through an environmental levy at the LCBO under the pretext of dedicating these funds for environmental purposes.

First of all the people in my riding are a little upset about the terminology he used, but the people of my riding don't mind paying fair taxes. They don't mind paying the environmental levy, if that's where it's going to go. They don't mind paying taxes at all, provided that they're fair; most of the taxes they've been charged over the years have been unfair. But I wonder if you could clarify so that I can explain it to the members of my riding?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I thank the member for Kitchener Centre for the question. I'm pleased to clarify the government's position with respect to the environmental levy. I would first like to remind all members that the environmental levy is not a new issue; far from it. In fact, the Liberals brought in the environmental levy in 1989, at five cents a container, and the NDP doubled that to 10 cents per container in 1992. The money today, as it did then, from the environmental levy, or the fee charged for each non-refillable container sold, goes into the consolidated revenue fund and it is not earmarked for any specific program.

1450

Mr Wettlaufer: My supplementary is going to be a little bit different. It's about the Waste Diversion Organ-

ization. There has been considerably publicity recently about this waste diversion program. As you're aware, Minister, Kitchener is the city which inaugurated the blue box program. I wonder if you could explain to us a little bit about the waste diversion program: who established it, exactly what it is.

Hon Mr Newman: It's a pleasure to respond to the member for Kitchener Centre. On November 3, 1999, the Mike Harris government announced the establishment of the Waste Diversion Organization. The Waste Diversion Organization is a partnership of government, municipalities and industry, and with that partnership there's a commitment of $14.5 million from its members which is used to help fund municipal blue box and other waste diversion programs, which include things such as composting and special household waste depots. I'm pleased to report that the—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker: Thank you, I say to the Minister of the Environment. The question went over the minute.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): It didn't.

The Speaker: It did, I say to the member for Oshawa, and I'll look after the time.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is for the Minister of Health. We have raised time and time again in this House the problem facing northern cancer patients. We have asked you to understand the sense of discrimination that northerners feel.

I want to put it to you in the simplest terms. A patient who is re-referred from Toronto to the Sudbury cancer centre drives four hours to get that cancer treatment and is paid for all their expenses, as you know. A patient who drives from Manitouwadge to the closest cancer centre to them, which is Thunder Bay, drives roughly the same amount of time and receives compensation of only 30.4 cents per kilometre one way. Surely you can understand, when those patients have an opportunity to talk to patients from southern Ontario who are referred to Thunder Bay, how they feel that discrimination, how they understand that they are being placed in a situation of personal bankruptcy in order to get necessary treatment.

Will you please tell us that tonight the Premier, when he meets with those people in Sudbury, will tell them that your government understands northerners should not be faced with personal bankruptcy in order to get cancer treatment, needed life-saving treatment? Will you tell them you've changed your mind and you will end this discrimination?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It would be very helpful if people would represent accurately the fact that if you were to go from Toronto to Thunder Bay or Sudbury and you needed to be re-referred for radiation treatment for prostate or breast cancer, you would have your expenses fully reimbursed. In the same way, if you are re-referred from Thunder Bay or Sudbury to a hospital, say, in Hamilton, you would have your expenses fully reimbursed. There is no discrimination in the re-referral program. Anyone who is re-referred for radiation treatment in the case of prostate or breast cancer is treated in exactly the same way.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I just wish to advise you that I have filed notice with the Clerk's table expressing my dissatisfaction with the answer from the Minister of Health and I'm calling for a late show.

VISITORS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: With regret I am unable to recognize the students from Bowmanville High School, who are in the west lobby today, and the grade 9 class teacher, Doug Weldon. I'm disappointed.

PETITIONS

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature regarding the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

"Whereas Mike Harris promised an Ontarians with Disabilities Act during the 1995 election and renewed that commitment in 1997 but has yet to make good on that promise; and

"Whereas the Harris government has not committed to holding open consultations with the various stakeholders and individuals on the ODA; and

"Whereas Helen Johns, the minister responsible for persons with disabilities, will not commit to the 11 principles outlined by the ODA committee; and

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontario citizens believe there should be an ODA to remove the barriers facing the 1.5 million persons with disabilities;

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

"To pass a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act that would remove the barriers facing the 1.5 million persons with disabilities in this province."

This is signed by a number of individuals from my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London and St Thomas, and I gladly affix my signature to it.

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

"Whereas Ontarians with a developmental disability are in growing danger of inadequate support because

compensation to their worker is, based on a recent survey, on average, 20% to 25% less than compensation for others doing the same work in provincial institutions or similar work in other settings;

"Whereas there are hundreds of senior parents in Ontario who have saved the Ontario government millions of dollars by keeping their child with a developmental disability at home, and who are still caring for their adult child;

"Whereas there is no plan of support for most of these adults with a developmental disability to go when the parents are no longer able to provide care;

"Whereas these parents live with constant anxiety and despair;

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

"To significantly increase compensation for workers in the developmental services sector so it is comparable to the compensation of government-funded workers in identical or similar occupations; and

"To provide the resources necessary to give appropriate support to Ontarians with a developmental disability who have no support when their parents are no longer able to care for them."

I affix my signature.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas essential health care, educational and waste diversion programs have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving propaganda in the form of glossy pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as 'government waste and unnecessary expenditures,' while it squanders well over $188 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implore the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I affix my signature. I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): "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."

I have read this petition many times. I have another 52 signatures from concerned constituents across northwestern Ontario who would like the government to address this pressing issue.

1500

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions against the $2 user fee this government has imposed on seniors in our province, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge seniors a $2 user fee for each prescription filled since July 15, 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the $2 copayment fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee, or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the…Ontario Minister of Health…promised in a July 5, 1993, letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that would punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, sensitive or accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm signing my name to it.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

M^me^ Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier) : J'aurais une pétition à apporter à cette Chambre législative.

"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."

Croyant en cette pétition, je l'endosse.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

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

"Whereas the privatization of Ontario's correctional services is wrong and only publicly run and accountable correctional services can be beneficial to taxpayers, employees and those incarcerated,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that the government of Ontario stop privatization of any correctional service now."

I'm in full agreement with the sentiments of my constituents, and I've affixed my signature to the petition.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I've already read the petition against the $2 user fee that this government is charging to our seniors, but I have another one here which is in a language other than English, and I will only be reading the first sentence.

Remarks in Italian.

It's roughly the same petition. Since I agree with this, I will also sign my name to this petition.

ILLEGAL TIMBER CUTTING

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

"Whereas timber cutters are trespassing on private and crown land, cutting, removing and selling trees, leaving a financial, environmental, aesthetic and emotional devastation in their wake; and

"Whereas the OPP have no authority to stop a cutter from cutting in the event of a boundary dispute but may only inform the cutter that a complaint has been lodged; and

"Whereas the mills accept all timber from their contractors whether it is stolen or not; and

"Whereas the practice of the crown attorney's office to relegate these obvious theft issues to civil court places an unreasonable and prohibitive financial burden on the landowner-victim; and

"Whereas the offending cutters are protected by their numbered companies, lease their equipment and declare bankruptcy rather than pay fines and restitution, and immediately register a new numbered company, the landowner-victim must then pay:

"(1) All court costs and legal fees incurred by the offender as well as their own legal fees;

"(2) The cost of the survey;

"(3) The cost of hiring and posting bond for a bailiff, an appraiser, a salesman and bond for each piece of property and for equipment seized from the convicted cutter at the rate of at least $2,000 for each of the above-listed;

"(4) The cost of cleanup and reforestation; and

"Whereas traditionally settlements to landowners-victims have amounted to the price of stumpage fees for the stripped area, while the cutter profits from the full price of the timber from the mill; and

"Whereas, because the offending cutter must work quickly to avoid detection, he/she leaves the land devastated, with little or no thought to environmental areas of concern, eg, wetlands, reforestation;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness to landowners-victims in the overwhelming support of illegal cutting of private and crown lands.

"We advocate:

"(1) That the cases be tried as grand theft in a criminal court;

"(2) That in the event of a boundary dispute the party who is to benefit financially (ie, the cutter) be responsible for the cost of a survey by a registered surveyor and not a forester;

"(3) Final judgments should not only include fines, all costs incurred for pursuit of justice and stumpage fees, but the full price of the timber, the cost of cleaning up the clear-cut area and the cost of reforestation and main-

tenance of the cut area, thus making theft of timber from private and crown lands potentially non-profitable;

"(4) Contracts of convicted cutters should be subject to suspension or termination, just as drunk drivers lose licences."

This petition is on an issue of extreme concern to people who are in the northern part of Ontario and whose livelihoods depend upon an effective forestry practice. I have affixed my signature in full agreement with these concerns.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I have a statement of business of the House for next week.

On Monday afternoon we will debate Liberal opposition day. On Monday evening we will continue debate on Bill 114, the Victims' Bill of Rights, and/or Bill 133, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act.

On Tuesday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 132, the degree-granting act. On Tuesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 114, the Victims' Bill of Rights, and/or Bill 133, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act.

On Wednesday afternoon we will continue with Bill 132, the degree-granting act. On Wednesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 114, the Victims' Bill of Rights, and/or Bill 133, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act.

On Thursday morning, during private members' business, we will discuss ballot items 45 and 46, and on Thursday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 112, the McMichael bill.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health concerning St Michael's emergency department. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT AU MINISTÈRE DE LA FORMATION ET DES COLLÈGES ET UNIVERSITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 25, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 132, An Act to enact the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, repeal the Degree Granting Act and change the title of and make amendments to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 132, Loi édictant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, abrogeant la Loi sur l'attribution de grades universitaires et modifiant le titre et le texte de la Loi sur le ministère des Collèges et Universités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): First I'd like to say that I'm sorry I wasn't here last night to hear the minister and her parliamentary assistant at first hand to debate this bill. I had a long-standing engagement in Hamilton on an education forum. In fact, I have a lot of homework and I'll need to speak with the Minister of Education on that at a later date. They sent me packing with a lot of questions. But I'm pleased to debate this bill today.

Over a year ago the minister and I got together and she offered me the opportunity to help, and we did discuss some ways we could work together. But on this one issue we were both very clear we were on opposite sides, literally, of the House. We have both known that. They had their say yesterday and today it is this side of the House that will say why we're so upset at this bill.

Before I do that, I would like to make a correction on something the parliamentary assistant said yesterday. The parliamentary assistant quoted the Institute of International Education as the source for 7,000 Ontario students studying in the United States. I have an extremely bright executive assistant, a product of our public university next door, the University of Toronto, who checked on this. Mr Todd Davis, the director of the Institute of International Education, denies this, is upset that he was sourced on this and would like to know how the number was conceived, because it did not come from his institute. They look at Canada; they don't look at Ontario. In fact, his words were, "The numbers are misattributed and misrepresented," and he was quite upset. So perhaps you can check with your research department how that 7,000 was got and can clarify that. Mr Todd Davis would like to know as well.

1510

Before I go into the bill itself, I would like to get into some background information which we believe has led to the government's belief that there's a necessity for private universities. In 1995, $400 million—15%—was cut from the budgets of colleges and universities, the largest cut in the history of post-secondary education. Since 1995, a funding freeze for operating grants was in effect, resulting in the approximate reduction of 2% per year, depending on inflation, to the funds available for colleges and universities. At present, Ontario ranks last among provinces in providing per capita operating funding for post-secondary education. It's not last if you take into account other sources of donations, endowments and incomes from the federal government, but as far as what Ontario gives, it ranks last. From 1992 to

1997, Ontario ranked second-last in all jurisdictions of North America in per student funding of post-secondary education. We are still among the lowest ranks.

By the end of its first mandate, the Harris government was responsible for a 60% increase in university tuition fees. Because of the policy of tuition deregulation announced on May 6, 1998, tuition fees can now increase by any amount for graduate and professional programs, and they have. Dentistry and medicine are extremely expensive. And as I'll talk about later, recent research shows that now the incomes of families who send their children to medical school are much higher than they were before; in other words, only the richer kids can go to medical school, at a higher rate than the poorer kids.

With respect to student aid, the Harris government is responsible for diverting funds from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. The minister quite correctly says this is not a scholarship; it's something that the federal government has given to the students. However, the spirit of the millennium fund was for students to receive it over and above anything else the provinces are giving. Some provinces did abide by that. Most, in fact, abided by it to a certain extent. Ontario was the only one that pretty well sucked up all that money into the big pot, but recently, and thankfully, gave back $500 without penalty. But it's a far cry from—

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My apologies to my colleague for interrupting her speech, but I did want to seek unanimous consent of the House. It's my understanding that the Minister of Health would prefer to have the late show on Tuesday evening, and I'm certainly agreeable to that if we have unanimous consent of the House to that.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mrs Bountrogianni: No problem. An important interruption.

With respect to student aid, the Harris government is also responsible for disqualifying part-time students for OSAP eligibility. I know the ministry is relooking at OSAP entirely and I hope they reinstate that money.

They increased the loan forgiveness threshold from $6,000 to $7,000, causing many students to accumulate $1,000 more in debt per year; and they changed the name of the loan forgiveness program to the Ontario student opportunity grant to give the illusion that more is being done to reduce student debt.

They introduced a $10 processing fee for paper OSAP applications and a $2 fee for students seeking OSAP information over the telephone. In total, the government has netted over $800,000 from these new user fees. None of this money is being reinvested into post-secondary education.

As our leader, Dalton McGuinty, said last week, you starve a system, make it look to the public that the system needs refurbishing or something different and then you introduce private institutions. I think whether consciously or subconsciously, this is what this government is doing. First you create a crisis—I'm sure John Snobelen has really regretted saying that—and we are facing a crisis.

I have read the Hansard for the minister's and the parliamentary assistant's comments and I would like to rebut some of their comments, if I may. The minister has said that she has "extreme confidence in the ability of our students, and indeed our working adults, to seize the opportunities and meet the challenges that this change will bring"—this change of private universities. I have no doubt the minister wants to meet the needs of Ontarians. We differ in how we meet that need and how we wish to have that need met.

My response to the minister's extreme confidence in the ability of our students is, why is the government, then, unwilling to invest and reinvest even the dollars they've cut? Within one month of being elected, they cut $400 million from the post-secondary budget.

I understand that a significant amount of money has been put into SuperBuild, and the institutions welcome that money. It is matched, so there is a competition. You have to have private money before the institutions can receive this money, but it is welcome money nonetheless. However, what professors and presidents and students are telling me is that you need bodies, you need professors to teach students in those wonderful new buildings, and this is where there isn't any money.

On a talk show last year the parliamentary assistant hinted that there may be added money. I'm hoping this doesn't come in the last year, just before the next election, because universities need to plan. They need to know now. If you are planning on giving a windfall in the year 2002-03, universities and colleges would like to know that now. I used to work in that system, and you don't hire professors overnight, particularly when they are retiring at a faster rate in the United States and therefore they are coming up here to recruit our young professors. You need to start now, and you can't recruit without knowing what your budget is. If the parliamentary assistant is true to her word and if in fact there will be more money invested in post-secondary education to hire professors, tell the institutions now that you're going to do that. Even if you're going to give them the money in the future, put it in writing and tell them you're going to do it so they can go and hire these professors. It doesn't happen overnight, and the younger ones will be leaving for the United States when they're offered secure positions.

Another statement the minister made yesterday was, "As Ontarians, we are proud of the investments we have made in our post-secondary education and training systems. We have all benefited from the highly educated citizenry that is the envy of other countries." I agree with the minister here. We are the envy of other countries. In fact, Canadian embassy Web sites all across the world brag about Canadian universities. Their main point is that all our public institutions are publicly funded, therefore ensuring consistency of quality across the country. We will lose this in Ontario if we allow, without acts of the Legislature, which I'll discuss later, for-profit universities to enter Canada, and in this case Ontario.

According to the minister yesterday, "The Honourable William G. Davis not only had a vision for a new system

for those changing times; he and his government also had the courage and the conviction to create Ontario's network of new colleges of applied arts and technology that opened up a whole new era of learning." Premier Davis did have a vision. He had a vision of a stronger post-secondary education system in the province. He created community colleges, supported through the government budget, accessible to all, to fill a need. Why did this government not want to have that vision, and in fact shamed that legacy by laying claim to it and then creating private universities?

Private universities will not be of an equal calibre, particularly the for-profit type. New Jersey, for example, wouldn't let Phoenix university into their state because it didn't meet their requirements. Why are we even talking to Phoenix?

The minister stated, "Our Premier, our caucus and our cabinet have a new vision for the future. Our vision is of a post-secondary system that provides high-quality learning, that is relevant to the real needs of students and the workplace." That vision is a good vision, but why should that vision not be fulfilled through the public system, ensuring quality, ensuring consistency of quality?

1520

The minister stated, "We are meeting increased demand for student spaces through SuperBuild." You are doing that, the government is doing that, but according to the Price Waterhouse study, thousands more spaces will be needed. SuperBuild is not enough and, as I said earlier, operating grants need to be increased to hire professors, to buy the equipment that will fill these buildings the government is funding. As well, some of the institutions that have received SuperBuild funds are telling me now they're getting a little nervous as to how they will be able to match those funds, to keep their promises.

As you know, and this week was a great example with Nortel, markets change, business situations change, what one business can offer one day may change the next. I think Apotex is an excellent example of that: $20 million promised to the University of Toronto, something changed in relationships between Apotex and the federal government and perhaps they quite rightly withdrew the promise of $20 million. I'm not attacking businesses. I'm just saying we shouldn't just be depending on business for post-secondary education.

The minister claimed yesterday that she welcomes discussion and debate. Well, I hope so. Public hearings were promised and then were changed to private meetings. Yes, a lot of groups were consulted, but nothing of those discussions is in Hansard. The honourable members across, Gary Stewart, last week committed to hearings for this bill following second reading. It was printed in the Peterborough Examiner. I certainly hope that you will live up to this commitment. You're a majority government. If you want this, it'll happen. We know that. But the public still has a right to know both sides of the argument, for and against private universities. Our concerns are legitimate concerns. Perhaps by hearing the concerns, we can actually help the government avoid some of the pitfalls that I know they're going to be facing with this new bill.

As well, this was never in the Common Sense Revolution; this was never in the Blueprint. The people of Ontario didn't vote for this. At the very least we have to give them as much exposure to discussions and the debate. If there isn't a public outcry, then the bill will pass and the public will meet the consequences as we all will.

The minister claimed yesterday that they're trying to meet the needs of lifelong learners no matter how old they are, no matter where they live. A wider spectrum of students requires a wide spectrum of choice. Some students want access to programs that are not offered by their institutions. But lifelong learning is being provided by Ontario and Canadian institutions as well. If, instead of just looking to the private sector, real consultations had been held, then those creative solutions might have been found right here at home. The University of Toronto, for example, provides on-line learning, continuing education and evening and part-time courses. An example is right next door. Most of our institutions provide that.

The minister also commented that in addition to face-to-face consultation, she encouraged everyone to submit in writing, to her office, their ideas and recommendations on the best way to implement this new degree-granting policy. They met with over 150 individuals representing public universities, colleges etc. But, Minister, we were asking right up until the last day of the House last year for a list of these groups, to know whom the minister was meeting with, and we weren't given this list until the very last day, when we were given a partial list orally, by the minister herself, in the House. That's not public consultation. I realize that at times opposition is a thorn in the side of ministries, but that is what democracy is all about and better decisions are made as a result of this.

The new Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, according to the minister is enabling legislation. It will establish the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board, a very key component of the success of this legislation and the ongoing process. This board will establish rigorous standards to maintain and enhance the quality of programs available to students. But there are no clear guidelines. I understand and believe the minister's word that they will be developed by this board. But the standards won't be laid out in this new legislation. It'll be done by the boards.

How can they claim to uphold excellence when this is not only not a key and central component of this legislation but in fact is missing in legislation? Based on this board's recommendation, the minister herself, or in the future himself, can make the decision. In fact, if you read the bill carefully, a designate can make that decision, a deputy minister, an employee. Clearly, for such a change in how we do education in Ontario, we need more.

With all due respect to the minister, it doesn't matter how many degrees the Minister of Education or the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has, it

should not be up to one person to make that determination. This shouldn't be a one-person show, Minister. You have the ultimate and absolute authority to grant consent; in effect, it's irrelevant what the board advises. I'm quite surprised that you would want this awesome responsibility and this potential liability.

The minister stated yesterday, "We're underlining quality of the program and the institution's ability to provide it to our students, who come first." Does this mean that if the University of Phoenix makes an application but, like in the US, it doesn't plan on creating adequate library facilities, it will be denied? What about the lab space? There are so many different ways that public money can creep into this private system, and I will talk more about that in a few minutes.

The minister is proud to say that Ontario is home to some of the best publicly funded universities in the world, and I agree with her there. Our universities have been successfully competing on an international basis for many years. They have a strong record of academic achievement and are able to attract the brightest and best faculty and researchers. If this is the truth, then, should we not be fighting for increasing funding for our public universities instead of abandoning them to the market?

We now have major fundraising campaigns underway at our best institutions, as they fundraise to be able to build spaces, maintain existing infrastructure, offer scholarships for the needy, and attract the brightest so they can make up for the shortfall in government dollars. We're proud of their efforts. I'm proud of my hometown university, McMaster. It just reached its $100-million fundraising mark, and will exceed that goal. The new president has an astonishing goal of trying to raise $1 billion.

"And just as important to note," the minister said yesterday, "we have many students leaving the province to get the post-secondary education of their choice because they could not get the specialized programs they wanted in Ontario.... They're young people who have been going to other provinces, to the United States and even abroad because Ontario has failed to keep up with other jurisdictions." There will always be students who want to go the US or to Europe. I agree, if they are going there because there are obstacles in our system, we need to look at that. But there are other reasons why students want to travel aboard: they're young and they want different experiences.

However, there is a little paradox here. If the programs that are to be introduced are programs we don't already have and if, with all of the efforts of this quality assurance board, with all of the good intentions of the minister, this private institution does close, where are those students going to go to complete their degrees if these are highly specialized institutions? I think that's a good question, and I hope at some point, perhaps in her rebuttal, the minister can answer that.

If you are opening a highly specialized school because it doesn't exist here and, with all your best interests, it closes—I know that you've promised to reimburse students financially, but that's not enough. Where are they going to go for year three if it closes after year two, if this is such a specialized program? Our public universities will already be splitting at the seams because of the double cohort. Will we expect them to take them on? Will we be opening enough private ones that other private ones will be taking them on?

That is what is happening now in the private colleges. When they close, the minister's office does an amazing job in trying to place these students who are out in the cold. Three of these places closed in Hamilton last year and the minister's staff did their best to place most of these students, but that is because there were equivalent private institutions in close proximity for most students—not for all. I had one in my constituency, a single mom with three kids. Even going to downtown Hamilton was a two-bus ride and that was challenging enough. She couldn't go to Burlington. There was just no way. So she lost her investment, her tuition and, more importantly, her time. Again, this is not rhetoric. I am actually asking this in a non-partisan way: what are you going to do?

1530

On that theme of public funding, the minister says there won't be any public funding, on the one hand, and then on the other hand she says that these students will be eligible for OSAP. Of course they will be eligible for OSAP—I'm not arguing that they shouldn't be; they're our students—however that's public money. Let's be honest about this: that is public money. As well, the Premier has been noted as saying that MIT and Harvard are great places and why wouldn't we want to have places like that in Ontario? I would argue that we already have places like that. I would put U of T and Queens beside Harvard and MIT any day of the week. However, that opinion aside, those institutes that the Premier likes to say we don't have up here, like Harvard, Yale and Stanford, are private degree-granting institutions but get a great deal of public money. In fact, they now call themselves publicly supported institutions, even though they're private.

The minister and I have a disagreement about NAFTA. That's fair. I guess we'll see what happens with NAFTA. We believe on this side that NAFTA will tie our hands, that once we allow these private institutions in, we will have to give them NSERC grants. The federal government will have to do that. Redeemer College in Ancaster already gets NSERC grants, notwithstanding NAFTA. The minister believes that because of Honourable Minister Palladini's and Honourable Minister Pettigrew's statements that this won't be on the table, it won't happen. Maybe I'm a worrywart, but the word of those two gentlemen isn't enough for me. I want a little bit more in writing from the World Trade Organization itself to say that our hands aren't tied, again with all due respect to the two ministers mentioned.

I'm not a specialist on NAFTA. I'm talking about what experts have told me. I guess on this one I hope I'm wrong, because that would certainly be the beginning of the end of publicly funded universities if this indeed were

true. But as an opposition member, as a former academic and a mother of two kids who I hope will get there some day, I'm concerned. So I feel I have to bring this up.

Chapter 11, the rules on investment, which comes out of the NAFTA agreement: for the first time a corporation can sue a foreign government if that government enacts any law, practice or measure that negatively affects the company's profits or reputation, even if that law, practice or measure has been enacted by a democratic Legislature for legitimate environmental, social, health or safety reasons.

I can't remember if I told the minister this, but a long time ago, before private universities actually became a public issue, before the minister started talking about them publicly, I actually went myself and talked to Minister Pettigrew about this. He said what Minister Cunningham echoed yesterday, that indeed education and health care are not on the block at NAFTA. I'm saying that's not enough. We need a little more than a minister who's in the middle of an election now, and we don't know what's going to happen on November 27. I'm honest enough to say that: we don't know what's going to happen on November 27. So we need a little more than that.

I have a trade lawyer, Barry Appleton, who is quoted as stating that under NAFTA, Ontario "must provide a level playing field for public and private universities once it changes the current system." The article presenting Mr Appleton's views implies that this equal treatment would extend to funding, a very significant implication given the $2.5 billion annually—I hope I have that number right—that Ontario transfers to its 17 universities and their students. It also seems to contradict the statement by Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, to the effect that any private groups given approval to operate university level programs will not receive taxpayer support.

Those aren't my words, Minister, they're trade lawyer Barry Appleton's words. Perhaps you could challenge him as well as me when addressing this issue.

Thomas Walkom—of course he's a journalist; sometimes they're our best friends and sometimes they're not—in an article in November 1999 also claims, "Under WTO rules, a sector that is fully open to the market must effectively remain so.... Nations are allowed to discriminate against foreign firms only in those areas dominated by government. But once Alberta puts private hospitals at the core of its health system, it will have to give foreign firms equal access. So too with Ontario and higher education." Again, don't only challenge me, but challenge others, in the press, experts, trade lawyers, the NAFTA agreement itself, Chapter 11, and come back to this House and reassure us again with a little more conviction that we have nothing to worry about.

The minister yesterday said, "It is time for us to face reality. Students require more, not fewer, opportunities right here in Ontario, close to home where they have the support of their family and friends, and where the resources are not as extensive."

Maybe we should have looked at polytechnics, other programs, other options, more applied degrees and more co-op programs. Failing that opportunity, the chance to innovate and lead the way, yet again we are failing the students of Ontario.

I was recently touring one of our community colleges which actually offers all of those innovative things that the minister claims are missing in Ontario.

"All new institutions," according to the minister, "will be subject to our key performance indicators that students are increasingly using to make informed decisions about their education futures, and they are taking these decisions very seriously. They want to know what percentage of students graduate and go on to get a job."

This is the one area that even the minister cannot say was a success. The key performance indicators, according to one post-secondary institute president, were intellectually vacant standards. The minister herself said they are relooking at these indicators because the margin of error is sometimes greater than the actual differences between universities that get extra funding and universities and colleges and so forth that don't. Even though those institutions that received funding this year were really happy to do so, they know that, by the grace of God, next year they may not because of this very flawed formula.

As well, I will again give the example of the private colleges. I'm sure they had indicators and data showing—I know they did—that such and such a percentage of students will go on to get jobs. What happened at Credit Valley? First of all, that wasn't even a real institute. It turned out to be a couple of rooms. Yet, it defrauded the government of $18 million, or there's an alleged charge of that fraud.

I'm happy that the minister will be buckling down on students who default on their loans. But that's not where the big problem is. The big problem is with some of these private colleges, which have the highest default rate in Ontario, over 30%, much higher than our public colleges, much higher than our public universities.

What makes the minister believe we won't have similar difficulties, defaulting on OSAP, with private universities? To give some examples: Shaw and Alexandrian in Hamilton closed and, I believe, sometimes received funding from the ministry and OSAP knowing they would close. I know the ministry officials were very upset at this.

There's a situation that has come to my attention this week with a particular private program that I will bring to the minister's attention in the next few days, after this particular bill's debate is complete. I know she has a lot on her mind and so do I, but something very similar is about to happen right here in Toronto.

Again, in this bill, the students will be reimbursed their tuition if this happens. What about the rest of their OSAP? When they borrow, they also borrow for room and board, they borrow for books, for living, for eating. Will that be reimbursed? This is public money. Let's not lose sight of that fact. It is public money.

"This government is committed to ensuring that new degree-granting opportunities are accessible to all Ontarians, regardless of financial circumstance," according to the minister yesterday. "Therefore, students attending these new institutions will be eligible to apply for and receive financial help."

Minister, the other point I want to make on this point is, as you know, some of these private vocational colleges have tuitions that are much higher than our public colleges. Therefore, the OSAP loans are much higher. Not only is the default rate higher, but the amount of money that we are losing is higher.

Let's shift now to private universities, which I'm assuming will have even higher tuition fees than some of these private colleges, over $10,000 a year. Again, if they close shop and leave, the defaults that may occur on the loans, because the students will be without a degree and without a good job, will be higher and more public money. Again, I'm issuing this as a caution and hope that there's a backup plan to avoid this.

1540

I understand when I read the bill that every assurance—that it'll be screened very well and so forth, but I know that the Alexandrian Institute was well screened, I know that the Toronto School of Business in Hamilton was well screened, and yet we had these problems. In fact, the Toronto School of Business in Hamilton was there for many years before it ran into difficulty.

The minister claimed yesterday that our young people are entitled to our assistance. I'm extremely pleased with both the millennium fund that the federal government is giving as well as the provincial scholarships that this government is giving, but research from the University of Western Ontario, as well as the University of Guelph, is showing that, for the first time, students from the poorer families are attending post-secondary institutions at a lower rate than students from middle-class and upper-middle-class families. So there is that difficulty.

The minister is very proud of the fact that we have a large number of our 18- to 24-year-olds attending our colleges and universities. We should all be proud of that. An educated public means a good, strong economy, means a safer society for our kids. But there again I think someone in the ministry is basically playing with numbers, and I want to point that out. If you look at the chart, right now there's a 35% enrolment rate of 18- to 24-year-olds, compared to 1985 when it was 23%. You say, "Oh well, under this government a lot more kids are going to university and college."

But if you look at the numbers more carefully, you will see that within the mandate of this government it's actually flat-lined. It's up 0.6%. If you look at the mandate between 1985 and 1990, it went up 3.6%. If you look at between 1990 and 1995, it went up 5.6%, and between 1995 and now, it only went up 0.6%. Basically yes, we're doing great, but you can't, by these statistics, say there is a causal effect. In other words, it's not necessarily any government's doing that our enrolment rates are the way they are. Again, I'm not going to take credit for the Liberals having it increase so much in their mandate. This government shouldn't take credit for the number of students we have going to our universities now, because in fact that's not true. If you look within each government's mandate, the numbers tell a different story.

Another caution: let's not, all of us, mislead the public. I'm not accusing anyone. I'm just saying let's not do that. We don't need to do that.

Recently the minister appointed a task force to look at the highest quality of education while ensuring access for students, affordability and accountability. In conducting this review, according to the minister's backgrounder, the task force will examine best practices in Ontario and comparable initiatives in other jurisdictions. I actually welcome this, because I happen to know of individual cases where there is waste in administration, and I would love that money to be reinvested back into post-secondary education. I believe the minister has given her word that that is exactly what's going to happen, that this money will be reinvested, and that's wonderful. But if you read this backgrounder, again, it's a little misleading in that it says you will also be looking at quality. This task force was very clear to the first presenters that that's not their mandate. Quality is not their mandate. Efficiency, savings, that's their mandate. So again, let's not confuse the public.

I welcome this task force; I think it's a little one-sided in the way it's made up. There are businessmen, lawyers, the president of the University of Alberta, the CEO of a college in Nova Scotia. However, let's trust for now that it has an honourable intent, but let's not mislead the public that it's there to ensure quality. It's there to save money. If there's money to be saved, great, but I really truly hope—and I'm suspicious, but I hope I'm wrong—that this task force isn't just another rationalization to say, "We're wasting a lot of money. We have to cut more from post-secondary education." I really hope that's not what it's about.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Do you believe them?

Mrs Bountrogianni: No, I don't, but I'm trying to be objective. I am afraid of that. I actually believe that the minister has excellent intent, but we all know who really makes the decisions across the way. I really hope that this task force isn't just another example of creating a crisis in the minds of the public so we cut more money out of public education.

Mr Marchese: What's the name of that task force again?

Mrs Bountrogianni: The Advisory Task Force on Investing in Students.

Mr Marchese: Can you believe that?

Mrs Bountrogianni: Thank you.

Mr Marchese: I want to talk about that.

Mrs Bountrogianni: The other number we seem to disagree on is student debt. I'm not even going to go there until I get the number from the legislative library, but I do have one statement from the Council of Univer-

sities in 1999, which stated that student debt has doubled since 1992-93. The government likes to say $13,000; we've been told $25,000. But the one source I found said it has doubled. So regardless of the actual number, we know that student debt has increased.

There's a real paradigm shift happening here too—and perhaps the government agrees with and is actually fuelling this paradigm shift—and that is that it's OK to borrow and have huge debts as you finish your university or college degree or diploma. We don't know the impact of these student debts on the economy, though. Usually when students finish university or college, they might take a couple of years when they spend their money and make up for what they had to go without during university, but eventually they'll buy a car, settle down, buy a house and start spending money. If they have to pay back student debts, that money won't be going back into the economy. This government likes to brag about what it does for the economy. I hope their economists are looking at that and the implications of that.

I'd like to reiterate what I said earlier about the Guelph and Western Ontario studies that kids from lower socioeconomic families are taking on more OSAP loans and are not as likely to receive financial help from their parents, and they're not as likely to go to university, compared to the middle and upper classes, as they were 10 years ago—actually seven years ago. The difference, according to the Guelph study, did not exist in 1993.

I talked earlier about examples of public funding. I want to get a little more specific there. We compare ourselves to the United States a lot, but we're not the same. Their private institutions have been around for over 100 years. They have rich alumni who keep giving and giving—and I'm not talking about thousands; I'm talking about much more than thousands of dollars—to these institutions. That won't occur in Ontario by 2003. If that is the plan to address what SuperBuild won't address as far as the number of spaces students will need because of the double cohort, I think we'll be disappointed and I think there will be a lot of disappointed families out there.

I know some members of the government might think this is fearmongering. It's not fearmongering. I'm actually going to hold a town hall meeting in my town in January with members of the faculty and administration from McMaster and Mohawk to problem-solve this—not to fearmonger but to problem-solve this: what are we going to do in our hometown to make sure the double cohort isn't an obstacle? Again, all I'm doing is cautioning the government that this may happen. If in 2003 you plan on throwing in a ton of money because it's an election year, that's too late. You've got to tell us now if you're going to throw money in, so we can hire the professors.

The so-called private universities in the States are not as private as they seem. The National Centre for Education Statistics in the US reports that private universities in the Great Lakes states, Texas, Florida and California receive an annual average of $9,554 of public funding per student. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT—Mike Harris's favourite example of the type of private university he'd like to see in Ontario—receives 70% of its research funding from public sources.

I'd like to talk a little bit about what California is actually doing. I'm a little jealous; I wish we were doing it. It is going to actually give more than $1 billion a year in scholarships to needy high school students who have good marks, up to $10,000 a year toward tuition at one of the state's institutions. There's a similar entitlement program in New York, but this new California endeavour is twice as generous as New York's. They realize in the United States that until very recently they've been denied public funds, and now they're trying to make up for what they did years ago.

How does it work? Starting January 1, 2001, any high school senior in the state of California with a "B" average and a household income of $64,000 or less—that's American, by the way—for a family of four would qualify for free tuition at any public university in the state or US$9,700 toward tuition at a private one. Even "C" students from families earning less than US$34,000 per year would receive US$1,500 for living costs and books to help them catch up at community colleges. So they're also going for the "C" students, those students in the grey area who, with help, may succeed, and then they can qualify to go on to four-year degrees. In fact, there is an exciting college-university in British Columbia that I hope the minister visits, where you can start in college, but if you increase your marks and do well, you can switch to university right on the same campus. I think those are exciting ideas, a sort of seamless college-university education.

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The state officials in California did not hesitate to call the program, which is expected to cover almost one third of all graduating high school seniors or about 100,000 students a year, an entitlement. They know that, but Mr Davis, a moderate Democrat and a fiscal conservative, did not use that word. He had proposed a separate measure, also enacted today, that would award $118 million a year to merit scholarships. It won't only be the funds to these students. There will also be scholarships over and above this for "A" students. So this covers the whole gamut. You may argue that if you give everyone a scholarship, why would they want to work hard and get an "A"? They've taken care of that by having merit scholarships as well. So here is the state of California, and we will be looking at this very closely and seeing how this impacts on their economy, their workforce and their graduation rate.

I had a meeting the other day with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, and they had a number of concerns over Bill 132. They've objected to allowing private universities to operate in the province. They have argued that private, for-profit universities offer niche programming at exorbitant prices while drawing on public resources, without enhancing either the quality or accessibility of a university educa-

tion. These private institutions are being welcomed by the government, not as centres of academic excellence but as decoys employed to deflect attention away from the government's own legacy of undermining the public system through years of underfunding, and these private universities will not address the projected increase of spaces needed in the year 2003 and above.

Other concerns: OCUFA is concerned with the process of establishing a university, including the public disclosure of decisions by the quality assessment board. Whereas authorization of a university through an act of the Legislature allows for public review and debate, authorization by ministerial consent does not. Any authoriziation of a new university should be through an act of the Legislature, in order that public debate can take place and the public interests be protected.

Of course, that's not going to happen. I can see some members across, and I know what you're thinking: that it's not expedient, that's not efficient. But sometimes slowing down before you make such an important decision is a good idea.

According to OCUFA, there's nothing in this legislation which states that the board's decision and its reasoning be made public, or that the public have access to documentation supporting an application. It is imperative that any decision made by the board be transparent and open to public review. Here is another question which, hopefully either today or next week, the minister will reply to: will this board be transparent? Will the public be able to go to board meetings where applications for new universities will be discussed, or will all the decisions be made behind closed doors?

A concern that OCUFA has, and that I share, is the definition of educational standards. Such standards are not spelled out in the proposed legislation and may be subject to wide interpretation. These are small "e," small "s," educational standards. How would be know they are in fact meeting the standards of our universities? If you read the bill carefully, they're meeting the standards of this quality assurance board.

OCUFA also shares my concern that the powers given to the minister to prescribe procedures for reviewing applications are large, and that they shouldn't be made by one person alone, regardless of the intent or the background of that person.

Section 8 of the proposed legislation states that, "Institutions seeking consent to operate in the province are not entitled to any funding from the Ontario government." I've already discussed that. I share OCUFA's concern. We know they will be eligible for OSAP, we know they will be eligible for NSSRC grants and other federal grants and we know the professors going there will also be eligible for grants. Then there's the question of how NAFTA will be playing into all this.

Redeemer College in Ancaster receives NSERC grants and OSAP. It's a niche university. It offers one program. It's an excellent university but it does take public funds.

At present we do have some out-of-province, private, non-profit universities. We have the Adler School of Professional Psychology, and we also have, as I just mentioned, Redeemer College. However, we don't have any private, for-profit universities. This would be a major change.

Although there were private meetings by appointment, there were no public hearings. I'm happy to say, though, that the honourable member from Peterborough did mention in his newspaper that there would be hearings, and I'm looking forward to those.

In 1996, the government's Advisory Panel on Future Directions for Postsecondary Education recommended that, under strict conditions, the establishment of privately financed, not-for-profit universities with authority to grant degrees with a secular name be permitted. Nowhere did they say "for-profit universities." This is your task force, 1996, and from what I understand, for-profit universities will also be allowed.

To recap some of the concerns, private universities are not so private. They depend upon government funding over the long run, through the use of the OSAP system for tuition, three to five times higher than public institutions. Private institutions have higher OSAP default rates, comparable or lower employment rates and lower incomes of their graduates over the long term. See the research from Dr Allen.

Private institutions, rather than focusing upon quality education, look to their bottom line and are run as a business, focusing on maximizing income. Therefore, shorter, more intense programs are usually the norm, one to two years, and are not regulated in the same way that public institutions are.

Students run the risk of paying many thousands of dollars to complete a certificate or diploma program which ends up not being recognized by their desired employer. Private institutions lead us down a path to a two-tier education. They also lead us to a trend toward market-model universities, corporatization increasing in public institutions, exclusive deals being signed, endowments and research agreements already bringing closer ties between business and academia.

I'm not arguing against business being involved or doing their part, but there have been—

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's a conflict of interest. You're a professor.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I was a professor. I'm not any more. So I believe I'm objective when I say that when you accept private money for research, you do have that risk of losing your objectivity, and again I use the Apotex example.

Universities train thinkers for the future. The Premier might not recognize the importance of great thinkers, but without them innovation and productivity fail. Critical thinking, analytical skills and leadership come out of public institutions. By the way, they also come out of liberal arts programs, an area that is indirectly impacted negatively by this government.

The example of the University of Phoenix is that they were fined $650,000 recently over an audit which showed system-wide problems with financial aid pro-

grams and therefore they weren't allowed to establish a site in New Jersey. Also, the state of New Jersey wouldn't let them in because they had an inadequate library and they didn't have qualified full-time faculty. Yet I know they've already been up here.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Now New Jersey is exempt?

Mrs Bountrogianni: If New Jersey doesn't accept Phoenix, why are we even entertaining them, former Minister of Education? I've been at it for 50 minutes. Maybe I'm not as clear as I should be.

The CAUT, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, voted in December to oppose the establishment of private universities due to concern over their ability to drain public money from the public university system.

I guess another question is, if you are going to give the students OSAP loans, are you going to increase the OSAP budget, and, if so, by how much? That is a question we'll be asking if the minister ever does go to estimates in the next year. How much are you going to increase that budget for OSAP?

Mike Harris always gives MIT and Harvard as examples. Well, Phoenix is hardly a comparable example to MIT and Harvard.

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I know there are many challenges in post-secondary education today. The challenge of the double cohort is one that the minister, I'm sure, is thinking about. But this isn't the solution to that challenge. In fact, we're really late on this one. We should have started planning for the double cohort years ago. It takes years to build the buildings that you're funding right now, and it takes many more years to establish a faculty. What is already happening, because of the cutbacks to post-secondary education, is that more and more part-time faculty are being hired in certain faculties. That is not the same quality as full-time, tenured professors.

The minister announced that Ontario would be opening its doors to private universities last April at Seneca College. I was there with my staff, and many students were there. It wasn't in your Common Sense Revolution, it wasn't in your Blueprint, and you didn't introduce any legislation before the announcement. You had private meetings with stakeholder groups and then last week it was announced. The minister announced there would be public consultations and then changed her mind.

In a press conference last week, in response to the question, "Why is the public so against private universities?" her reply was, "They are simply afraid of change." Rosario, I think you were at the press conference.

Mr Marchese: Yes, I was.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I don't know how you felt, but when I found out that this was said, I felt it was rather patronizing and typical of this government's Big Brother mentality on knowing best for Ontario. I don't think the public is afraid of change. I don't think the public really is aware of what this change means, and I don't think, if the public knew the implications, they'd be supportive. That is why again and again I say, if you really wanted to do this, it should have been in your Blueprint. Then the public would have voted for it. Then that would be fine; we'd have to accept it. This is a little difficult to take.

SuperBuild purports to open 73,000 new spaces by 2003. We'll still need 16,000 more. This isn't the solution.

Let the public not be misled for a minute. These private institutions do receive public monies, as I have outlined in many examples.

The minister stated that she will get tough on students defaulting on their loans. What about getting tough on the private college institutions that have defaulted on the taxpayer and on the students of this province? One last year defaulted us of $18.5 million. What we could do with $18.5 million. These institutions up and close when they see their profits eroded, and once they go bankrupt, that's it; we've lost that money. Why would we want to even go there? Why would we want to put ourselves up to that possibility by opening even more private institutions? Why not fund our public ones?

Interjection.

Mrs Bountrogianni: You'll get your turn and you can rebut anything I say. That's fine.

The minister said there will actually be a reimbursement of tuition if the private university closes. In other words, the minister is already acknowledging that this is a possibility. Why go there? Why even have this possibility? Again, you can reimburse the tuition, but the students usually spend a little bit more than tuition. If they've left home, they've spent room and board, food, books, plus two years of their lives. If the university closes in the middle of the tenure, will the ministry forgive their OSAP? Will the ministry also reimburse their living expenses? Will the ministry pay for them to go to another niche program? Because that's what they're saying. They're saying they're going to accept universities that have programs that we don't have. They'll have to accept a lot of them if they start closing.

I'm just hoping it was a slip, because the biggest insult last week was when the minister said that education is a business. Education is not a business, Minister. It's a right, it's a service, it's a great equalizer in our country, and it's what makes us unique. It's what makes us the envy around the world.

I had the opportunity in 1997 to evaluate programs for the European Community and the reason I got that job—my credentials weren't the main reason—was that I was Canadian, that I was from a Canadian university. That is how much we are respected in the rest of the world and part of that is because our public universities work. I think it's a shame that we want to take this away from our young people. We'll be watching, and I hope the government will be watching these institutions very carefully too.

I want to end with some quotes from university presidents who are not left-wing, who are not Liberal or NDP, who, in fact, quite often think the same way as the government. Your own supporters say things like:

"Our excellence is relentlessly being eroded by forces beyond our control"—Principal Leggett from Queen's University;

"Unless the province makes a serious commitment to new funds commensurate with the growth and demand for places, it is inevitable that access will be sacrificed and quality will be eroded"—the former University of Toronto president, Robert Prichard. This is a man who I really was embarrassed for a year ago when he came and practically begged for money. I was embarrassed for him as a man and this is what he is saying;

Peter Mercer, the University of Western Ontario vice-president of administration states, "The fundamental building blocks of the Ontario university system will crumble if we do not very, very soon get the operating grants we need."

Carleton University president Richard Van Loon states, regarding SuperBuild infrastructure, "Additional classrooms won't help us much if we don't have the faculty to teach in them."

Something else from the young Tories: I was at a conference on Saturday where I spoke to university students from political parties and the young Tories told me that they actually asked their party to freeze tuition. They like the idea of finding inefficiencies in administration, they like this task force and so do I, so do we, so does the Liberal caucus, but they wanted this government to freeze tuition fees. These are the young Tories.

I'm happy that the government put a 2% cap, that's better than the 60% increases that they allowed to occur under their mandate, but their own supporters at the student level wanted a freeze. Their own young Tories told me that, yes, medical school tuition is very high and it's getting out of hand and they don't want it to increase any more. Of course they're careful, of course they're not going to say they want it rolled back. They're young Tories. They knew they were speaking to a Liberal but they were honest enough to say they wanted a tuition freeze, and yet their government didn't listen to them.

Of course, why would they listen to the students who want rollbacks, the students who want more assistance? Why would they listen to the class of students that can't afford the new Ontario tuition fees?

Again, I'll end by saying this wasn't in their Common Sense Revolution. This wasn't in their Blueprint. Hopefully, we have the word of the member opposite, Gary Stewart, that we will have public hearings after second reading and they will take place so the public can openly see the pros, the cons and the implications of allowing private universities into our province.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Let me tell you about Joe DiBartolomeo because he knows, he understands that this government's introduction of private, for-profit, American universities is a betrayal of generations of hard-working Ontarians.

You see, I know Joe DiBartolomeo. I know his parents, Fior and Loretta. I know his grandparents, both sides of the family from Port Colborne and Dain City. Fior didn't get a chance to go to university. He, as a child, emigrated to Canada with his parents. Fior, like his father before him, worked a lifetime at Inco. Joe is the first generation of his family to get to go to university. Let me tell you, he completed his bachelor's degree at Brock and his master's degree at Brock. He's now got his PhD in environmental ethics—all but dissertation—from the University of Ottawa.

Joe DiBartolomeo knows what this government's tuition fee increases have meant for him and his family. He's a bright young man who deserved to go to university. He's among our best but he also knows that private, for-profit, American universities will shut the door in the face of young people like him for generations to come.

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Joe DiBartolomeo of Port Colborne knows this so well, he knows it so viscerally, that he offered himself as a candidate at the Erie-Lincoln New Democratic Party nomination meeting last night. He was elected as a candidate for the NDP and he's going to be campaigning in this federal election throughout the riding of Erie-Lincoln, speaking for people like him—young people, the children of immigrant families; speaking for young Canadians, not just in Erie-Lincoln but across Ontario and Canada; speaking out against this wave, this orgy of privatization that's been embraced both on Parliament Hill and here at Queen's Park; speaking on behalf of hard-working families like his folks and his grand-folks were before him, hard-working families who built colleges and universities in this province and across this country, who made sacrifices to build them so that their grandchildren could go to university and college when they couldn't. This government betrays those hard-working generations of Ontarians. It betrays them in a way no government ever has. Joe DiBartolomeo is among the people who are going to change that.

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): I would like to respond to the comments made by the member from Hamilton Mountain, who is also the critic for training, colleges and universities. I want to say that every concern that the member has raised here today has been addressed. The questions have been answered. As a matter of fact, a number of those concerns were raised through the consultation process, and they have been addressed in the legislation before us today. If you read the bill—the bill should be in your package; you should have a copy of it—you'll see that a lot of those concerns are addressed.

But I want to focus on some of the comments that were made, because the member made a lot of political statements rather than talking to the actual legislation in the bill that's here. As a ministry, students are our first priority, and all of the money is being reinvested in students.

It's important to note that in 1998-99, 35% of the Ontario population aged 18 to 24 was enrolled full-time in college or university. This is the highest participation rate in Ontario's history. We've made numerous investments in post-secondary education: $1.8 billion in capital

to provide for the 73,000 new pupil places. We've invested in the research and development challenge fund: $550 million there. There have been a number of reinvestments that we have made in the system to provide for students in post-secondary.

I want to comment also on the fact that $698 million was put to financial assistance for the students. So when the member talks about the cuts, the money has been reinvested, because the main focus for our ministry is for the students.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I want to applaud my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for her insight and the quality and tenor of her arguments that were put so well. I wanted to pick up on a couple of those points.

First of all, by doing this we undermine our public institutions. There is no question. A case in point: in the United States, if you look at the private universities, say in the state of Michigan, which I am fairly familiar with—the great riding of Windsor-St Clair is on the international boundary—what we see is poor public universities and better-off private institutions. There is a drain-away of money.

I want to add one other component to this argument, because I think this bill ultimately will have regional implications. The universities and the public bodies that will be hurt the most are the small, regional teaching schools, whether it's Lakehead, the University of Windsor, Trent University, the universities that aren't necessarily the largest and the most powerful in terms of the research but do wonderful things. At my university there's the Great Lakes Institute, and much else. The joint venture with Chrysler Corp: we've just seen another half-billion dollars, private sector-public investment, in a great partnership that I was proud to support when I served on Windsor council.

I say to the government, if you won't believe the arguments that were so eloquently put by the member for Hamilton Mountain, that is, that an investment in public education, an investment in our students, will solve the problems—remember, we're still at the bottom or near the bottom in every measure in this country—think it through carefully. This is not a good piece of legislation.

Mr Marchese: I want to quickly congratulate the member from Hamilton Mountain whom I like as well as the Liberals close to us here. I don't like all of the Liberals, I've got to admit, but I like her.

I want to say that she did a more than an adequate job of articulating a position against this bill, because it's going in the wrong direction is what we argue and is what she has argued.

For the benefit of Nadia Lambek, who is a co-op student from Harbord Collegiate and is here in the gallery, and is very interested about what this government is about to do—that's why she came today—I want to tell her that I'm seriously concerned about her future and the future of so many of the students that are about to go to university very, very shortly.

I'm saying to the Minister that I don't know anyone that has been calling for private universities. Normally governments behave on the basis that somebody out there is articulating the needs, is screaming for private universities? So I'm saying, OK, where are these people clamouring for private universities? Is it the high school students? I don't think so. Is it the university students? I don't think so. Is it the professors out on the streets saying, "We want private universities"? I don't see them.

Who are these people who want private universities? The Tories, one, and those who lobby the Tories who are their buddies, who are coming from the US, ready and willing to snatch away whatever they can from our public institutions, waiting and willing to come in and make some money out of education. A public institution which should service all—they come here wanting to make money out of education. Those are the only people asking for it. No one else.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mrs Bountrogianni: I thank everyone for their comments. For the member from Thornhill, I've read the bill very carefully—I hope you at least took that from my preparation and my remarks—and it raises more questions than it answers.

As far as your comments that a lot of these issues were raised in the consultations and answered in the consultations, how would I know? They weren't public. They were supposed to be public. Then you came across here and, to your credit, said, "We've changed our minds. We're going to make them behind closed doors for security reasons." Fine, but then don't expect me to know what happened. I don't know what happened in those consultations. I know some of the backup plans that the minister has. I'm not happy them, I told you why. I actually think I'm being quite helpful in suggesting ways to make sure that the backup plans are tighter.

In this case I really hope I'm wrong, because I have two kids and I know you've got kids. Mine aren't quite there yet, but hopefully they'll get there. I want the system to work. Whatever system's in place, I want it to work, I want it to be excellent, for selfish reasons as well as political reasons and, in my case, for professional reasons. If I don't get elected, I don't want to go back to a system that isn't a good system.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Oh, you'll be back.

Mrs Bountrogianni: But I'll be back, sure. We'll see.

So there are a lot of reasons why I have stakes in this. It's personal, professional and political.

I'll just go back to my premise, and I'm sorry if I'm repeating myself. But I think it cuts to the bone of democracy. This wasn't in your Blueprint; this wasn't in your Common Sense Revolution; the people didn't vote for this.

My friend who likes me, Rosario, says, "Who wants this?" Again, we don't know who wants this, except for maybe a few businesses in the United States that want to come up here. I know that the teachers' college in Buffalo can't wait to come up here.

There will be students paying $10,000 a year down the street from our students paying $4,000. Why not give more money to Brock University to do the job?

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): That certainly says it's a heck of deal in Ontario, isn't it, even with all those comments that you made about high tuition?

It's my pleasure to be able to speak to Bill 132, the choice and excellence act, and I indeed support the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Statute Law Amendment Act, 2000. As a government, we have made a commitment to ensure our students have access to high-quality and relevant post-secondary education.

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The reason I'm pleased about speaking to this act is the fact that I am very fortunate in my riding to have three very high-profile institutions. One is Trent University, one of the smaller universities in Ontario but probably one of the most well-respected universities, and certainly in their aboriginal studies program and their environmental studies program second to none in this country. The other one is Sir Sandford Fleming College, a college that has some 4,000 to 5,000 students, which has created partnerships with both the private and public sectors and is highly respected. Their graduates seem to be able to access jobs very quickly after they have graduated. The third educational institution that I have in my area is Lakefield College School. For those of you who don't know about Lakefield College School, it is a private college and one that is respected all over the world. In fact, many of you may or may not know that Prince Andrew attended that school.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): And my daughter-in-law Jane Forsyth taught there.

Mr Stewart: The member for Mississauga has informed me of that, and that's the type of college that is available in the private sector. Unfortunately, my kids were not able to go there, but I can tell you that I have a great deal of respect, a tremendous respect, for that school. I know many of the professors there—David Hadden, the president, and many others who know what education is all about.

Those three institutions and the quality of institutions they are have added tremendously to the economy, the culture and the social fabric of the Peterborough riding community. As a result, I'm extremely pleased to speak to this bill on their behalf and to be able to offer praise to those three institutions.

This legislation is a key component in meeting that commitment to increase access to post-secondary programs through more flexible delivery. This legislation is about protecting and enhancing the quality of education available to students right here in Ontario. I want to make a comment that when I use the words "enhancing the quality of education," it's because we want our universities and our colleges to be second to none in the world. We also want our students to be second to none in the world, and we want them to be able to compete against any student from any country in the global marketplace. I believe that if we don't offer that type of education to our students, we are indeed short-changing them.

The Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board will play a pivotal role in helping us achieve that goal, because they will be the policing unit, for lack of a better word, to make sure that quality is available to the students here in Ontario.

As the minister has said repeatedly in this House, any private university applying to grant degrees in Ontario must meet or exceed the criteria set by the board. I have absolutely no doubt that the universities we have and the universities and/or colleges that will come in the future will indeed exceed that criteria. Again I say it for one reason: that we have to make sure our students have the best quality education possible.

Second, they must provide a flexible program that students want, and third, they will need to lead to jobs. Isn't that what education is all about, so that our students have the education, the ability, the qualifications to go out and compete in the global marketplace, but indeed to get the jobs?

It's interesting to note that the jobs that have been created by this government over the last five or six years, to the tune of in excess of 800,000, are out there now. We want to make sure the students who are graduating are staying in this province to be the leaders of tomorrow and that we're not, unfortunately, having that brain drain going to the United States.

These new institutions will also be subject to our key performance indicators that students are increasingly using to make informed decisions about their education futures. They are taking these decisions very seriously, and indeed they should.

We want to know what percentage of students graduate and go on to get a job. I believe we must teach to the job market. Unfortunately there are not a great deal of jobs out there for furriers these days, or harness-makers or whatever, because we have entered a major high-tech world. We had better make sure all of our students are well enough equipped and that we are teaching to that job market. That job market is changing very quickly.

I often hear people saying that in the course of a lifetime in the future, people will have four, five or six different jobs. That wasn't the way of the past. We've got to prepare students of today to meet those challenges and have the ability to apply for and have those jobs of the future.

While the legislation we are debating today, if passed by the Legislature, would allow private universities to provide more flexible and relevant opportunities for Ontarians in a broader choice of fields, we are sending a clear signal to potential applicants that we intend to be vigilant and protect our students' interests. Quality education in Ontario is not negotiable now and, if we do it right, will not be negotiable in the future. But we have to make sure that the safeguards are in place and that our students' interests are indeed protected.

The act would also enshrine into law the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board. That is the board, the group that will make sure we are indeed vigilant, that we are indeed protecting the students' interests.

This independent board—and I believe that is one of the keys—would assess new degree program proposals submitted by Ontario universities, out-of-province degree-granting institutions and new degree-granting institutions in Ontario, including privately funded institutions. The board would use rigorous criteria established in accordance with recognized educational standards. It would then make recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities about whether proposals should be approved based on the quality of the program and the institution's ability to provide it.

One of the keys to that is the fact, as I have mentioned, that it's an independent body, a body that is going to take the concerns and go out and talk to parents, students, universities, whatever it may be, to make sure we get it right.

This will ensure that new degree programs offered by colleges of applied arts and technology and new private universities will be of good quality and meet Ontario's high standards.

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I mentioned Lakefield College School for one reason: because it is a private university, a private university second to none, I believe, in the world. I have great concern when the opposition seems to be constantly against privatization or the private sector. We deal with doctors and lawyers every day—retail. We buy cars, we buy houses. We deal with banks. We deal with the local grocery store which supplies us with the food that will keep us healthy and alive. Yet when it comes to something like that, then the private organizations are all wrong. I don't understand that. If privatization is wrong, why are you all dealing with them every day that you exist, every day that you live? It's most interesting. Maybe part of it's because I've been in the private sector. I've also been in the public sector, and I believe that both of them are very similar in quality. The problem I have is that there's always the constant pushing of negativity toward the private sector, and I have great difficulty with that.

It was interesting to note that the member from Hamilton Mountain made the comment that education was a right. I don't believe it's a right. I believe it's a privilege. It's a privilege that we all have to be able to achieve as we go through the various levels of education. We have to be able to look at education and say, "I want to move on because I have the ability, because the programs are there." But I don't believe it's a right. I truly believe it is a privilege.

I've mentioned the comment about the board setting rigorous criteria. The board will be established by order in council. Subject to the passage of this legislation, we hope to have the board up and running later this fall.

The other thing about privatization is that I'm a great believer in competition. When you get competition, you get quality, you get accountability and you get service. If we had, and continue to have, competition in education, wouldn't that be interesting? It would then add a whole lot of accountability to the various levels of education, and I am 100% supportive of that.

As I mentioned, the board will be established by an order in council. It will be representative of all legitimate interests and will include academics, business and student leaders. If that doesn't say we are going to have the input from all sectors, I don't know what would. It will have 11 members and the members will be part-time.

The legislation being introduced today also contains measures that would protect students attending private degree-granting institutions. Before granting consent for new degree programs to be offered by a new private post-secondary institution, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities would need assurance that the institution could provide appropriate financial protection for students before degree-granting authority was given so that students could recover their tuition fees in the event a school closed.

What difference is that from anything else that is involved? We have to make sure those people who pay dollars into various institutions or organizations, whatever, are protected. That is primary, and with it being in this type of legislation that says we not only want to make sure you have quality education, but we want to make sure your hard-earned dollars—and we've heard it's difficult these days for all students to try and gather up enough funds to go, even with OSAP and the number of new jobs we've created in this province, but we have to make sure these students are protected.

An applicant would also have to make arrangements to ensure that students have access to their transcripts in the event the school closes, again primarily to make sure that the student has those transcripts if he has to move to another location. People are going to stand up and say, "See, I told you this could happen." We have to make sure the protections are in place so that this doesn't happen, and we will do that.

The legislation would also permit colleges to offer applied degrees in areas where there is a demonstrated employer demand for degree-level applied education and training and where current diploma programs are not fully meeting emerging needs. Again, we have to educate to the jobs. We have to educate to the needs. We have to educate to the areas where employers need these people. If we don't do it in Ontario, you and I know where they're going to go. They're going to leave, and we can't afford to have the quality students we can produce in this province leaving this province. We want to make sure they stay.

Mr Agostino: Which way does the river flow today, Stockwell Day?

Mr Stewart: It's interesting, the comment from Hamilton, or wherever he's from, suggesting I sound like Stockwell Day. I'm telling you what I sound like: I sound

like a person who is concerned about education and the students of this province. I want them to stay. I'm a businessman who wants people who are knowledgeable to stay in this province. You may not want that, and that is fine. We want them here and we want them well educated, and we indeed will do that.

As part of the application process, proposals for colleges to offer applied degrees will need to demonstrate employer support. This credential is being introduced to colleges on a pilot project basis. Up to eight projects per year will be approved for three years. Examples of areas where college applied degree pilot projects might be granted include plastics, information technology, electronics, automotive design and manufacturing. Small manufacturing is going to be the key for survival in this province. It's happening now. They're creating the jobs and we need qualified students.

It's interesting, that last comment my friend across the way made. I just want to make a comment about "Liberals Just Don't Get it When it Comes to Schools." "It means more jobs here. It means more prosperity here. It means more opportunity here.... The Liberal stance is dumb on so many levels that it's hard to know where to start, except perhaps by observing that the poverty of policy imagination within the official opposition has reached alarming depths.... [Private universities] ... will fill a niche, answer a demand and provide a service."

As I mentioned, this government is committed to ensuring students have access to high-quality and relevant post-secondary programs. We have already taken steps to achieve that goal at our publicly funded institutions.

We have expanded enrolment in science and high-technology programs through the access to opportunities program to increase the number of graduates in these high-demand sectors. Through SuperBuild, we are investing with our partners more than $1.8 billion—Peterborough: Trent University, $32 million; Sir Sandford Fleming College, approximately $28 million. We are preparing for the double cohort. We are preparing for top quality university and college in my riding and we are going to be prepared to meet the demands of the future.

I'm proud to be a participant in this debate. More important, I am proud that we are finally responding to the needs of our students and our communities.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Questions and comments?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): First of all, I think the member for Peterborough should maybe correct the record. My understanding is that Lakefield College is not a university, it is a high school. That's the first thing that should be corrected. It is a fine institution. He also said it was the best anywhere. I think there are a lot of excellent high schools throughout Ontario. I can name public schools—St Mike's College here in Toronto. Lawrence Park in my riding is a public institution.

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I just want to say that maybe this bill is a wakeup call for all of us in Ontario who perhaps take for granted our excellent public institutions. If you look at our universities—and I've had direct experience, sending my four children to them in Ontario. Actually, one went to McGill, but one has graduated from Ryerson, one is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design and one is at Queen's right now. They are excellent institutions, second to none.

If you compare what they offer at Queen's or U of T, compared to what you have to pay in the States, it's $25,000 for tuition at comparable schools like Dartmouth or Cornell. In a public institution here in Toronto or in Kingston, you can get an excellent education. I think we, as legislators, and people in Ontario interested in education, better start standing up and defending our public institutions because they provide an excellent education—as I said, a world standard.

I know the member doesn't mean to do this, but he basically implied that our public institutions aren't up to par. They're not perfect, but our institutions—I gave an example of Queen's, Western, Ryerson, the Ontario College of Art and Design—are second to none and they are publicly supported. I don't want to see this government take them for granted or in this Legislature somehow hamper their efforts. Their efforts are producing great results, in the private sector providing employees and certainly internationally in academic circles. Let's not forget what they do.

Mr Marchese: I'll just comment on a number of areas. It's difficult to comment on everything, because you said so much, member from Peterborough, but just a couple of things.

You were saying, "If we don't do it, somebody else will." If we listen to your argument or the argument of the minister and this government, we're not going to be spending any money because they will be privately funded. If that is the case, if they don't come here, we've got nothing to lose, really, because we have a well-funded university system, you argue, that's very competitive and doing very well. So we don't have any need for this private university, do we?

But wait a moment. It suggests, by offering the quality assessment board, however, there might be some problem. Why else would you bring into this equation the quality assessment board if you didn't think there would be some problems? You're admitting, Mr Stockwell, to the fact that you're going to have a problem with these private universities; therefore, you're introducing a quality assessment board, meaning, "We've got a problem with this introduction of private universities so we better put in some mechanisms to protect ourselves from the critics, because they might just be right."

This is, in my view, humble as it is, an admission that you people know that organizations like Phoenix, south of here, have caused serious problems for themselves and the student body in the US, Mr Stockwell. Go over there and respond in your two minutes. Come on.

The point is, you create a problem and then you set about creating another bureaucracy as a way of solving that problem.

To the member from Peterborough and others who are present, we don't need a private university. We don't

need the US folks to come over the border and make money out of our education system. Nobody wants it.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I think the point is that we need to reframe this debate, much as the member from Peterborough has pointed out.

One just cannot accept the illogical thesis offered by the members opposite that somehow this is pitting public institutions against a new type of competition in private universities. Evidence of that is quite clear. All you have to do is visit some of the community colleges. The member for Hamilton Mountain has cited Conestoga.

In my own case, Humber College, a vice-president of business development, Ms Chris Gatavekas, has for a number of years had to operate within the constraints of the old community college education system. She has wanted to expand and get on with the job of creating a lot more new jobs. Humber College, among a number of community colleges across Ontario, has done so, in plastics development, in automotive technology, in robotics. How did they come about? Sometimes they came about because of partnerships, but all too often, unfailingly, an appalling record by our friends in Ottawa, who are denying this province, its employers and particularly its workers nearly $600 million of training funds that we never hear about from our friends opposite. Every other province and territory has an agreement; not Ontario. Ottawa is deliberately discriminating against us—all the more necessity for this bill.

Another example: the architectural technologists want associate degrees. We put through a specific bill four years ago to sponsor that. What is happening? We're losing these folks to the United States. This is all the more reason for the rationale and need for this bill.

Mr Agostino: I listened with great interest to the member from Peterborough. If there really was a statement that clearly shows the difference between the Mike Harris Conservatives and the Dalton McGuinty Liberals, I believe it was the comment of the member for Hamilton Mountain, Marie Bountrogianni, that education is a right. The member from Peterborough feels that education is a privilege in this province. That fundamentally shows the difference between the Dalton McGuinty Liberals and the Mike Harris Conservatives. Clearly, we believe that if you have the ability, the will and the drive to go on, you should be able to. What you believe is not only that you have the ability, the will and the drive, but more importantly that you have to have the money—the great divide between the rich and the poor in this province.

My colleague talked about Lakefield. Yes, Lakefield is a great school. But let me tell you what the fees are at Lakefield: grade 9 to OAC as a boarder, $31,575 per year; grade 9 to OAC as a day student, $19,806; Grades 7 and 8, $14,975. How many parents in this province, working people, can afford those types of fees? We need first-class, quality, publicly funded university education, and your government has failed miserably. You still owe the university system $200 million of the $400 million you cut out in 1996. You've badly underfunded the university system. You are creating the kind of crisis you want in order to justify private universities.

I understand the Minister of Labour believes in private universities for his rich friends and the kids of his rich friends at the Albany Club. We understand you believe that. We don't. We believe every Ontarian should have the opportunity to be able to afford to go to university, unlike the Tories, who believe it should be based on how much money your parents have.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Stewart: The comment just made is interesting. I have a number of friends in Peterborough whose children go to Lakefield College School—and it's not a university. I didn't say it was. I called it what it is, Lakefield College School. Some of those people—many of them—are working people. We have a number of aboriginal students at that university as well. But it's the quality, and it proves one thing: the private colleges and private universities can work well and can deliver the quality of education we need.

I want to read another quote, if I may: "This significant and visionary action by government recognizes the quality of Ontario college programming, the needs of Ontario students and the demands of the job market. Applied degrees will give students greater choice in the knowledge economy"—Howard Rundle, chair of the committee of presidents of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. I suggest those types of people making those types comments are truly dedicated.

I also made the comment that I believe competition in the education system would greatly enhance education in this province. That is Gary Stewart's statement, that is my opinion, and certainly does not reflect the opinion of members of my caucus. But we have to have competition. We have to make it the very best we possibly can. I have seen competition for many things in my few years of life, and I can tell you that competition adds accountability, adds efficiency, it adds a quality we cannot do without in our students in this great province.

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The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): It should not be surprising that the government is bringing forward this bill. I think we recognize the ultimate agenda of this government. To be fair, anybody who is surprised that they're going to introduce private, American-style universities into Ontario is pretty naive. I certainly expected it. It is not something I thought would be avoided under this government. There have been advocates on the right wing who wanted private universities to come into Ontario a long time ago. They have been people who have not been prepared to fund appropriately the universities and colleges that are there at the present time, which require not only the capital funds you will see from the so-called SuperBuild fund but also the funds that are necessary to operate those universities and colleges.

Some here who served at the municipal level would know that when making a decision on whether one is going to embark on a capital expenditure, for instance, to

build a building, often the major cost is the operation of that building and the operation of the services provided within that building. Although post-secondary institutions are no doubt delighted to get funding from any level of government to expand their operations, to accommodate their needs and to bring about new opportunities for students—they're happy about that—the key is to have the operating funds, and that is where the students themselves end up having to pay a considerable amount.

There are some countries that have a very small tuition, almost a nominal tuition. I think there's a recognition that in the year 2000, students at the post-secondary level should probably pay at least a portion of the cost of their education. I've heard of no one who says that's not going to happen. I think the NDP at one time had it in their policy package that they were going to abolish tuition. When they came to power they found out it was difficult to do, and I think they raised it by either 32% or 40%.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: The member for Windsor-St Clair says 50%. That wasn't because they wanted to be mean to the students, and that wasn't because they wanted to see this happen. In fact, as I said, it was in their policy package that they would abolish tuition. But I think there was a recognition that to obtain the funds necessary to have those institutions offer the kinds of programs they wanted them to offer students, and within the fiscal realities of a deep recession, they found they had to significantly increase the tuition fees. That's a recognition.

What we don't want to see in this province is going back to the days when the only people who could have post-secondary education were those who were either extremely bright and were able to obtain scholarships through their performance academically—and we applaud those people and are happy to see them in post-secondary education—but also those who had sufficient money to go to a post-secondary institution of education. So essentially it was very bright people or the children of the rich who were able to obtain that post-secondary education.

The other day in a stop along his endeavour now—I guess it's the campaign trail—the Prime Minister said he did not apologize for the millennium scholarship that the federal government has put into effect, which allows students some additional funding to obtain a post-secondary education. I know the province of Quebec—at least the present administration in Quebec—was very annoyed about that, because they do not like to see the federal government have anything to do with education. However, they were simply providing funding for students across this country to further their post-secondary education. I think that is an excellent program and a good millennium project.

It is my understanding—someone in the government will correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm quite sure I'm correct—that in Ontario what this government did was subtract the amount of money you got from a millennium scholarship, saying, "We'll take that off what your loan would have been, what your financial obligation to the government might be," instead of allowing them to use that for education. So even here, as we see so often, when the senior level of government, the federal government provides funding, as they did for child care, we find there's a clawback from the provincial government, so that the people who would have been the recipients are no better off.

Let's look at the philosophy of this. I happen to believe we should invest appropriately, and that means substantially in post-secondary education. There's a great payoff for it. It's not money down the drain. When we see the students we produce—it sounds almost like a production line when you say it—when you see the students who come out of our institutions of post-secondary education, we recognize that we have something that can be considered to be quality for the country, a real asset for the country. Whether they're in the professions or in speciality areas, they have obtained an education which has allowed them to advance further and helps our competitiveness.

I am the first to concede that we're in a very competitive world today and we want to ensure we have a well-educated and well-trained population. But it must be within the financial realm of those who are going to school. One would hate to see students who simply do not have the money be unable to access post-secondary education. I notice that a deregulation has taken place now for certain professions. The idea behind that is that places like Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario and others would say, "Well, if you get an MBA, you're probably going to have a chance to make a lot more money, or if you get a legal degree or a medical degree, chances are that your earnings in the future will be quite substantial." That may well be the case. But what I want to say here is that what we'll see more and more is that it's the sons and daughters of the wealthiest people in the province who will have first access to those positions in medical school, law school, the other professions and in other preferred places in the post-secondary institutions of education in this province.

One of the fundamentals that certainly brought me into politics is that the publicly funded education system is there to provide equality of opportunity for students in this province. I cannot, nor can anyone else, guarantee the outcome. That is for the student. Perhaps that is for luck, in some cases. But what I want to be able to guarantee is that whether a person comes from a home of very modest means economically or whether it's the son or daughter of Conrad Black, where there are millions available to them, those people will have the same opportunity. That's what we in the Liberal Party have believed over the years. I remember a speech that Dalton McGuinty made just the other day about that, wanting to ensure there would be that equality of opportunity.

I was at Ridley College in St Catharines the other day. Ridley College is a private school, and I was giving the same message to those students at that private school, whose parents are paying a substantial amount of money

for them to attend that school. I indicated to them that not everyone had that same privilege available and that my responsibility as a publicly elected official is to ensure that within the publicly funded system, whether it's elementary, secondary or post-secondary, there is equality of opportunity. That can be provided only if the cost is within the reach of those students and their parents.

That's what we're fearful of when you start introducing these private, American-style universities into Ontario. I think a better course of action would be to appropriately fund our post-secondary institutions of education, as opposed to inviting others in to compete. I know there's a theory among many in the right wing—it's in the bible of the Fraser Institute—that somehow you must have this competition from the private sector in the field of education before you can achieve something approaching paradise in the post-secondary realm. But I happen to believe that if we appropriately fund our publicly funded system, places such as Brock University, McMaster, the University of Toronto and others, Niagara College, Conestoga College, Cambrian College—in other words, both the community colleges and the universities in this province—we will go a long way to providing the kind of quality education we want for our students.

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So I'm quite concerned when I see this government now bringing in the American universities, the private universities, because there's no question that's going to siphon students away, just as in the United States, with what has happened in the elementary and secondary system with vouchers, for instance, what you see there is a deterioration of the public school system because people of means are able to take their children out of the public school system and put them in the private school system. Therefore, there is less incentive for government to build a strong public school system where people of all backgrounds are able to join together as we have in this country in our publicly funded school system. I am concerned—I don't want to say I'm shocked, because I'm not shocked by what this government is doing—at the consequences of allowing these universities in, that some of the money, even from the students, that would have gone to our universities will be available to the private ones.

The member for Hamilton Mountain, the Liberal critic in the field of colleges, universities and training, gave an example of Brock University, where there's a college of education. Many students have had to go, as we say in our area and as they do in Windsor, "over the river." That means over to the United States. And they had to pay a substantial amount of money in American dollars, perhaps US$10,000, US$12,000, US$13,000. There are some who think the solution is, "Why don't we just have them pay that over here and we'll put them in our universities here?" My solution would be to have the cost of university as it is here available to those students but there would be more opportunities for them, because if you look in the field of education, there is going to be a shortage of teachers.

One of the reasons we have that, and I digress a bit here but I know the Speaker will be indulgent of my digression, is that so many people are leaving the teaching profession right now, the day they can. This is a change. Many of us have in our families—perhaps you do, Speaker, within the larger family out there—people who have been in the field of education. At one time they taught till they were 65 years old, the retirement age, and stayed in education. Now the morale is so bad in so many of our schools that people are leaving not at the end of a school year when they're eligible for retirement, not at the end of the month or the end of the term, they're leaving the day they can.

I was talking to a person the other day who in my view has devoted his whole life to education. That is the person's whole life. He had decided that that is what he was going to, devote it to education. I would have thought this was a person who would have taught till he was 65 years old. In fact, I thought the person would at least teach until eligible for retirement. This person is leaving the day he can, in February of this year. For some, I understand it. For some, they have reached a point in their educational career where they're prepared to leave. But when you see people who are so dedicated, who've spent their entire life dealing with education, and their morale is so low and they're so—I can't use the terminology—let's say "annoyed with" the policies of the government and the attitude of the government towards those individuals. The former minister of education is trying to determine what I was thinking of at the time, so I said "annoyed."

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Don't fall into that.

Mr Bradley: I would never fall into that, of course, as my friend from Scarborough-Agincourt says. But they are so dispirited that they're leaving the education profession. We're going to be competing for teachers soon. California has to give all kinds of incentives now to get teachers into the system. That's why I'd like to see an expansion of the opportunities for students to go into our colleges of education in the province. The answer isn't to set up American-style high-priced opportunities for them, which are largely opportunities for the rich. I think it is to expand our present system and ensure that it's within the financial reach of the students in this province.

I don't expect it's going to be free any more. At one time there were some opportunities in certain categories where it was free. I don't expect that's going to be the case in the year 2000, and I don't think students really expect that. But they don't want to accumulate such a huge debt that they spend half of the rest of their life paying off that debt and seem to be mired in debt.

We get it back anyway. If these students accomplish what we hope they will in post-secondary education, then we're going to get it back just in terms of income taxes and other taxes that people normally pay in their everyday lives, because they're going to be better equipped to compete in the world.

So I am concerned. I do believe, as my colleagues in the Liberal caucus do, in an increased investment—I

don't use the word "expenditure"; I call it an investment—in post-secondary education. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities seems to be clouding the issue out there. We support Ontario colleges in their efforts to offer new and innovative programs to Ontario students. We do not support the introduction of private universities that will draw precious funds away from those public institutions.

Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions, as you would know, in North America that has been reducing its investments in higher education. SuperBuild funding, while it's welcome for some—and I am happy to see it when it is allocated, although the conditions on getting it are much tougher these days-does nothing to address the critical need for operating dollars. Colleges and universities welcomed the money, but as I say, it's how they're going to heat the buildings, staff the buildings and things of that nature. Mike Harris promised every motivated and qualified student a space, but surely not at the cost of some $40,000.

The government is claiming that private universities will be fully funded by private money, with no taxpayer dollars, that they will enhance quality through competition, and that public money will have more impact because the public system will have fewer students. Well, the government is claiming to have put a safeguard in the act. We don't think that's going to happen. In reality, private universities do draw on public funds by means of student loans and grants, tax incentives to students and donors, and research grants.

The minister strongly stated that students at private universities in Ontario would be eligible for student loans. In the US, non-public institutions receive an estimated 30% of their income via public means. Even Harvard receives 17% of its funding from government grants.

The competition already exists in the publicly funded system in Ontario. What I'm fearful of is that after we get over the double cohort—that is, where we have abolished grade 13 and you're going to have two years of students coming in at once—once we get past that bulge the government is going to be looking to close universities and colleges in this province. That's what my fear is. Some will say, "It will never happen." But if you have these American universities moving in, these private universities coming in, what you will see is that people—the wealthiest people particularly, because they're able to do so—may filter into those systems, and we will have our own colleges and universities, paid for by people in their community as well as by the taxpayers of the province and national taxpayers, disappear.

Will that happen tomorrow? Of course not. Is it likely to happen within two or three years? No. But if you look down the line, if you follow this pattern that the government is following, you might well see that happen.

I think it's important to ensure, from junior kindergarten to post-secondary education to graduate school, that you have a situation where you have equal access for all, an equality of opportunity which allows the child or the adult, by the time they're in post-secondary education, from the poorest family economically in the province or the richest family, to have that same access to a high-quality publicly funded education system.

There was never a fight, for instance, when we had Bill 160 before us, between the teachers of this province and the government of Ontario. The fight was essentially between those who believed in a strong, publicly funded, vibrant public education system and those who did not. That's what the fight was all about. I see that fight now branching out into post-secondary education.

1710

Let us hope this government reconsiders. Let us hope the government recognizes the valid arguments put forth by people within our own university system and our own college system. None of us have objection to the part that allows community colleges to grant degrees in specific circumstances. I think that's progressive and I will support that part of the legislation. I cannot support, however, the introduction of private universities into this province.

The Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Marchese: I know the member for Thornhill might be doing her two minutes as a rebuttal. I'm looking forward to the hour I'm going to have next week to debate this bill and to have an opportunity to respond to the comments you are about to make, and made earlier, that I don't have time for. I support much of what the member for St Catharines has said. I agree with 95% of everything that he has advanced here as an argument against private universities.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Let's hear about the 5%.

Mr Marchese: Let me tell you, because I don't have much time: on the point of equal opportunity, while we agree with this notion of equal opportunity, it's not always true that people get equal opportunity in society. I'm sure he'll agree with me, because we know that those who are rich, those who come from professional backgrounds, are always going to have the edge over those who are much poorer and who make less and who don't come from professional backgrounds. Even if you open the doors to these poorer people, it doesn't mean they're going to get equal opportunity, because the conditions they bring are very different. So equality of opportunity with respect to unequal conditions does not bring about equal results. That's the point.

The whole issue of access is a bit of a tricky one and I'll have an opportunity to respond to that when I have my hour lead. But I agree with the notion of equal opportunity and I agree that governments have to commit themselves to it as a way of making sure that those who are at the bottom somehow have the conditions to be able to compete with those who are better off. The problem is that when this government speaks about access and giving, as the bill says, "choice and excellence," because they are going to rely on tuition fees to get into these private universities, they're going to have to double the tuition fees to be able to get in. At the moment if it's

$25,000, people are going to have to spend $50,000, so there goes the whole issue of access. It's gone.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I'm very pleased to be taking part in this what we traditionally call in the House two-minute hit in response to the speaker from the Liberal side and from the NDP.

"Liberals Just Don't Get it When it Comes to Schools." One might think it's something I'm trying to say. It is a headline written by John Ibbitson of the Globe and Mail on March 9 of this year. I'll take the liberty of perhaps elaborating on that.

"Liberals Just Don't Get it When it Comes to Schools....

"It means more jobs here. It means more prosperity here. It means more opportunity here.... The Liberal stance is dumb on so many levels that it's hard to know where to start, except perhaps by observing that the poverty of policy imagination within the official opposition has reached alarming depths.... [Private universities] will fill a niche, answer a demand, and provide a service."

One would say that perhaps the newspaper man has a biased view—I don't know why—but here is a quote from 19-year-old York University student Alfred Avanessy: "I'm somewhat distraught at the fears voiced by many of Canada's student leaders about private universities. Instead of protesting this initiative, we should be embracing it. The time has come for Canada to follow in the footsteps of most industrialized nations in offering students a choice between a public and private post-secondary education."

I had the privilege a couple of years ago while on vacation, in my own private time, to take my children to Boston, a fine city, if I may say so, to show them MIT and Harvard. I want to make sure that choice is available within Canada and within Ontario as well.

Mr Duncan: I'm pleased to respond to my colleague from St Catharines. I listened attentively to the points he made, and he spoke about and recognized, I think as all of us do, the competitive nature of the global economy.

One of the things that I think has made Ontario historically significant competitively over the years is our post-secondary education system. It has worked; it really has. This year, Ontario will surpass Michigan as the largest automotive jurisdiction in the world in terms of production and in terms of jobs.

I'll remind the members opposite that we've only had public universities for about 40 or 50 years now in many instances, and the system has worked. It has provided the highest standards of education. It has graduated Nobel laureates. It has produced great engineers, great scientists—great philosophers, I might add—and it's done so in a way that keeps things accessible for working families, people like those I represent in Windsor. It does so across the province.

So this bill, in my view, is going in the wrong direction for the wrong reasons. We are competitive. The system does work. The system has had great success. Of late, it's suffered under budget cuts, cuts particularly emanating from this government, and that's most unfortunate. The time has come to reinvest in our post-secondary institutions to provide those opportunities in what I believe to be—what is—the most competitive and finest post-secondary education system in the world.

Mrs Molinari: I'd like to respond, and it's a pleasure to be involved in this kind of debate.

Some of the comments that have been made have to be rectified. When people talk about, "This is just for rich families," it's in fact for everyone. What we're doing is providing more access for students, more choices and more flexibility, quite frankly, for the students, adult students mainly, who are working and are not able to take advantage of the traditional type of post-secondary education. This is allowing them to continue their education in a very flexible timeline.

I also want to state that the result of the consultation process, the whole summary, was posted on the Web page on October 17. Some of the comments that have been made by the members opposite were that it was a secret process, a process that wasn't open. It was an open process. All of the results have been posted, and anyone who wants to know what the summary of those results is can just look it up on the Web page.

Mr Bradley: Not everybody has a Web page.

Mrs Molinari: I'm responding to some of the members opposite. I would imagine that all of you have access to—and actually the member said that her assistant was very good at doing research. If she's got a good assistant who can do research, I'm sure she'll have access to the Web page as well.

This is about opportunities, as I said. There will be no government funding for any of these private institutions. What we are doing is committing to helping students, not helping the private institutions with funding. Students will also have access to OSAP for programs that are deemed appropriate by the quality assessment board that will determine which are the universities that will be able to operate in the province of Ontario. This is about helping students.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Bradley: I thank the members for Trinity-Spadina, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, Windsor-St Clair and Thornhill for their comments.

That's exactly what we're talking about here, equality of opportunity, and I don't think the equality of opportunity is enhanced by allowing American universities in. Rather, it would be much better if we were to expand the opportunities within our own universities and colleges. Essentially, the people who will be going to the private universities in this province are going to be people who have the money to do so. That's who is going to be there.

It's just like the two-tiered health care system that I heard Stockwell Day, I think it was, talking about the other day—somebody can correct me—or one of his people. I guess it was Mrs Meredith from British Columbia talking about the two-tiered system of health care. This is the same thing as that. They think that if you

somehow relieve the pressure by allowing rich people to get their health care somewhere else, somehow everybody benefits. Well, they don't. The rich people benefit because they can afford the very best opportunities, and the others are left to fend for themselves, so to speak.

1720

The same is true when you allow the introduction of private universities. What would be much better is to expand our already high-quality universities in this province, make an investment in them and our colleges across the province. That would be supportive. If the government brought in a bill doing that—it probably wouldn't need that, but if it brought in legislation doing that, I think we'd see enthusiastic support from all sides of this House, particularly if they were prepared to allocate the necessary operating funds to ensure that the quality of education provided in those post-secondary institutions of education would be very high. The ideology of this government militates rather in favour of something that will provide a benefit to the rich and the most powerful in the province.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Interjections.

The Speaker: I hope the member is ready. I apologize. The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: You've got to get in the game here. It's your turn as Tories, right? We skip a turn.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think you will know, and the member should know, that the rotation now goes to the NDP. We're all disappointed that he didn't realize that.

The Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: I thank you for that intervention; it was brilliant.

So it's my turn. I'm ready. I'm always ready, happy to serve, always on duty. I'll get my little notes together and we'll have a speech that I can begin for this fine hour.

I want to begin by saying that the title is where we should always begin, because it's an indication—member for Thornhill, stick around. I wanted—

Mrs Molinari: I will.

Mr Marchese: OK. The title is An Act to enact the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: The problem I've got with this, monsieur Sampson, Minister, is that the title belies its content, and I'm going to explain why. First of all, where's the choice in this act called An Act to enact the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): All over the place.

Mr Marchese: All over? I'm going to explain to you why it isn't all over the place. In my response to the member for St Catharines I was saying that we do not have equality of opportunity in our society. We think we do, Tories certainly say that we do, but we don't. Because if you, Mr Sampson, as a banker, have a whole heap of money, your children are going to be better off than Mr Marchese's children when it comes to choices that you children will have versus mine.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: That's an example. Forget you; let's talk about somebody else. Someone with a whole heap of money, somebody with millions of dollars—not you, but somebody with millions—in my view has a lot more choices than someone who's got only up to $50,000, $60,000 or $70,000. Doesn't that make sense? So is there equality of opportunity if someone is loaded with money and someone doesn't have any? It's a simple equation, right? The guy who's got a lot of money is going to have more choices than the guy who doesn't have any money. It's a simple equation for those of you who are tuned in to this political forum of the day.

When they argue about choices, good taxpayers of Ontario, I know a lot of you taxpayers are not wealthy people. In fact, these Reform-minded Tories are appealing to the working man, the working guy who is only earning $30,000, $40,000, $50,000. You are the people, the taxpayers, who are sustaining this party. They are reaching out to you and they are saying to you, "With this bill, you and your children will have more access." And I'm saying to you, good taxpayers of Ontario, the ones who support this party, that your children are not going to have the same access as their children, the children of the rich. They are not.

I tell you what. I'll explain it even further for your benefit and for the members who are listening. At the moment, tuition fees represent 35% of what it costs them to fund our university education. Some 35% of the money that is funded for public post-secondary education comes from the individual who goes to university. It's a whole lot of money. It used to be 25% under the Liberals and New Democrats.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: I'm happy to admit it, but under the Tories it has jumped to 35%, and they think, good taxpayers of Ontario, that that is normal. So at the moment the average tuition fees of my daughter, at the end of four years of university, will be $20,000 to $25,000—tuition plus the other costs like textbooks. I tell you, it's a lot of money, which Mr Marchese doesn't have, and I'm well paid. If Mr Marchese, a member of provincial Parliament, who earns a good salary in this place, who makes $78,000, doesn't earn enough to help his daughter, are you, taxpayer, making $40,000 or $50,000 or $60,000, able to pay for her or his tuition fees? I think you don't have the money. So who does? Who's got this choice?

They want to introduce private universities and they argue that private universities ought to be funded by the private university, meaning no money will come from public institutions. If that is the case, as you argue—and I will show you later that it is not—that it is completely funded by this private sector, this entity somewhere out there, then if the tuition fees represent 35% of the cost, meaning on the average $20,000 to $25,000, it is estimated—Mr Sampson, fellow minister, I don't understand why you're shaking your little head.

Hon Mr Sampson: I'm trying to figure out what channel you're on. I don't know. Are you on another planet?

Mr Marchese: The minister, Mr Sampson, says I am from another planet. Well, let's put the argument out. I leave it to you, good constituents, to figure out whether Marchese is from planet Earth or Mr Sampson and his government are from planet Mars. I'll leave it to you.

Mr Bradley: Rosie, it's the Albany Club they're from.

Mr Marchese: The Albany Club indeed; a good place for the working man to go and mingle with the other working men.

Let me continue with the argument. You just said to me what planet am I from, and I'm telling you I'm from planet Earth. On planet Earth, students pay, on average, $20,000 to $25,000 for university. This is planet Earth we're talking about, with our feet and yours presumably, and hopefully, firmly planted on the ground, right? It's a reality you can't dispute.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Minister of the Environment, follow with me on this. If you're going to allow private universities to come into the province, you've made the argument that they're going to have to fund themselves, correct? Yes or no? OK, you nod, indicating yes.

If that is the case, then someone has to pay for that university education, that little niche e-commerce kind of thing that you guys want to bring into Canada. If the tuition fee in our public universities is about $20,000 to $25,000, what do you think, Mr Sampson? That it's going to be for the student who is going to go to the private university? Well, it's got to be more, right? Are you following? If there is no public funding, it means the student is going to have to pay more for his or her own education. Speaker, are we together on this?

Interjection.

1730

Mr Marchese: Sure it is, because we're part of the same team. If we're part of the same hockey team we understand that we play together, right? But they're not playing together with me. They're playing their own game. That's why they're accusing me of being on another planet.

I'm saying that those students who go to the private university are going to be paying presumably anywhere from $40,000 to $45,000 in tuition fees. You can't dispute it. I'm waiting for one of you, when you have your moment, to dispute that fact. What I'm saying to you is that your title belies the reality. The reality, therefore, is that you're not giving access to people, you're giving access to a few specialized individuals who want that niche education but who have the money to go. I've got to tell you, if they have to spend $40,000 or $45,000 a year, you've got to be more than a minister in this place to have enough money to be able to pay for their education. You've got to be a federal minister to earn enough money to send your daughter or your son to university, because you need the extra $40,000 which the federal members are getting over the provincial members. That might possibly be just enough to pay for the tuition fees to send that child to a private university. So much for access. What access do you people want to give, and to whom? The point is, you're giving access to the people who don't need it. You're giving access to people who want their own private, little club. I'm saying to you it's not good. They don't need a private university in order to be able to get what we offer in our public institutions.

You often argue that our post-secondary institutions are quite good, that in fact they're great and they offer the kinds of services that everybody seems to want. If that is the case, why open up our system to private universities that come from down south to make money out of it? Why would you do that? Why not give our public institutions the support they need to be able to provide what you think we are not doing? If you believe we're not providing something, good God, it's your job to provide it. It shouldn't be up to some private institution to bring it to you. It is your responsibility as the non-government government to bring the public and its needs into this institution. That's what I think, and I think the people who are listening agree with me.

They also agree with me that when you made this announcement in April and organized some private little meetings, you, the minister of post-secondary education, closed those meetings to a few people you obviously wanted to bring to that meeting. We said to you, "Why do you skulk away in such a vulpine manner? Why would you do that? Why don't you open up those doors so that we know what you're discussing, so that we know what the framework of that discussion is?" We have no clue. We had no clue whom you invited. We don't know what they told you. You've never told us. You've never released the information that permits the public and us, as opposition members, to know what kinds of discussions you had with the few people you invited behind doors. We think that's wrong. If you feel good about your legislation, then open up the windows and open the doors and let us in. Let the public into those discussions so they can assist you, inform you and advise you on the kinds of institutions we want and need. But you shut them out. It was a private, little club you had with a couple of people you obviously thought would be on your side.

I did happen to meet, by accident, one person out of that whole gang you invited who said to me just a couple of days ago—not even a couple of months ago but a couple of days ago—that she was in those meetings. She said that the fact that private universities are coming is not subject to debate. That was not on. The framework, therefore, had already been established by the minister and so the advice she wanted from those people was how best to bring private universities in so that presumably the minister wouldn't look so foolish when she did bring them in just last week. But there was no discussion of the framework, no discussion of the need to have a money-making private university or not. I think that just reflects the manner, the modus operandi of the government over and over again. It is an ideological party that just does

what it wants and not what the public needs, not what the public desires.

I have often said in this place in relation to this bill, who is asking for Bill 132, An Act to enact the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act? Who is asking for it? I have been asking around. I have been asking high school students, "Have you been asking for this private university?" They say no. In my riding of Trinity-Spadina we've got hundreds of university professors. I exaggerate a bit but there are a lot of university professors in my riding and I ask them personally, "Are you people begging the minister, pleading with her to bring in private universities?" They say, "Good God, no. It's nothing to do with us. She doesn't consult us as professors in the system."

So I move on, I go around and say to the various faculties, the various university institutions, "Are you people asking for it?" They say no. What some of them are publicly saying is they're not afraid of the competition. But for those who do say that, they miss the point. The point is not that our public institutions cannot compete with the private universities. That's not the issue. The issue is that our universities are good institutions that are performing well, are internationally known, and what they're looking for is support from the government to be able to do a better job.

Of course I understand they're not afraid of the competition, because there is nothing to be afraid of. There's no quality that comes out of these private universities that I am aware of. In fact, the kind of quality we're talking about has brought people like Phoenix, that organization, into disrepute, if anything. So there's no quality involved. The point I make about the university presidents who say, "We're not afraid of the competition," is that they're missing the boat. They are not seeing the larger picture in terms of how our society is being restructured and reshaped by this ideological, Conservative government for its own political ends. Will it divert public funds to be able to support these private institutions? I say yes, and those who have studied this matter are saying funds will be diverted from the public purse to support them, and in that regard those institutions, those universities that are saying, "We've got nothing to be afraid of," are wrong. Because the more money gets sucked out of our public institutions to support the private universities, the more it will eventually hurt those very people who are saying, "We've got nothing to be afraid of."

The point I'm making, good taxpayer of Ontario, is, who are we serving here? Who is clamouring for a post-secondary, for-profit university? Where is the need? Where are the demonstrators saying, "We want private universities in here"? Where are they? There aren't any. So who's driving this agenda? It's the minister and the Premier and a few cabinet ministers and that's it. They are the ones who are driving this agenda, because if it's not responding to any perceived need, it is a reflection of a Conservative ideology. They love to privatize. They love to privatize anything that moves, anything that they can.

Similarly, I argue, just about a month ago we had in this building a number of organizations that had come, organizations that are, dare I say, Conservative-inclined, or with proclivities that lean to the Conservative Party. These interest groups—by the way, they are not interest groups if they support Tories, but if they support the NDP they're interest groups. But these individuals who had come to Queen's Park, those who are Conservative in ideology, came here in our press chamber and said to this provincial government, "We need charter schools. We want public money so that we can start our own schools and we think you, Conservative government, who agree with us, should do it."

1740

Here's the way I think it works. The Minister of Education, elementary and secondary, probably had lunch with this group of people, not necessarily lunch but a meeting with them, and I am convinced the Minister of Education and some of the MPPs have said to this group, "We need you groups of people, you organizations, to go out and create a need for charter schools. We want you to create the sense that somehow there are people out there clamouring for charter schools."

The minister is likely to have said, "Be careful. I can't be seen to publicly agree with you, because at the moment we are not in favour of charter schools and public opinion is against it, so we are a bit squeamish about lending our support to you. But we've got to begin the debate somewhere, so we want you to go to Queen's Park and raise a fuss. In the meantime, I can't be seen to be supporting you, but what I want you to do is to come back in a couple of weeks' time, or three or four weeks or a month and a half, and do the same thing so that we create the impression, you see, that there are a whole lot of people out there who want charter schools."

It's coming. It's coming because Mike Harris, the Premier, and the Minister of Education dissociate themselves from it for a short while until they've manufactured consent or created the impression that people want it. It's brilliant. They're good. They're very good, and they're getting better and better all the time.

Mr Bradley: They hired Paul Rhodes.

Mr Marchese: Paul Rhodes, oh, my God. They've got a lot of people who know how to manufacture public opinion, how to twist it and shape it, mould it. They know how to do it.

So they were able to do that at the elementary-secondary level, and they're gradually beginning to create, not a groundswell, but a little murmur of a desire for charter schools. But have you noticed? They haven't been able to do the same at the post-secondary level. You know why? Because they can't find a crowd of people who say, "We want private universities." They can't find them. That's where I think, Mr Sampson, you've got to go out of this province and reach out to some other planet to bring in these supporters of the private schools, because you can't find them on planet Earth. I feel if you could have found them, you would have brought them here in the Legislature, the press gallery, urging and

demanding that we have a private university. They're nowhere to be found.

So you engage in your usual practice of obscurantism, which is what your language of all bills plays with. You obscure things in such a way that you lead people to believe one thing whereas it's the opposite that is contained within the substance of every bill that you've introduced into this House.

Where do we go from here? How else are you going to be able to define it, to explain it as a way of being able to get the support you're looking for? The problem that many are speaking to is that our existing university system, that has diversity as its focus, that has equity as part of its focus, good, sound principles, that has comprehensive programs—not narrow, not focused on one or two particular issues but much more broadly based, not niche marketing education—our system where they're doing good research and basic research and would love to do more research if only they got more money from governments, where they have the academic freedom, by and large, to do what needs to be done, they're saying, "Support us. Give us the money we need to be able to give diversity, equity, comprehensive programming and the good research that we're doing." They're not getting it. They're not getting what they need.

As a result, they introduce a smokescreen for the restructuring of post-secondary education which enhances neither quality nor access. There is no quality when it comes to these private universities.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: John, no, I tell you, the programs that have been offered by some of these private universities are in much disrepute, not quality. But it's up to you, taxpayers, to discuss, to debate, to listen, to demand hearings, because at the end of my speech—and it won't be today but another day—I'm going to be asking you to be demanding the kind of committee hearings that are deserved in order to have the accountability that you demand of governments. If you hold this government accountable, you will have to call them one by one and say, "We need public hearings in order to have our views heard." I will do that. I'll repeat that message as we come closer to the end of my hour—and it won't be today, it'll be another day. I'll invite people to the following session, which will probably be Monday. We'll continue this debate on Monday, I suspect.

How do we deal with governments that refuse to give those public institutions the support that is desperately needed? How do you deal with a government that continues to deny and deny—like the Minister of the Environment, Minister of Housing, Minister of Education, every minister imaginable in this place, where they stand up day in and day out and deny and deny every fact presented by the opposition. They say smugly, with their own prepared texts that those poor assistants have to prepare for them—they have the same prepared text to every question we ask. No matter how simple or complicated, their answers are always the same, framed in the same way. They will tell you over and over again, "We gave more money than you ever did and the other opposition party ever did." They just say that over and over again, deny and deny and deny. That's all you get from this government. You would know, those of you who are watching this program, what I'm talking about. How often have you watched the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Education, every other minister—post-secondary education—not answer questions? It's more than once—more than once. I'd venture to say 99% of the time they don't answer our questions. That ought to tell you something about the way this government behaves.

Interjection: That is baloney.

Mr Bradley: Not 99%; 100%.

Mr Marchese: Jim, you're quite right. Maybe I was too generous. Did I say 99%? I may have been a tad too generous. I've got to tell you, I shake my head in desperation every day when they answer questions; in desperation, shaking my head, wondering where these ministers are coming from, because it ain't planet Earth.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: It is not planet Earth whence you come. You come from your own recesses, some aspect of some place on this planet, but it isn't here. It isn't here.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Mr Sampson, I'm waiting for you to do a two-minute rebuttal. You've got to be here on Monday, because I want to hear you. I want to see what you feel, what you think about private universities. I want to know. I want you to tell your good taxpayers how they're going to be able to get access so that they can send their children to Mr Sampson's desired post-secondary, for-profit university. I want you to hear him tell you how your son—you, taxpayer making $50,000—is going to be able to go to this private university where tuition fees are going to be anywhere from $40,000 to $50,000. You, taxpayer earning $50,000, supporting people like him, I want you to hear him. If he doesn't do his two-minute rebuttal, call him up and ask him what he thinks about access. I want to hear him. I know you want to hear him too. I'd love to hear each and every one of them speak to you directly about how this will give access to your children, to this niche for-profit institution, those who want to make a buck out of education.

This government slashed grants to post-secondary institutions from the very beginning when they came into office. For the last five years they've had so many billions of dollars, and they've given it away. In the last budget, they gave $5 billion to—guess who? Did you, Mr Taxpayer, get the $5 billion that was announced that's going to the corporate sector? Was the corporate sector on their knees demanding that you give them a few more bucks back because the economy was doing so well? If only these corporations had a couple of more billions of dollars, they could make the economy even better. Think about it, Mr Taxpayer, you supporter of this Conservative Party. They give $5 billion away to the corporate sector that's been doing well for five years, but they have no money for post-secondary education. They cut that from the very beginning. No money for them, but $5 billion for the private sector, for the corporate sector.

1750

My favourite one, the one I call the corporate bum—there are so many corporate bums—the real welfare recipient, the guy who sits at his desk making the billions of dollars on the stock market, these guys who are buying in the Bridle Path, the guys who are buying in Forest Hill—thank God, it's not in my riding. These are the people—

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: I don't know most of these people. These are the people making the millions of bucks just playing with their little computers, moving a little money around. This government says, "We're not going to tax you because you work so hard for your money on your little desk, just watching your little screen, moving money around. You work so hard that we're going to give you a tax break. So on up to $100,000, we're not going to tax you anything." You, taxpayer of Ontario, are you getting the same tax break from these ministers and this government?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): Yes.

Mr Marchese: Oh, I see. The Minister of the Environment says yes. You working man, the one who supports this party, are you, up to $100,000, not being taxed for your hard work? The Minister of the Environment says yes.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Then what did you say if you didn't mean that? I'm telling you that the corporate welfare bum who makes over $100,000 doesn't get taxed on his first 100,000 bucks. How could you, Reform-minded voter, elect a government that takes your money and gives it to those who don't need it? How could you allow that? How could you vote for a government that continues to do that? I don't understand it.

I know the Minister of the Environment is likely to say, "I meant the tax cut" he gave you. You, Reform-minded supporter who only earned $40,000, how much money have you seen back in your little paycheque? You haven't seen very much, but the guy making over $80,000, in the $90,000 range, $100,000 range, gets back 12,000 bucks. It's not bad for a day's work.

The government says it's OK, that if the rich make more money, they'll spend it. It's good for the economy. If you, poor schlep, don't make enough, you get a couple of bucks back. You shouldn't whine about that. You can spend it however you like, in the same way that you must have just received your tax rebate of 200 bucks.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Oh, yes, that $200 is going to go a long way to paying for the private university these people are going to bring in. With that $200, you can rest assured to have a place in that private university that these people are just bringing in. Two hundred bucks, alleluia, it's going to help you a lot.

You know what hurts me more? Speaker, I think I met your mom just the other day and I am sure she probably will agree with me that if she is on a fixed income—just ask her in case she doesn't watch the program, ask her whether she's getting the 200 bucks back. Those of you who are the most vulnerable, if you assume that $200 is good to get back—speaking to the Speaker's mom, if you're on a fixed income, did you get your $200 back? Because if you're on a fixed income, earning $10,000, $11,000, $12,000, $13,000, you're probably not getting a single cent. Not much. Speaker, just check it out for me because the members are so excited, they're sort of running through Hula Hoops out of excitement. But I'm looking for the response to that and to so much I have said.

Imagine, we've got billions of dollars and we just give it away to those who don't really need it. Mr Harris, the Premier, is trying to buy votes with a couple of hundred bucks. Then you've got the media coming around saying, "How are you going to spend your 200 bucks?" Instead of saying, "Do you find that this $200 rebate is wrong fundamentally?" they ask you, "How are you going to spend your 200 bucks?" That's how critical the problem is. We're not asking critical questions. We're not being critical sometimes.

Two hundred bucks—seniors get nothing and we throw away one billion bucks. Think of that number. The banker here would know how much that number is. It's a big number, isn't it? A whole lot of zeroes, isn't it, one billion bucks?

Hon Mr Sampson: You know what's bigger? Eleven billion, $15 billion is ever bigger.

Mr Marchese: One billion, imagine what we could do to help the environment, to help the most beleaguered member of this place, the Minister of the Environment. Not you, John. The Minister of the Environment, the most beleaguered, it could help you, if they could only free up a couple of bucks to help you out, but they're not even doing that. Ask him for some help. You could have said to them, "Don't give away this billion bucks. I need it because everybody's beating me up. Everywhere I go, they're going bam. I'm getting whacked left and right. Give me a couple of bucks, Premier. Help me out." Where are you, Minister? At least if you're going to help the community, help yourself out. You need the help.

Speaker, are you indicating that I—

The Speaker: Yes, I thank the member. It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)
Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	**Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony** (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)
Burlington	**Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron** (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	**Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David** (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)
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)
Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
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
Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Kitchener-Waterloo	**Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth** (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Lanark-Carleton	**Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.** (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Leeds-Grenville	**Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.** (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
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
London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Markham	**Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.** (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Mississauga Centre / -Centre	**Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob** (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Mississauga South / -Sud	**Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret** (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children) / ministre sans portefeuille (Enfance)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	**Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John** (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles

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

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Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling, Gerard Kennedy,
Frank Mazzilli, John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters,
R. Gary Stewart, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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Finances et affaires économiques

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Doug Galt, Monte Kwinter, Tina R. Molinari,
Gerry Phillips, David Young
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Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
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Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
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Bert Johnson, Morley Kells, Tony Martin,
Joseph Spina, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

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Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Mushinski
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
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Lyn McLeod, Marilyn Mushinski
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