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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 30 October 2000**

**Lundi 30 octobre 2000**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 October 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 octobre 2000

*The House met at 1845.*

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 26, 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 Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I don't believe there's a quorum. I really would like a full house before I start.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you like me to check and find out?

**Mr Marchese:** Would you check, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you see if there's a quorum present, please.

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

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if it would be in order to point out that at the time the quorum call was made there was only one NDP and one Liberal in the House.

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

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: What the member said was factually incorrect. There were several Liberal members.

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

**Mr Marchese:** Why would my Liberal colleague feel the need to defend anything? They're in charge. They've got the wheels. They're the government. They're supposed to have the members here to listen to us. So defensive.

I'm glad I called quorum because we've now two, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11. At least I can begin my speech now, but with five members it was very difficult, because without an audience it's so hard to speak in this place.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** You got past 10 and you didn't take your shoes off.

**Mr Marchese:** Nobody can hear you.

I want to welcome the folks who are watching. This is Political Forum and we're on live. This is not pre-taped. We're on live and we are discussing Bill 132, An Act to enact the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act. That's the act that says, "We're going to let the private universities in. We're opening the door wide to private universities."

**Mr Wettlaufer:** What about applied degrees?

**Mr Marchese:** This is important, though. I would need another hour to talk about the other component of this bill. You're trying to subsume it under this other thing so we can talk about community colleges as opposed to what you snuck into this bill, which is private universities.

I say welcome to Political Forum because it is a forum where we have an opportunity to speak to you directly because we don't get much coverage in the newspapers. New Democrats don't get much coverage in the Toronto Sun. We don't get much coverage in the Toronto Star; we get some coverage, God bless them. We don't get coverage in the Globe and Mail. We don't get coverage in the National Post. These are all Conservative papers. The Toronto Sun, which appeals to the working man at the grade 4 or 5 level—I'll see you later. Thanks for coming.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I'll be right back.

1850

**Mr Marchese:** No, no, do. The Globe and Mail is less populist and deals with those who have a higher reading level but is essentially Conservative. The National Post tries to sneak in to sell to the same crowd, the crowd that

isn't happy with the fact that the Conservative Party is simply not right-wing enough. What do New Democrats have? Nothing except themselves, except their passion for what they believe in. That's why we speak to you directly, because the only thing we've got is this parliamentary channel, through which we're able to communicate directly with you. You see, we're waging a war of ideas, and the right, meaning the Conservative/Alliance types—

**Hon Mr Sampson:** The dark forces.

**Mr Marchese:** The forces of evil—who have the benefit of friends who have deep pockets to help them sell the ideas, together, in collusion, are selling an ideology across the country, an ethos of what they represent and what they want to disseminate. And God bless them, they've got all these national papers to sell their ideas. They talk about tax cuts and they talk about privatizing—whatever they want—and they've got a willing host: newspapers that are willing to print it day in and day out, to the extent that after people read the stuff they say: "It must be so. If these papers write it, certainly they are not biased in any way. They're neutral newspapers communicating information to the rest of us. If they call for tax cuts, it must be so. It must be good." Who is to dispute it? Not many.

There is no one to dispute the fact that tax cuts are hurting us. They are hurting us. Instead of cutting the debt, this government has blown away one billion bucks to make you feel good by giving you back 200 bucks, and you can vote for them again. Blown away; wasted, I argue. One billion dollars to make you feel good by receiving \$200 in your pocket, and you seniors with a fixed income get nothing, because that's the way it is. The poorer you are, the more you have to suffer under a Conservative government and, dare I say, a Liberal government federally.

**Mr Brad Clark (Stoney Creek):** Which bill are we debating?

**Mr Marchese:** We're debating how we are losing the war at the level of ideas. That's why you are selling these ideas even at the level of privatizing universities. You've got newspapers quite willing to sell that for you too.

What have we got? All we have is the parliamentary channel to tell you that the ethos of this government and the ethos nationally of the Alliance is to give more tax cuts. What the Liberals have given is simply not enough; they want to give you more. So they take money from one pocket—as an example, employment insurance, where you collect six or seven billion bucks—and give it back to you in the form of a tax cut, except the little guy who supports the Reform party who earns 30,000 or 50,000 bucks gets very little back, although you've got to pay a lot to employment insurance and you get a marginal amount of money back in terms of its use. But they give it back to you in the form of an income tax cut. Do you taxpayers of Ontario think you're getting your bigger share of the pie? You're not. They're taking from you by collecting it, and they're giving it back in the

form of a tax cut that goes to those who are the most wealthy.

Tories unabashedly say, "This is OK, because it benefits all." Why couldn't the Tories, why couldn't you taxpayers argue that it's better to reduce the debt than to get money back from an income tax cut? Why don't you argue for that? And why wouldn't you say nationally to the Liberal party, "We don't want the billions and billions of dollars in tax cuts, including corporate taxes. We want you to do two things: (1) reduce the debt and (2) reduce the GST, the Goods and Services Tax." If I'm a poor, humble individual working in a factory making 30,000 or 40,000 bucks and you reduce the GST by 1% or 2%, I benefit because you're taxing everything that lives and moves. If I as a poor working man have to pay GST on everything, the best way to help me, the low-income individual, is to cut the GST. If you reduce or eliminate the debt, you're helping me the working man much better than by giving tax cuts that go to the wealthiest.

It's what you've got to argue for. Those of you who are watching have to become a little more critical, dare I say. You've got to become a bit more like Socrates, if you recall that great Greek philosopher. Socrates went out and challenged traditional views which were held to be true by many, and proved by humble discussion, by questioning, by simply asking everyone he met in the streets of Athens—he asked them questions to the extent that he challenged them and forced them to doubt traditional views, forced them to challenge conventional wisdom such as tax cuts, such as privatizing post-secondary education, such as allowing private universities from the US to come into our country and our province. We need many more Socrateses of today to go around and become a little more critical instead of absorbing the pap—the pap, I say—from all the media, from the Globe, from the National Post, from the Toronto Sun and so many others, so many who own those media and sell themselves. By "sell themselves" I mean selling for the sole purpose of profit, of making money, pecunia in this wonderful capitalism of ours where if you've got more, you make more. That's the beauty of it.

We poor taxpayers at the bottom levels are suckered into their agenda. It's a war of ideas, and we're losing and we've got to fight back. If we don't fight back, we will have given everything away to these people. The dissimulation of this government, and I dare say the federal government, has to stop. It can only stop when the public becomes much more politicized and engaged.

I'm amused to see, at the level federal, M. Chrétien say he wants to keep Day at bay because they are dangerous and because those tax cuts would only go to the very wealthy. But, dear Lord, what has Chrétien done except already give money away to the very wealthy, and accuse Day of doing not just the same but literally doing so much more that he would waste the country, he would tear the country apart? But Chrétien has already done that to you, under the guise that he still has a heart. He's had seven years to prove he's got a heart, but that heart is

not there. But only you can judge that. Only with much more capacious, critical and intellectual engagement will we be able to make politicians accountable.

These people want to introduce private universities. I asked them, in the last speech I made on Thursday: "Who wants them? Who wants private universities?" I asked them last week who wants it. I asked them today, who wants private universities? Other than the Conservative party, this government, Mr Harris, the minister and this big membership of his in this place—other than them—there's nobody else. So I say: "Why would you introduce private universities? Nobody is demanding them. Whose benefit are you supporting? Whose pockets are you trying to fill? What choices are you giving to students?"

I argued last week that tuition fees for these private universities will be close to \$40,000 a year. How can it allow for choice when tuition fees will be close to \$40,000? When we look at our public institutions now and see students paying anywhere from \$16,000 to \$25,000 in tuition fees alone, and most of the students out there are saying, "We can't afford that," how could students afford a \$40,000 annual tuition fee in the private sector? How?

So what choice is this, except to give a choice to wealthy investment managers, bankers, insurance corporate types, the corporate welfare bums who certainly work for their money, but I don't think they deserve the kinds of tax breaks this government gives them, and the federal government, for that matter.

I say, put more money into our public institutions. I say, reinforce our institutions by supporting them the way they ought to be supported. Let me give you some facts. Here is a figure that most of you might be interested in when we're talking about endowments and private donations: in 1992, private donations constituted \$286 million. In 1997-98, they constituted a contribution by the private sector through the endowments, through the donations, of \$502 million.

#### 1900

It's indicative of a government that's getting out of the funding of post-secondary education, because more and more of the private sector is to come in and make donations, which of course we pay indirectly as taxpayers. But no matter; the point is donations have increased tremendously. Tuition fees: in 1992 tuition fees constituted \$834 million, which equalled, more or less, 25% of total revenues. That was in 1992, during the reign of the New Democrats. By 1997, the figure ballooned from \$834 million to \$1.255 billion, which represents 35% of total revenue—again, to indicate that students are picking up the cost. Governments are getting out of funding post-secondary education and students end up having to pay more for their own university. Government support declined from \$2.269 billion to \$1.785 billion from our reign to the present reign of the Conservative government, and it's a drop from 67% of public funding to 50% of public funding.

All this is happening—to your taxpayer who is watching—in a good economy. It's happening when we

have the money, when this government and the federal government have so much surplus money that they don't know what to do with it, that they're throwing it away through corporate tax cuts and personal tax cuts, that we on this side, as New Democrats, have argued go to the wealthiest Ontarians and the wealthiest Canadians.

Watch this Conservative Party, when it has its \$700 fundraising events, and when Day has a \$25,000-a-table event—Day, who's supposed to be presumably a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, which presumably means that he worries about the poor little guy who doesn't have enough. What I know of Jesus Christ is that he was there to protect the little guy. So you've got Mr Day, who has a fundraising event and raises \$2 million with the wealthiest corporate individuals in this society—

**Mr Wettlaufer:** What does that have to do with this bill?

**Mr Marchese:** It has a lot to do with it. It means that he's in the pockets of the wealthy, like you guys are. You are in the pockets of the wealthy and you have a Christian at the national level taking money from the wealthiest corporate individuals, like you do when you have your \$700 fundraisers, and claim that you are helping the little guy. It is a paradox in my mind that a Christian, or many Christians, at this level and at the federal level, could, if they are religious, as they claim to be, go to bed at night saying, "Yes, we like giving away our money to the wealthy," and believe that somehow it's going to trickle down to the little guy. Taking my money to give it away to somebody who doesn't need it—I find that insidious, obscene, nefarious. Only this government is capable of doing it.

That's why we make our appeal to you, because unless we speak to you directly, unless you mobilize your critical conscience in a way that is able to shape society differently than where we are going, I've got to tell you, in the next economic recession you'll see suffering unlike you've ever seen before. This government is not planning for it and the federal government is not planning for it. When you give all of our potential wealth and our surplus money away, both to the corporate sector and to wealthy individuals, what you are doing is wasting our coffers to the extent that we will have nothing left to help you when the economy goes down—and it will, I can guarantee it.

If there is anything I can claim omnipotence to, it's that I can claim there will be a recession, as there always has been, every seven to 10 years. There will be, and when that time comes, I am wondering what you people will do to protect the little guy, because you've given all of our money to the corporate sector—\$5 billion of corporate cuts and \$6 billion to \$7 billion to the highest-income earners of Ontario. Nobody will be left there to protect you. There is no ethos in terms of values. Mr Day talks about values. I presume that these people talk about values, but what values do they have when all of their campaign is focused around the idea of, "We want to give you more tax cuts, because it's your money"?

That's the ethos. That's what binds their politics together, the Conservatives at this level, Mr Day at that

level. Their sole reason for being is to give you more tax cuts. But there won't be any money left for, dare I say, your pensions. Good senior citizens who are watching this, there won't be any money left for your pensions when these people have been through this, when Day and others get through this; there is no money left in the coffers for you.

How do we deal with an increase in population in our post-secondary education system? How do we deal with the fact that we're going to have 190,000 more students by the end of the decade? We are indeed experiencing participation rates that are high. Why? Because they know that in order to be able to have a decent job in this society, they need a degree. It's not because, as this government says, they are so great that people are participating unlike ever before. People are participating in terms of going to university because they know that without an education, they are left with nothing. So they endure the heavy debt of \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year, in some cases more. They endure it because they have to.

How are they dealing with the fact that we will be short of professors by 10,000 to 15,000 in the next four, five, six, seven years, and we've lost 2,000 professors already. This government makes no effort to say, "We need professors in the classroom to be able to reduce the ratio of teacher and students," which in some cases is incredibly high. What measures is this government taking to say, "We're going to put the professors in place"? None.

There is insufficient capacity to meet the demand. Because of the unprecedented reductions of this government, they are ill-equipped to accommodate the pressures of the enrolment that I spoke about, including the double cohort of this year's grade 9 students who, when they combine with the present grade 9 students, when they come together with that double cohort, will be so jammed into universities that without this government making sure they expand the capacity to take those students in, those students will be lost in those classrooms or won't have a place to go.

What are you doing? What? This is why you're introducing private universities, so you can put in maybe a couple of hundred, maybe 1,000 students? Or how many more? How many more do you want in a private university? How many of the wealthy kids do you want in private universities, and will having 1,000 in that private university alleviate the fact that we will have 190,000 more students in the next decade? Will that do it? Of course it doesn't do it. That's a cover-up for the fact that these people are so deep in the pockets of the lobbyists—the private sector that wants to make money out of university—they don't know how to extricate their hands from them.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** Why are you against choice?

**Mr Marchese:** John Hastings from Etobicoke North says, "Why are you against choice?" I already made the argument. How many times can I repeat that it's not a choice for Gilles Bisson's children to go; if the tuition

fees are \$40,000 a year, it's not a choice for this man. It's not a choice for the regular taxpayer, because they can't afford \$40,000 of their money or the young man's money or the young woman's money, to pay for tuition fees. If they're private, then they're not supposed to get any funding from the public sector; that means their tuition fees will more than double ours, from \$20,000 to \$40,000.

**1910**

I tell you these people, these lobbyists and these private universities, want to come into this province. They're looking to use our public institutions, like our libraries. We pay for them but they will be using them. You know that. They're looking for the tax incentives they have gotten in the US, and they will get them here. They're looking for government assistance through OSAP, the loan program—our money. They're looking for that and they'll get it. Rich people will probably get it.

It won't be public. That's why they've set up the Quality Assessment Board. They know that Phoenix, the private university, has been so scandal-ridden by problems they have to set up some institution, a new bureaucracy, to attempt to deal with the problems private universities bring. I appeal to you: if you are interested in what we are doing, if you're interested in fighting this government, you've got to participate, and call us, because you need to be able to get the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which will talk about the general agreement on trades and service. We are about to include education in that regard and we're going to sell and we're going to lose it there as well.

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

**Mr Wettlaufer:** It's always interesting to listen to the member for Trinity-Spadina even if he doesn't know what he's talking about. He's talking about one private university that has a tarnished reputation; however, he makes a blanket statement that they're all guilty. So I guess Yale is guilty, Duke is guilty and Harvard is guilty. Three of the most world-renowned universities are private. Stanford is another one, world-renowned and private. You're going to bulk the world's best with one.

Let's just take a look at this. I did not have any lobbyists come into my office and ask for private universities, but I did have a lot of students who are going to universities in the United States right now. We have 7,000 university students in Ontario going to school in the States and they want to come here. They want to have the choice of a world-class private university right here in this province so that they don't have to spend \$60,000 or \$70,000 or \$80,000 in the United States. That's what they want. They want that here.

Not only that, but this bill allows applied degrees. You want to ignore applied degrees, that necessary thing that industries tell us they need to meet the shortage of personnel in the global economy.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** That has nothing to do with money, I say to the member from Brantford. The students who

take applied degrees will get better jobs and they'll make more money and they'll be able to pay for their debts very easily, thank you very much.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I'm having trouble here, Mr Speaker.

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

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** A revelation here tonight: we listen to the Tories in the House and they talk about what this agenda is all about. I just heard the member across the way talk about the importance of building world-class universities in Ontario so people can get a good education. Are they looking down on the University of Toronto. Are they looking down on Queen's? Are they looking down on a number of fine institutions in this province that are public institutions, that are affordable and accessible to young people across this province? I don't know about you, but I don't know a lot of people in Timmins-James Bay or Trinity-Spadina or Ottawa East who can afford go to Harvard or MIT, because the tuitions are around \$30,000 to \$50,000, depending on the program you're going into.

What these people are talking about doing is bringing us back to the bad old days where we had a class system. If mommy and daddy, and normally daddy, had a few bucks, you got a good education. But if your father happened to be somebody of average means when it came to the income of the day, you didn't get a good public education because there wasn't anything available. That's what they're about. Tories are about yesterday, about bringing us back to the 1900s, bringing us back to the 1800s if they could, bringing us back to Louis XV if they could. That's what the Tories would do, because that's capitalism at its best.

Public institutions are about giving people the opportunity to get post-secondary education in a way that's affordable to them, something that private universities will never be able to do, and I say to all of you on the other side of the House, you should be ashamed of yourselves.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** It's curious. It's very curious that we would have my friends in the NDP caucus commenting on the terrible situation with private sector universities and how it produces nothing but wilful neglect from the public. You're talking about mommy and daddy having a lot of money and they're the only ones who can send people to private universities.

Let me say this: I'm not afraid of private operators in the province of Ontario. I think there are a lot of very good schools that are privately run in the United States of America and in other parts of this world that operate very, very well. Let me tell you, I think some people in this assembly are in favour.

I ask the member from Timmins and my good friend from Fort York, I guess; I don't know his new riding name—

**Interjection:** Trinity-Spadina.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Trinity Spadina. Your own leader went to private school. Your own leader was on a hockey scholarship to a private university in the United States of America. Let me just report what you said: Did Howie have a rich mommy and daddy that put him through a private sector, dollar-run facility? I don't believe he did, because if he did, and the perception is the rich capitalists come out and produce for the private sector, what went wrong? He came back and became the leader of the socialist party in Ontario. Now, I ask my friends opposite, what is it? It's only good enough for Howie, but not good enough for anybody else. This is a strange dichotomy I hear. Thou protest too much. Your former leader, Mr Rae, spent more time in universities outside the country than he did inside the country. Maybe you guys should check the history books before you start condemning—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** In the couple of minutes that I have, let me say that this is the year 2000. It's another century and we have a lot of problems out there. I think we have—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Sergio:** Oh, yes, absolutely. I have to allow the Minister of Labour, when he says how the leader of the third party went to a private school. Well, let me tell you the fear that is out there in today's economic situation. We fear that private universities are going to take away from those needy people who can't afford to go to private schools. What this government is doing is creating one for the rich who can afford anything, and one for the rest who can't afford anything other than what the government leaves them. I don't think that's fair.

This afternoon we dealt with another bill brought by one of our members here. What did the government do? They didn't support it. That shows you the very interest of this government, that they are interested only in looking after one particular group, but not the needy people, not those who can't help themselves, can't speak for or defend themselves. I think that is the difference between them and us, between the government and us, that we really care about those who cannot look after themselves.

I believe that we have to defend those have-nots from the haves, because if we can't give a reasonable, affordable education to those who can afford the least, we will not have the province that we all aspire to have for our children, for ourselves, and I hope that they see the light and change their mind and do not tinker with the public funds.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Trinity-Spadina has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Marchese:** The World Trade Organization is at this very moment working to radically restructure the role of governments worldwide, this organization that nobody knows about—not the Tories, I think, although they might understand it, some of them. No one has a

clue who these people are subjecting an ever greater degree of governmental decision-making to the World Trade Organization's oversight and interference. These negotiations are aimed at expanding the general agreement on trade and services, or what they call GATT, a framework agreement that was adopted as part of the Uruguay round in 1994. Essentially unknown to the public, this agreement is designed to help transnational corporations constrain and override democratic governance.

#### 1920

It includes discussions such as post-secondary education, health, the environment, culture. They're all on the table, and we're about to give it all away. Canada's giving it all away. Sergio Marchi, a civil servant, now is giving it all away. These people are helping out with the private universities. If post-secondary education gets written into the trade deal, privatization of universities becomes irreversible with a national treatment clause to the extent that it means that nations are allowed to discriminate against foreign firms only in areas dominated by the government. But once you let the private sector in, you've lost control. They're in and you've got to treat them the same way that you treat your own universities. We have a world-class university system that's public. I'm saying to you, dear taxpayer, don't sell it all away.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** What about Howie and Bob Rae?

**Mr Marchese:** Don't give in to that black humour of M. Stockwell, the minister, who blah, blah, blahs about this and that. We have a world-class system and they are about to sell it. They're about to commodify our educational system. The only people who will gain access to this are the very wealthy. We're about to sell our public system away. Please don't allow it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It is a pleasure to be here this evening to take part in the second reading debate on Bill 132, the university choice and excellence act. I'd like to compliment the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for her foresight in bringing forth this very important legislation. As we enter the 21st century, we must prepare our youth for the world economy and society. Competition and choice are part of that preparation.

I'd like to thank the members, particularly the member for Trinity-Spadina, for offering their insights on this bill designed to give students more choice in post-secondary educational institutions. I'd like to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina for his comments. I'd like to thank the minister and the parliamentary assistant for bringing this bill to the House and for meeting with the numerous stakeholders whose expertise was important in drafting this legislation.

Education is one of the cornerstones from which our society grows and is strengthened. In the past, someone could get a good-paying job with a high school education. That is often not the case any more. Today we need the training. It has often been said that an education

is the key to the future, and I'm sure even the members opposite will agree with that.

In these times, with rapidly developing technology in every single industry, a quality education equals a good job and a very bright future, particularly when you have a vibrant economy such as the one we enjoy in Ontario today under this government. I was amazed last week when I heard the member for Sault Ste Marie comment about how students were better off under the NDP government. I thought it was amazing, when I looked back and saw that the province was spending \$1 million more an hour than it was taking in and there were no jobs for the students, for him to make a statement like that.

Our government believes that improving access to a quality education is an important way in creating opportunity. That is what this bill is about: improving access to a quality education and a bright future, a bright future of job creation and a very strong economy.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Statute Law Amendment Act, 2000 is an important milestone for our college students. It represents the culmination of years of dedicated commitment to a vision set out in the 1960s. At that time, the government of the day—you will remember the Premier was John Robarts and the education minister at that time was the future Premier, William Davis—set out a clear vision for change. From that vision a whole new area of educational opportunities opened up for the students Ontario.

Expanding on the strong academic traditions of our universities, the government launched Ontario on a bold new experiment in learning through the creation of colleges of applied arts and technology, a system designed to prepare students for the demands of the contemporary workplace. Literally hundreds of thousands of students have taken advantage of our community colleges, not only through one- to three-year programs but many through part-time and adult courses as well. There's no question that what began as a bold experiment has matured into a highly sophisticated network of learning institutions with strong ties to the local economy.

In my riding of Simcoe North the creation of Georgian College, which has many campuses throughout my riding and throughout Muskoka and the rest of Simcoe county, has been a valuable contribution to our communities and to our province. Georgian's recent successes include the top graduate placement rate in the province at 93%, as well as being named one of Canada's top 100 employers. I might add that they are wise enough to advertise that right on the highway, where over 30,000 cars per day pass Georgian College and see the fact that 93% of their graduates do have employment at their graduation. These are all indications of Georgian's corporate commitment to work in collaboration and co-operation with the many community partners.

Last Thursday I was on hand when agreement between the Ontario Provincial Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and Georgian College was signed. This agreement was a multi-million dollar expansion of



the police and law enforcement program at the Georgian College campus in the city of Orillia. With the OPP general headquarters situated beside the Orillia campus of Georgian College, it only makes common sense to partner the law enforcement programs that are available through that college. I expect that eventually this college will become the centre of excellence for all law enforcement programs across this province and perhaps even this country. I commend Commissioner Gwen Boniface, OPP association president, Brian Adkin, and Georgian College president, Brian Tamblyn, for this important initiative, which will be very important to our community.

As well, last March our government—in fact, it was Mr Wilson who announced it at Georgian College—announced \$17 million to create 2,744 new pupil places and allow the college to offer university degrees through a partnership with York University. Combined with fundraising and other sources, the \$25-million project will create a centre for technology and enhanced learning at the Barrie campus. Programs to be offered include automotive technology to help supply highly trained employees. I suspect the Honda plant in the town of Alliston will make use of many of the graduates of this very important course.

There will also be programs for information technology, tool and die making and tourism. With these programs and the partnership with York University, the students in Simcoe North will be able to get a university degree without having the expense of living away from their homes, which is often very expensive, as you know if you travel across the province.

I am pleased that this type of funding and support for our post-secondary education institutes is being distributed throughout the province through the SuperBuild growth fund with our investment of \$1 billion. The recent SuperBuild initiative is the single largest capital investment in over 30 years. This commitment, together with funding from partners, will lead to the spending of \$1.8 billion to renew and expand colleges and universities and create 73,000 new student places.

The Ontario Jobs and Investment Board recognizes that colleges, with their links to industry, are well positioned to offer advanced training in emerging areas. Its report, the Road Map to Prosperity, called for a strengthening of those linkages and a greater degree of specialization of college programs to support regional economic prosperity. We agree with that report and believe that we as a government have a role to play in supporting that specialization and regional economic growth.

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The legislation we have been debating over the last three days would establish a new Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act that would make it possible for Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology to grant applied degrees on their own. This is in direct response to requests we have received, both individually from colleges and through the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. In

fact, the association said in its press release, "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."

As I mentioned, colleges were established to provide programs that would prepare students for the workplace of the late 1960s. While the system has continued to evolve within its original mandate, the challenges facing us today require more than incremental change in diploma programs. They call for a new set of choices designed for today's reality, one that reflects the innovative programs developed by colleges and the real needs of students.

Colleges have seen this coming and they have urged us and previous governments for a number of years to permit them to grant applied degrees. They see the value for both students and communities of advanced training beyond the diploma credential in specialized college programs that would differ in structure and content from university programs.

We believe that by allowing colleges to grant applied degrees, we are providing students with the wider range of choices they require, and it would reflect and encourage enhanced quality of the specialized programs that can be offered at our colleges.

Under this legislation, colleges would be permitted 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.

It is important to note, however, that this is an expansion of the college system. Its primary role will continue to focus on their efforts of providing high-quality certificate and diploma programming in programs of one to three years' duration.

We believe this establishes a level playing field in Ontario for our students, our colleges and our communities. It brings our system into line with the type of innovative programs offered at the college level in neighbouring jurisdictions such as Alberta, British Columbia, Michigan and many other states in the United States. But more important, it helps our students to better pursue their goals. Applied degrees would allow them to achieve, in one program, the right balance of academic and applied skills they need to get the jobs they want, and they could get that education right here at home. I was really interested to hear the other day when the minister said that over 7,000 Ontario students are receiving an education outside Ontario.

For too long we have stood on the sidelines while the entry-level jobs in the job market have become increasingly sophisticated. For too long we have put the onus on our students to take the time to acquire both a university degree and a college diploma in order to pursue their goals. For too long we have watched as our students and their families have been asked to assume the extra cost of getting an applied degree in another jurisdiction.

The members on the opposite side of the House have been very vocal on the issue of introducing degree-granting private universities at no cost to the taxpayers. I think John Ibbitson of the *Globe and Mail* said it best about the Liberals' views on this when he said, "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."

What the opposition fails to understand is that Ontario's 25 community colleges already compete with private career colleges like the Academy of Learning, which, by the way, is opening a new campus in the Midland area over the next few weeks. Are they saying competition is OK in the community colleges but not at the university level? If they are, it is a very arrogant thought.

Ontario's universities are established as some of the best in the world. There's no question about that. I think we're all very proud of the universities we have in Ontario. I personally feel that the University of Toronto, with its \$1 billion in endowments, will be successful in competing against places like the University of Phoenix, which is already in the NDP-led British Columbia. This university offers programs aimed at working professionals, a group of people whose needs might not have been met by the traditional university system.

Private universities have the potential to inject a sense of competition into post-secondary education, offering courses and reaching techniques geared to the marketplace. Obviously, there will more use of new technologies, such as Internet and teleconferencing, as we proceed in time.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Dunlop:** Yes, I hear the comments from the other side, but they're afraid of competition. Competition is important in every aspect of our society.

I also agree with Premier Harris when he says there are a considerable number of Ontario students who are now going to the United States who are prepared to pay \$40,000, \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year in tuition. If some of these institutions want to provide opportunities here in Ontario at no cost to the taxpayer, why would we not look at that?

I would also like to point out that Ontario has a long tradition of private universities. Today, all are publicly funded, but it was not always that way. Many began as church-related institutions, for example, the Anglican Church with the University of Toronto, the Baptist Church with McMaster University, the Roman Catholic Church with the University of Windsor, and gradually all became public as tax money was needed to fund expansion after the Second World War.

Ontario's last private university, Waterloo Lutheran University in Waterloo, switched to public financing in 1974, and of course we know it has since changed its Wilfrid Laurier University.

If there is no demand for private colleges and universities, they will not be able to compete and will no

longer exist. If there is a demand, then public universities will have to modify their programs to meet the demands of industry and the public, which to me is a necessity.

We want to ensure that the new post-secondary programs are the best. To ensure the quality of new post-secondary programs, this act would enshrine in law the Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board. This independent body would assess new degree program proposals submitted by Ontario's colleges, out-of-province degree-granting institutions, and new degree-granting institutions in Ontario, including privately funded institutions. Using rigorous criteria established in accordance with recognized educational standards, the board would then make recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities about why their proposal should be approved based on the quality of the program and the institution's ability to provide that.

Proposed amendments to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities Act would include permitting the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to appoint inspectors to ensure that institutions are administering the Ontario student assistance program properly. This change would help us ensure both the viability of private institutions and the protection of both taxpayers and consumers.

We have asked our students to wait far too long. It is time to put in place a post-secondary system that provides them with the full range of choices they need to reach their full potential. This bill will do that and more. We have a duty to our students. We have to give them choice and competition as we proceed through this next century.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight and look forward to further debate here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

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**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** The riding with the longest name, Mr Speaker, and you know why.

I'm pleased to rise and speak on this—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Biggest member?

**Interjection:** Be nice.

**Mr McMeekin:** I missed that. What was that, Chris?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I take it back.

**Mr McMeekin:** OK. You're a good guy, Chris.

This was an issue that came up in the by-election a number of times. I had the privilege of being educated in the public school system and had the privilege of going to one of those community colleges, as the start of a long and very fortunate educational experience, which eventually saw me coming back to teach at that same community college. I can tell you that educators out there are really worried. It has been said that fear and hope eat off the same plate. They're really worried, because they've seen a lot of the kind of funding that they've counted on gradually being eroded with this government. There are more and more young people, with changes to the OSAP program and such, who are having a more and

more difficult time, greater difficulty just seeing how they're going to swing things.

There is an increasing lack of confidence in our post-secondary institutions, which I think is going to be further eroded with this piece of legislation. Educators are very conscious of the fact that this government, I believe, currently stands 59th out of 60 North American jurisdictions in terms of per capita investment. That doesn't mean—

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** We're number 59.

**Mr McMeekin:** Yes, 59. On the bottom. They're worried about it. I think this government, if it's going to move forward with this, has to be cognizant of those concerns and do everything they can to make sure that they're responded to.

**Mr Bisson:** I listened to the comments from the member across the way, from the Conservative benches, and it really amazes me that they're trying to portray this as an issue of choice. They're saying if we don't introduce private universities in Ontario, students across this province will not have choice when it comes to post-secondary education. It's totally ludicrous, because we already know that in the province of Ontario there is plenty of choice when it comes to the choices young people face—and other people who decide to go to university in later years—within the province. There is a multitude of good public universities in this province, world-class universities, I might add. There is the University of Toronto, Queen's and number of others that I can list, Laurentian University in my own area, Nipissing University in the Premier's own riding, and the list goes on. It's not as if people in this province don't have a choice when it comes to what kind of post-secondary education they want to follow.

But the policy in this province has been, and for good reason, that what we would promote by way of public dollars, is public education when it comes to post-secondary education. The reason we did that is because we tried to move away from the policies of the bad old days, the policies that said what decided what university you went to and the quality of post-secondary education you'd get was based on how much money your parents made. The government is trying to portray across the way that the only way that kids are going to be able to excel in this province is to go into a private university. It's ludicrous. We have some of the best post-secondary education systems here in Ontario, and we don't need to be going the way of private universities.

I listened to the Minister of Labour across the way. He went, "But Howard Hampton went to university in Toronto." He's a hockey player. The guy got there on a scholarship and plays good hockey. He was one of the lucky kids from a working-class family who was able to do that. But how many students out there have the skills or the dollars to be able to get there on a sports scholarship? I just think the government is stuck on this, and we'll hear more on this from the Minister of Labour, who

will berate us on other issues when it comes to public education.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I'm trying to point out the inconsistency in this argument. The inconsistency is you're talking about the fact of choice and you're telling us that the only choice is X. But apparently it wasn't. Because I've gone through further to look and see where else some people went to university, and it seems what you say is, "This is only good enough for us but can't possibly be good enough for all the people in the province." OK, Howard Hampton went to Dartmouth on a hockey scholarship, and Bob Rae went to Oxford and was a Rhodes scholar, and Shelley Martel went to the Sorbonne in France, and Tony Martin went to Denver, Colorado, to university.

Not to let the Liberals off the hook, my friend Cordiano went to Tulsa. Kwinter went to Syracuse. McGuinty Sr, the father of the leader of the Liberal opposition, went to Colgate and Harvard. These people had a choice. The choice was that they went to school out of the province.

When we offer the same choice to the hard-working people in the province of Ontario, suddenly, all these folks well-educated off these shores, suggest, "That's not good enough. It's only good enough for me and my confreres, but it's not good enough for everyone else."

If these universities are capable of educating the leaders of your own parties, why would they not be capable of educating the good constituents in Timmins? I just don't get it. If you want to have a free and open system, if you want to tell us the only thing we need is public education, then don't elect two leaders of your parties who were educated overseas. It makes sense to me. I don't know why it doesn't make sense to you.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** One of the interesting things the member for Simcoe North started to allude to regarding privatization of our universities is that we have to be careful to make sure that we unfold, peel back some of that onion that seems to be smelling up the place.

It's a privatization issue right across the board. It's one more example of this government's ability to try to get us off the topic and off the desire for us to understand what the overall agenda is. We're going to do that with our hospitals. We're going to do that with our schools. We're now going to do it with our universities. We're doing it with our jails and our institutions. We want to privatize all those things.

When we've done some of the research behind that, we've also found out—for instance, with the privatization of our jails, to give an example, in the member from Simcoe North's very own riding 70% of the constituents in the municipality of Penetanguishene, 70% of people polled by the government's own money, by our taxpayers' money, said no to privatization. They haven't taken it to the people of the province of Ontario. They haven't taken it to anybody other than those people who are going to give them the answer they want to hear.

What I'm saying, very clearly, is that there is a solution. The Minister of Labour keeps trying to tell us

that privatization is the only other option available. Well, quite frankly, the option is very clear and very easy. Why don't we improve the public system we presently have? Why don't we invest the money that you've taken away in the first place? Why don't we do something for my riding which this minister hasn't done, and that is to give them money that's owed to the students in Laurier Brant. They're not giving any money to them. Although they've opened up a branch in Brantford, they're not giving them the money they need to fulfill their mandate.

Why don't you put the money forward that you need to put into the public institutions and make it work, without this other experiment that's going to blow up in your face?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Simcoe North has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Dunlop:** I'm trying to get everyone correctly. I thank the members for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot—and congratulations—for Timmins-James Bay, Etobicoke Centre and for Brant for their comments. Thank you very much.

When we talk about the private sector, to me it's not a dirty a word. Coming from the private sector myself and spending my whole business career in the private sector, I don't consider myself to be someone who's crooked or rotten or whatever you want to say. That's what I gather, what I hear continually, from the members opposite, that they don't like private sector investment in the province. I look at 740,000 jobs that have been created by private sector investment in Ontario in the last five years.

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We've tried to build an economy, tried to grow an economy with the tax cuts. Yes, there have been tax cuts, 166 of them. Those tax cuts have created \$11 billion in additional revenue since we took over. I don't know if that's such a terrible thing. I know we hear from the members opposite fearmongering and scare tactics about the private sector; it doesn't matter what happens. I look back to the road system before we started to maintain our roads with private companies. I think those private companies today are doing an excellent job. Maybe some of you people don't feel that way, but as we go through this legislation, I again see private sector investment and jobs being created and also the many benefits it will bring to the students here in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier):** I would like to let you know that I will share my time with my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings—got it right.

C'est avec plaisir que je me lève pour ajouter ma voix à celles qui ont déjà si bien dénoncé cette idée du gouvernement Harris d'édicter la loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire en favorisant des universités et collèges privés. Je dois vous dire que ce projet de loi aura comme résultat d'accélérer l'érosion de la qualité d'éducation postsecondaire en Ontario.

It is clear that this bill will set up a two-tier education system. It is also clear that if this bill is allowed to pass,

our public university and college systems will continue to erode. Let's not fool ourselves. Our post-secondary institutions have been seriously hurt since this government was elected in 1995, especially with the rise in tuition fees in these past years.

We must face the fact that when a two-tier system exists, the accountable, responsible and affordable public system will suffer. The notion put forth by this government claiming that private universities and colleges will provide Ontarians with more choice is a myth. It is simply not true. To the extent that there is a choice, it is a false one.

Put yourself in a student's shoes. If as a student you have a choice between a private institution and a public institution that charges less and both offer quality education, tell me which one you would choose. Obviously you would choose the cheaper and equally effective public system. But now, if as a student you have a choice between a public institution that offers little hope and a private institution that offers quality education, again which one would you choose? The answer is that even though the private institution is more expensive, you would likely choose it because it offers a better education and it offers excellence. It is when these two simple scenarios are offered that the issue begins to clear up. It becomes clear that when both are equally effective, the public system will be the favourite one.

The provincial government believes that the public and private universities and colleges can work side by side and compete on an equal basis, but let me tell you it has yet to be shown that it is possible. With the introduction of this bill, the government motive becomes clear. It appears this government wants to pass the buck and renounce its responsibility to public education. The best way to do it is to allow private institutions to compete with public universities and colleges. This will no doubt again serve to continue the erosion of our public university and college systems, and this government is aware of it. Eventually this government will seek to ensure through more underhanded ways that private universities and colleges become significantly superior to public ones. This, in turn, will provide them with a perfect excuse to choke off funding to public institutions, arguing that the public sector has failed to show its merit and its relevance to Ontarians.

The competition the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities speaks about, as far as I'm concerned, is not healthy competition. It is not healthy because it leaves the public system to fail. The reason for this is fairly obvious. It is unhealthy competition because it allows private universities and colleges to set up, charge the tuition they want and at the same time receive indirect government funding through OSAP, tax credits and research grants to help.

Ce gouvernement sait fort bien que la population ontarienne ne le laissera jamais étouffer le système public d'éducation. Par contre, ce gouvernement essaie de le faire sous notre nez. En nous offrant le faux choix entre universités et collèges publics et universités et collèges

privés, nous ne faisons pas un vrai choix entre deux systèmes de haute qualité. Il faut admettre que, pour que le secteur d'éducation privée puisse fonctionner, il faut rendre le système public de moins en moins efficace. Vraiment, si ce gouvernement favorise le marché privé, qu'il nous le dise, mais qu'il arrête de prétendre que ce projet de loi offre un choix pour les Ontariens et Ontariennes. Qu'il arrête de nous dire que le système public et le système privé pourront fonctionner un à côté de l'autre.

Si ce gouvernement croit si fermement dans l'excellence et croit vraiment que nos institutions post-secondaires publiques sont de première classe, pourquoi ne pas investir davantage dans le système public ? Vous savez que nos universités et collèges publics en Ontario se comptent parmi les meilleurs au Canada et même au monde. Pourquoi mettre ceci en péril ?

This government has done a pretty clever job at hiding its real intentions. It is disguising its desire to end public education as we know it by using nice words such as "competition," "excellence" and "choice."

This government has failed to protect post-secondary education and now it wants to fail to ensure its survival.

Je me demande si ce gouvernement a pris en considération la situation dans laquelle se trouvent nos universités bilingues face à ce projet de loi. La situation qui se présentera dans le système anglophone si ce gouvernement laisse compétitionner le secteur privé est grave, mais ce n'est rien quand nous regardons le sort éventuel de nos universités bilingues. Le nombre d'universités qui offrent des cours en français en Ontario est déjà très minime. Si nous laissons le secteur privé envahir notre système universitaire public, nous passons le risque de voir le secteur public s'effondrer très rapidement dû à une compétition extrêmement féroce et extrêmement malsaine.

Le fait que nos universités et collèges privés vont pouvoir s'établir en compétition directe avec nos universités et collèges publics, avec l'aide du gouvernement provincial, pose un problème très grave pour nos institutions publiques. Nos universités et collèges publics ne pourront pas compétitionner parce que l'enjeu n'est pas juste. Je me demande encore une fois si le gouvernement a pris ça en considération. J'en doute, parce que je sais que le ministère des Collèges et Universités n'est vraiment pas équipé de façon à pouvoir analyser complètement la situation face à l'impact de ses politiques sur la communauté francophone. Je sais que le ministère de l'Éducation, par exemple, a des fonctionnaires qui s'occupent exclusivement des dossiers relevant de l'éducation francophone. Ceci rendra très difficile une analyse complète de l'impact de ce projet de loi sur la communauté francophone.

#### 2000

Le fait que le ministère n'a pas de branche francophone qui s'occupe exclusivement de nos institutions postsecondaires francophones, est-ce que ça signifie que le gouvernement ne considère pas important ce dossier ? Est-ce que c'est acceptable ? The truth is that

this government seems to prefer private universities and colleges to public universities and colleges. I challenge this government to do one of the following. If it truly believes in the merits of public institution education, then it must examine how public universities will be able to survive should this bill come into effect.

Au nom de Dalton McGuinty et du caucus libéral, je me déclare en opposition de ce projet de loi. Nous croyons fermement dans l'augmentation d'investissements dans notre système public. Nous ne croyons pas que notre futur est entre bonnes mains lorsque nous donnons la responsabilité d'éduquer nos jeunes adultes à des investisseurs privés s'ils n'ont que des profits à considérer.

Voici donc les commentaires que j'avais à partager.

**Mr Parsons:** There are really two areas covered under this bill. I would like to talk initially about the college system, with the government's intention to allow them to grant degrees, an extremely good intention, by the way, making us much more viable in the world market for our graduates.

The college system was started by Bill Davis when he was Premier, which was back in the good old days when the Conservatives could do things right, and I congratulate them for that. This government has taken Davis's legacy and cut \$400 million out of post-secondary education, much of it from the college system. The funding for community colleges is a disgrace. In the five years this government has been in office, the funding at the college I was at went from \$5,000 per student to \$3,000 per student, certainly not something to strengthen public education.

The reality within a college or university is that some programs are more expensive to offer than others. The engineering and the nursing programs are considerably more money than a general arts program. Colleges are faced with having to deal with the cutbacks by cutting the high-cost programs. Unfortunately, all too often the programs that are cut are the ones that receive extremely high employment for graduates and the graduates receive extremely high income. So the programs that the province and the country need most are sacrificed because of the reduction in funding.

The colleges have been hurt, as I said, far out of proportion to their size and what they serve. That means the students within the college system have had to struggle to afford college. Tuitions have doubled over the last seven years, and students are facing increasing problems being able to afford to go. Students, by and large, are doing summer jobs with minimum wage, not enough to afford a post-secondary education, particularly one away from home. Interestingly, \$40,000 is about the average income in Ontario for families. The number of students at post-secondary from families that have \$40,000 a year or less in annual income has decreased by two thirds over the life of this government. Forty thousand dollars is too much for students to get a grant or loan, but at the same time \$40,000 is not enough for a family to be able to send their son or daughter to a

college or university outside of town. That's going to cost \$12,000 to \$15,000, and that's not possible on \$40,000 before-tax income.

The students sometimes have had to resort to part-time jobs during the school year. Certainly it's great to see the initiative and to see them working at jobs to fund their way there, but part-time jobs and post-secondary education do not go together very well. All too often the students are forced to work in the evening when they should be doing their assignments or doing research. They suffer academically because of having to do these part-time jobs to fund their university. I believe that's very short-sighted on the part of this government.

This government has made great announcements about the money they're putting into post-secondary, and there have been quite a number of announcements of college funding over the past year. Unfortunately, this has been capital money; it's to build new classrooms. At the same time the province is funding new classrooms, the number of full-time faculty has decreased dramatically. So instead of having old empty classrooms, we're going to have new empty classrooms within the system.

The larger classes are detrimental to learning, particularly at the college level where very much of it is practical. A hands-on, lab type of course is required, and that does not work with a class size of 60 or 70. When you break them down into units of 15, 20 or 25 for a lab, the funding is not provided for that. What the colleges have been forced to do is fall back on part-time faculty. Nothing against part-time faculty, but from a student viewpoint part-time faculty tend to come into the college, teach the one hour or three hours or whatever and then leave, because they're not going to make a living on their part-time hours. For the post-secondary student who needs to talk to their teacher outside of regular classroom hours, for any number of reasons, they're not available. Again, when we hurt the students, we hurt this province.

Colleges have also had to considerably reduce the number of hours that students have in a program, yet our graduates continue to be incredibly successful. The graduates who are incredibly successful, though, are doing it not with the assistance of this government but with the opposition of this government.

Then we get to the other aspect of the bill, which deals with private universities. If we as a province are comfortable with private universities, why wouldn't we be comfortable with private hospitals? There's a natural extension. This may be a kind of trial balloon to see how much we can privatize. This government would privatize this Legislature if there was a buck in it for them. But the issue of funding, in the statements that they will get no public money, has not been borne out by the American experience, and we're hearing great references to how it works in the US. In fact, in the US many of the universities receive funding. On average, about 30% of the funding for a private university is coming from public sources.

But some programs cost less than others. As at the college level, the university-level engineering program

costs much more money to offer than the arts program, and at times one program subsidizes another. What I fear private universities will want to do is offer the low-cost, high-volume programs, such as general arts—worthwhile programs but considerably lower to offer—leaving the public universities to try to find ways to fund medicine and engineering. They, as private universities, will obviously choose the most profitable ones. The whole purpose of them is to have profit.

The other reality for the funding of universities is that universities derive some money from tuition, some from government grants and some from corporate sources. We're going to create a new group of universities that will compete with the public universities for corporate funding. Corporations are not going to increase their funding substantially, in all likelihood, so we're going to see the publicly funded universities receive a decrease in it.

The curriculum is absolutely vital. Curriculum is extremely expensive to produce. Will private universities coming into Ontario want to produce a made-for-Ontario curriculum, or will they want to use the curriculum from their own home state, wherever they're headquartered? This government is prepared to allow them to meet the requirements for their own home state, and we're going to see a considerable slant to American curriculum rather than ours.

I'm the critic for disabilities. There will be no requirement for private universities to provide interpreters in sign language or to provide closed-captioning. That closes the door to citizens in our province who are people with disabilities.

The private universities are going to have a requirement that if they go bankrupt they have to give the tuition back. Please explain to me how a bankrupt university can give tuition back. "Bankrupt" means they owe more than they have.

There are certain basic services in this province that we must control. About a year ago, Bill Davis said that if we value good health care in this province, then we must value good education. We have good health care only if our graduates are able to get good employment and if employers wishing to start up and operate in Ontario are able to get good employees. We don't get good engineers from bad universities. We don't get good doctors from bad schools. It is vital that we have a quality education system, not just for the education but for the very success of this province and every component of this province.

Again I give credit to former Premier Davis for recognizing that the key to our prosperity, to our health care and to the quality of life in Ontario depends on our young people having the right education, not just the right curriculum—obviously that's important—but they must have the opportunity. There should not be a requirement that they be strong academically and that their parents be wealthy. Any student who is strong academically will be a credit to this province, and there must be an absolute assurance that our public education system will be available for them.

2010

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

**Mr Bisson:** The joke about this debate is that at the end of the day the government side is going to do absolutely nothing when it comes to trying to find some compromise or some way to make this initiative work, if it ever could. We have a system of politics in this province, in this country I would argue, that's antiquated and old that is unfresh, that is back probably 300 years, where a party that wins 43% of the popular vote in an election is able to come in with a clear majority in this House and do absolutely what they want. What makes it even worse is that they've got the gall to come in here and change the rules of the House so they can do whatever they want. They can move on closure, they can do what they want and they don't give a darn about democracy.

I say to the members across the way that I don't believe any party, including mine, should have a clear majority in the House when it comes to anybody who gets less than 50% of the overall vote in a general election. I think it's wrong. It's not the way to do things. It's not the way to represent the interests of the democracy we supposedly cherish.

We listen to this debate; we listen to other debates. It doesn't matter what the debate is in this place. These guys—predominantly guys—on the other side are undemocratic and don't believe in the democratic process. They have an agenda, rightly or wrongly. If it's good or bad, if it's indifferent or terrible, it doesn't matter. These guys are going to go ahead and do it anyway and be damned with the public of the province of Ontario, because at the end of the day our antiquated system of elections around here says that if Mike Harris gets 42%, he can end up with 60% of the seats and he can do what he damn well pleases and nobody's got anything to say about it. I say there's something wrong with a democracy that works in that fashion and we should move off this stupid system and move to a system of proportional representation that allows people the ability to see themselves in this House and to know that at the end they can have an effect on what happens on the other side.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I'd like to join the debate this evening. I want to thank the members opposite for their comments on this legislation. I want to remind the House that this legislation is all about giving students choices and providing more opportunities for students in post-secondary education.

I recognize that change can be difficult for those who have grown accustomed to the old way of doing things, but in the complex world ahead, students need to be prepared for change. Students need to be prepared for an education system that responds to the needs of the future. With this legislation, this is what we will be providing for our students.

The minister commented on how this legislation can be, and has been said to be, controversial, but I believe

this legislation is courageous. It shows courage in this government and in this minister to lead the way in changing the education system and providing choices for students so there are more opportunities for the changing world.

The minister has repeatedly said in this House that any private university applying to grant degrees in Ontario must meet or exceed the criteria set by the quality assessment board. We've set up the quality assessment board which will determine all of the applications that come in from any post-secondary institution wishing to open up in Ontario. They have to meet certain criteria: one will be the protection of students; the other criterion will be excellence in education. These are all criteria that this board will ensure are in place before any institution is granted the opportunity to open shop in Ontario.

Providing applied degrees for colleges is something that all the students have been requesting, and so as a government, we will be providing this.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The members for Ottawa-Vanier and Prince Edward-Hastings both gave an outstanding speech and really put in context the problem that exists with this piece of legislation. One part of the legislation is fine; that is, allowing the community colleges in certain circumstances to grant degrees. That makes sense. There is nothing wrong with that. The second part is the real problem.

What this government is largely about unfortunately—this hasn't always been the case with the Conservative party—is privilege. It's about the most powerful people, the wealthiest people having special privilege, that privilege being available to certain people who can buy their way into these universities.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** You don't believe that, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** I do believe that. That's why I'm on this side of the House, because I feel your government believes in offering a choice to those who have the privilege of being able to pay for that choice. That's a major difference. I believe in the publicly funded education system, which is designed—it doesn't always achieve this—to provide equality of opportunity so that people, whether they are the son or daughter of Conrad Black or the son or daughter of a person who, unfortunately, finds themselves on social assistance, can both have access to the same university.

But you don't want to expand your university system to accommodate those students, particularly in the double cohort, who are going to need that accommodation. Instead you want to offer an option to the richest people to allow their children to be able to go to an American type of university that comes into this province. It would be much better to be able to invest in the education system we have here, in our colleges and our universities, the appropriate amount of funding so that everyone can have that access and not just the children of the rich and privileged.

**Mr Sergio:** I'd also like to compliment my colleagues the members from Ottawa-Vanier and Prince Edward-

Hastings for their wonderful input on this bill that is in front of us today. Let me say that indeed the introduction of this bill will take away money from the people of Ontario, from the people who can only afford less, to support private education. The government has starved post-secondary education. They cut some \$400 million back in 1996—

**Mr Dunlop:** We have not.

**Mr Sergio:** Yes, you have—and they have not put any money back into the system. The government should take into consideration, when it is willing to introduce private education, that every educator, including those in the States, has been saying it isn't working. It has not been working in the States and it will not work here in Canada. What will it do? It will not give extra opportunity to our Canadian people, our Ontario people, especially those who can least afford it. It will siphon money away from our public school system to grant tax incentives and student loans, which should be addressed to support the public school system.

What we are saying on this side of the House, and what our leader, Dalton McGuinty, keeps on saying in this House, is that we should be supporting, and we should be increasing equal funding for, the public school system, so everyone will have an equal opportunity for a good education in Ontario.

We don't fault the government when they say, "We want to have a wonderful, well-educated work force." How are we going to do that if we don't give equal opportunity to less fortunate people? I think it's our responsibility to give peace of mind to the parents and the kids in our province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mrs Boyer:** I would like to thank my colleagues from St Catharines and York West for their good words. Really, while listening to all this, I see that the truth is that this government seems to prefer private universities and colleges to public universities and colleges. That is why Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus are going to vote against this bill: because it is wrong, it is ill-conceived and it is misleading. This whole bill is dishonourable and is not what the people of Ontario want or deserve.

De plus, l'impact de ce projet de loi sur nos universités bilingues n'a vraiment pas été considéré ni même étudié. C'est malheureux, car l'impact de ce projet de loi sur nos universités bilingues sera beaucoup plus sévère qu'il ne le sera envers les universités anglophones.

Que répondriez-vous, membres de ce gouvernement, si nous osions aller jusqu'à demander, jusqu'à exiger, dans un futur rapproché si on faisait la demande en Ontario de nous donner, à nous les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, notre université francophone ?

2020

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's certainly my pleasure to join in the debate tonight on Bill 132. I know as in all things, change is difficult. That's a starting point, that government has to sort of initiate change, and by its

very nature change in itself is disruptive. We can talk about that, but I think you basically have to look at what the people want. When I look at the debate tonight on Bill 132, I tried to sort of go back and follow this debate to see if there have been any issues raised over the past while.

There have been special task forces look at post-secondary reform. I look at the Smith report as a good model, and the former president of Queen's University as a very capable person to make some comments about reforming post-secondary education.

I'm an alumnus of the University of Toronto and I have the highest regard for that university just across the street here. I took most of my degree as a student working, as a full-time employee. I did have the privilege of some full-time attendance, but by and large, and even when I was doing my work toward my master's degree, most of it was part-time. Access is the issue here, and how to provide access to people in an education-based society. We're always told technology or education or knowledge is the power in this new economy.

There were a couple of discussion papers. In fact, the Honourable Dianne Cunningham introduced her discussion paper in April 2000, and after that she initiated Bill 132 on October 19, 2000. The bill ended up—and I just want to go through some sequence here in the short time that's been left for me, which is unfortunate; that's another argument. I should be given twice as much time because there's so much that needs to be said.

Here's the response from the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. This is dated April 28, 2000, and what they're saying is, "The Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology applauds today's government announcement that gives the colleges the right to award applied degrees." I can only say to you that I've listened and worked with Gary Polonsky, as have Minister Ecker, Minister Flaherty and Mr Ouellette, along with Chris Hodgson, to try and allow Durham College to offer our constituents, our common constituents, the right, after the hard work, to earn the legitimacy of a degree.

I suspect that's the most significant part of this, that the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Statute Law Amendment Act enabling legislation enables the minister to establish the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board. I've got to stop here. This is the most important thing. The member from St Catharines should pay a little closer attention because this is the essence of the whole thing. "Quality" and "accessibility" are the two watchwords of this bill. Quality will not be compromised by Minister Cunningham or Minister Ecker or this government, but accessibility is something we must address in a changing workforce, where people and their habits and their children and their families need to have different models.

For instance, Mr Speaker, you would know that the Internet—I don't know if you've logged on recently; perhaps you haven't. But I think it's important to know that today you can get a virtual university on the Internet,



and it is an important area for the government to recognize what's actually going on. In fact, I think the first virtual university was in BC. There was quite a bit of outrage, if you follow that argument, and that university was really allowing people in the workplace to get a master's degree.

Now, this is my next legitimacy, if you will. I worked at General Motors, I'm very proud to say, for over 30 years. When I was there, they offered, and I was in the first class of, the General Motors Engineering and Management Institute, which is a full-time, private university in Michigan, and they offered a masters of science in manufacturing management. I completed most of those courses—not all, because most of it was engineering. My undergraduate degree was in economics, and I found it, quite honestly, a very rigorous program. The statistics in graduate school were—I had to work extremely hard. But the point is that General Motors brought this forward to the workplace and offered people an opportunity to improve themselves.

That's what this government is doing. If you live in Durham, you'll now be able to get an applied degree without having to pay about \$8,000 a year in rent. That's what this means to families in my riding. Let's stay focused here. It also means that people who have a college degree, or mature later in life, can now log on, arguably to the Ministry of Education, or Training, Colleges and Universities, and arguably they will be able to attend a university without ever leaving their family, or without having to travel or having to board.

The future's here, and what this legislation does is, first, recognize that quality will not be compromised. The standards of Ontario colleges and universities are world-renowned, and I think what is most important is the accessibility, finding a new model, a new method of delivering post-secondary education in a time when we know it's a knowledge-based economy.

Now, there will be those on the other side who will criticize. I understand that. Their job is to basically criticize everything we do. But I suspect if the members from the other side were actually listening to their constituents—and I often listen to the member from Hamilton East barracking. He basically is the man with one tone. I want him to stand in his place tonight and speak on behalf of his constituents, not on behalf of Dalton McGuinty—

**Mr McMeekin:** He does that every day.

**Mr O'Toole:** No, no. He should actually speak with his heart, listen to the people from Hamilton, listen to the people from McMaster, Algonquin. Listen to your real constituents and I think you'll come to the realization that this is the right thing to do. It's enabling legislation, and I suspect that if nobody wants the post-secondary courses, then clearly there won't be anyone attend them. But what are they afraid of in providing this opportunity for students who in some other model may not want to take the traditional course? They may want to take an accelerated post-secondary degree or training or certification.

I think competition, although it's a very difficult bridge for the other side to appreciate—they like the monopolistic, traditional position, and they have no courage to make the tough decisions for their constituents. That's the most important thing here, to listen to your constituents and do the right thing. It's about quality and it's about accessibility, and I'm certain, if they are listening tonight, they may vote for this bill.

I can feel the movement now, that some of them are actually turned. I know the member for Brant, as a teacher, said earlier tonight to one of our ministers that unless you have a post-secondary degree, you really don't know anything. Well, perhaps that's his point of view. Once you get your bachelor of ed, you actually know a lot more than—perhaps you'd agree. Now, it's just as well that he's not working with our young people any more, that he's here able to stand on his feet and tell his constituents that they don't have to have accessibility and quality. You stand in your place, Mr Levac, and tell them—

**2030**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Perhaps the debate could go through the Chair.

**Mr O'Toole:** Mr Speaker, will you pass that on to Mr Levac, please, because I'm not sure he can hear me anyway, even with a good ear turned toward me.

We've talked about tuition and in the few minutes I have left—under the Liberals, university tuition increased 35% and college tuition increased 29%. Under the NDP, university tuition increased 50% and college tuition increased 36%. Their method was to apply more money to a system that wasn't providing all the choices for students. Our suggestion here is that we're providing choices for students. At the end of the day, they get to choose whether they go to the university offering a course tailored to their particular needs or they go to the traditional institution and take four years to complete a degree with 20 credits.

I think there are lots of choice in the future, and our government is prepared to look at it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bradley:** I want to say that in one place I do agree with the member for Durham, and that is that there were some disparaging remarks made about the board of education in your area by another member, the member for Northumberland. I think you contradicted him and I want to commend you on contradicting him and supporting the board of education that he was unfairly attacking. I want to give that much credit in the House this evening.

I want to emphasize again to the member, and he knows this, that I think it was timely to allow community colleges, in certain circumstances, to grant degrees. That makes all kinds of sense. We've seen that evolution take place. Where the disagreement with this bill lies of course is in what you call competition. Very often, what that competition does unfortunately is, instead of having positive effect on the publicly funded system, it starts to erode it considerably. When you have a publicly funded

system that is well supported—and frankly I can't speak for the Minister of Education herself, but I would think her goal would want to be to protect publicly funded education. She's said that on a number of occasions. I think when you allow this kind of intrusion into our country of universities coming from somewhere else, really the people who have most access to those are going to be the wealthiest people in the province. I know you think that like with the health care system if you allow rich people to have their own health care system, if you allow rich people to have their own choices in education, somehow it relieves the pressure on the rest of the system. What it does in essence is, it has a detrimental rather than a positive effect on the publicly funded system. That's what I worry about.

The member was a member of the board of education. I think he understands well the importance of publicly funded education, and I hope he would share my concern and worry about that.

**Mr Bisson:** Again, if you listen to debate, what this is all about is privilege. It's about giving those who have most in this province, those who can afford most, an opportunity to get something supposedly better than everybody else. What they want to do is give people with money an opportunity to get out of the public system and to go into the private system and supposedly get something that's of superior quality. I don't know if that's going to be the case, but I would hope that in Ontario, as legislators, we would come to this place and would debate bills and try to find ways of providing opportunities to all Ontarians, not providing opportunities for a select few. It's really a sad debate that we're into in this place.

The other thing I'd say is that John Snobelen, when he was first appointed Minister of Education, set the strategy out in 1995, that they would create a crisis in the education system and that crisis would be the opportunity for the government ideologues and the Conservative-Reform-Alliance party of Ontario to make the kinds of sweeping changes they want in education. They underfunded the public system of education. They've cut by over \$500 million the amount of money we're sending into our post-secondary system. They're making student debt a huge problem in this province, where people are having to increasingly get into more and more debt to get public education. They're allowing all kinds of stuff to happen to the university sector that is increasing tuition for students, and they're creating that crisis. People are saying, "There's something wrong with the public system so we want to figure out how to fix it and how to find a solution." Presto, there they are, they're coming in with private universities. I say to members across the way that this debate is the beginning of a very sad path this province is going to take, one that changes from the politics we've had in the past, where together we tried to find solutions that work for all people, to where the Tories do suggestions that work for only a select few.

**Mrs Molinari:** It's certainly a pleasure to once again speak on this legislation put forth here today that we're

debating. It's all about providing choices, as has been stated by some of my colleagues, and it's unfortunate that the members on the opposite side don't realize the choices that our students need for the future.

I want to talk a little bit about the applied degrees that will be offered through this legislation for the universities. The report A Road Map to Prosperity called for a strengthening of those linkages and a greater degree of specialization of college programs to support regional economic prosperity. It is essential that the colleges are in a position to be able to offer the applied degrees. We've heard it from numerous students who leave Ontario, who leave the country to access the kind of education that we could be providing here in Ontario. When we're seeing that our students are leaving the province and leaving the country, it's incumbent upon any government to offer choices and provide for them what they are seeking elsewhere. We talk about the brain drain. We want to keep our students here in this province so that once they're educated here, they stay here, so that we'll be able to keep them in our province and in our country.

Even the member for St Catharines supports applied degrees. I was pleased to hear that because there is a lot in this legislation that I'm sure the opposition members would support if you would read it and give it credit. Open your minds to it. Don't just take the direction from your leader. Open your minds to what is in the legislation. I know if you do that, you will agree.

**Mr Levac:** Originally I was going rise to defend myself against the words spoken by the member from Durham, but I'm not going to waste my time.

What I will talk about is the fact that I try to bring to the attention of this House again that this is not just a single issue of private universities. I want to make it very clear that there are issues across the board that this government has introduced time and time again that are continuously reflected under words such as "competition," "better efficiencies," and all of those other buzzwords that have been used across the way in order to try to defend the idea of profit-taking.

I want to ask the Minister of Correctional Services and the member for Simcoe North to tell us why—70% of the constituents in his riding have said no to privatization. They went straight to the people and they asked them, "Would you support this private institution if we made it private?" The answer was no. What do they plan to do? They continue to go down the road of privatization. In essence, they've spent about \$100,000 to date to try to change their minds. They've spent \$100,000 out of taxpayers' money in a small area, in Penetanguishene, to try to tell them they don't know what they're talking about when they have stepped forward and said to the privatization issue, no; 125 communities across the province have said no to private prisons; 125 communities have said to this government in a letter, by resolution, by city council, elected officials, "Do not talk to us about privatization."

It's very clear that the government has no intention whatsoever of listening to the people of the province of Ontario when they do speak to the issue of privatization. So this is much bigger than the university issue, but very focused in. One of the issues that does come up time and time again is, what about privatization of our universities? That's choice? They have not improved the public system. That's what they're doing wrong.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr O'Toole:** I certainly appreciate the members' taking the time to, first, listen and, second, respond to the comments. More important, I have a lot of respect for the member from St Catharines. I think it's a matter that the glass is half full or half empty. He's an optimist. I can see that. He said he agrees with part I of the bill. I really think that working with this government—and I certainly would listen and I know Minister Cunningham would—will get it right on this quality piece for part II.

You would know today that there are private universities operating in Ontario and have been for some time.

2040

I want to quote here from Paul Davenport, the president of the University of Western Ontario. My daughter just graduated. That's a fine education. He says that the introduction of some small, niche-based private universities—and I think that's what they will be, very specific—will not be seen as a substitute by most parents and students for institutions like Western, Queen's or Toronto. I personally can live with that. I think they're saying that there are specific, very focused things that they will do a great job on.

I appreciate the fact that the member for Timmins-James Bay did make a comment. He should know—it was pointed out earlier—that the Minister of Labour has made it clear that Howard Hampton attended a university in the States. I don't hold that against him. It probably helped him get to where he is today. Some would argue that's nowhere, but nonetheless—Joe Cordiano, for instance, another person I thought would have been a good leader of the Liberal Party; Shelley Martel went to the Sorbonne, and I appreciate she's very classy and married to the leader of the third party. Perhaps that could change. Who knows? All of these things have nothing to do with universities.

I think the member for Thornhill is right: it's about making choices. Clearly the member for Brant—I haven't got time left to tell him what I really think. I may have to do this out of the House. Thank you very much for the time, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Speaker: I believe the member owes the leader of the third party and Ms Martel an apology for what I think was a totally irresponsible comment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'll give the member the opportunity. I don't think the standing orders would require it.

**Mr O'Toole:** If I offended anyone, I withdraw it, if there was any comment that may have been misunderstood.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Agostino:** I'm pleased to have a few minutes to join the debate on this piece of legislation that's in front of us. I think, as my colleague from Brant mentioned earlier, this is really a fundamental debate not only about colleges and universities but also fundamentally about the direction this government is moving in when it comes to trying to turn over the running of this province to the private sector.

What we see here, instead of an effort to enhance our university system, instead of an effort to deal with the chronic underfunding of our university system—I'm sure you know that this province is, if not the lowest, one of the lowest per capita when it comes to public funding of our universities. We rank near the bottom. We were 10th, I think, and we may have climbed to ninth out of the provinces across this country. So first of all we chronically underfund our universities. This government in 1996 took \$400 million in funding out of the university system and has only replaced \$200 million of that, so we have a shortfall of about \$200 million already simply from 1996.

The member for Durham said to speak on behalf of my constituents. I can tell you that my constituents and the people I represent in Hamilton East, hard-working people, often of modest income who are struggling, who are working hard to maintain their homes, keep their jobs and raise their families, are many of the people, because of what you have done, whose sons and daughters cannot go to universities across this province because they can't afford to, and they can't afford the debt they're going to have when they come out of university. That's how you've impacted my constituents. That's how this government's actions impact the people I represent in Hamilton East.

When I was growing up my family was very poor. Frankly, it was struggling to get by. If we had the situation today with regard to tuition fees, the size of the debts that young people walk out of university with, I would not have been able to afford, and would not have gone to, post-secondary education. I know that many other people ask all of you to look at yourselves, those who have gone through post-secondary education, look at your own situation, look at your family's and friends' and neighbours' situations and ask yourselves whether you believe that today you would have had those same opportunities, or your friends or neighbours would have had those same opportunities, under our current system with skyrocketing tuition fees. Since Mike Harris became Premier of Ontario, university tuition fees have increased 60%. As I said before, underfunding of universities—\$400 million cut, \$200 million replaced. That's still a \$200-million shortfall. It is embarrassing where we rank in the country when it comes to per capita university funding. It is embarrassing. One of the worst, if not the worst-funded system in Canada.

Now we're going to have the private sector come in, because of course the private sector always does it better when it comes to Mike Harris and his corporate friends at the Albany Club. It's always better when the private sector does it. We've seen it with the idea to privatize the jails—and the Minister of Labour was here earlier.

We've seen the success rate in privatizing collection of fines. We used to have a system where we collected 30% to 35%. The government decided they were going to get smart: "We're going to privatize it. The private sector will know how to do it. They're good at this stuff." Their return is 2% or 4%, when it was 35% before. That certainly doesn't seem like an improvement in my books, but that's this government's approach. Absolutely every single thing you can privatize, you attempt to, and you're doing it here again.

There will be competition all right, for limited resources, for limited grants, for limited tax incentives. Yes, there will be competition, but unfortunately the wrong way. You're going to have a system coming in that's often going to draw away, because they may be able to pay more money, they may simply be able to afford more as a private system. That was the same line Ralph Klein was using with health care in Alberta: "We have to privatize health care in Alberta. Competition is great"—the same approach here for post-secondary education.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education):** Nobody is privatizing health care in Alberta.

**Mr Agostino:** The minister of everything is yapping away again. You've done enough destruction to the high school and elementary school systems in the province. Please leave the university system alone.

This is a government that has no understanding of affordability when it comes to post-secondary education. Then they say: "Trust us, we're not going to give any financial assistance. Believe us, there's no financial assistance here." Well, they don't talk about grants, they don't talk about tax incentives, they don't talk about the competition for bursaries. Even in the United States, places like Harvard rely, to the tune of about 14%, on government assistance, on public assistance.

Down the line, you are going to do exactly that. You are going to evolve a system where you're going to start funding private universities. You say, "No, no, trust us." That's hard to do, because you told us you weren't going to close hospitals either. I remember that in the Mickey Mouse revolution of 1995. Hospitals would not be closed: "Yes, Robert, it is clear. It is not my intent to close any hospitals." We know how that promise went.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** No, that's not what he said.

**Mr Agostino:** Dr Laura across the floor is now suggesting that Mike Harris somehow did not promise in 1995 not to close hospitals.

They promised not to cut education funding. Well, we've seen that promise go out the door by about \$1 billion. They've totally screwed up that system upside down. Right now we've got chaos in our education system after five or six years of Mike Harris. We've got

strikes all over the damn province. We've got an education system that's falling apart because of this government and because of what they're doing. And they say, "Trust us, we're not going to do the same thing with private universities." That's garbage, Mr Speaker. It's hogwash.

I think what's really telling about this debate—the other night I was in the House and the member from Peterborough was speaking on the bill. I remember the comment, because it really stuck: "University education is a privilege and not a right." That is fundamentally where the Liberal Party and Dalton McGuinty disagree with Mike Harris and the Conservatives. We do not believe it's a privilege for someone to attend post-secondary education in this province. It is not a private club for your rich friends and their kids. It's got to be accessible, because often we have to help the people who need help the most. Wealthy people can afford to send their kids to any school they want in the States or anywhere else across North America. You're doing absolutely nothing for average-income, hardworking Ontarians who can't afford that, except setting up a competing private, high-end university system for them.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Agostino:** There's the minister of everything yapping again. She has done enough damage to the secondary and public education system in this province. Very clearly, we believe university education should be accessible to all. Unlike the member for Peterborough, I do not believe it's a privilege; I believe it's a right. It's a right for every single student in this province to attend post-secondary education. If you've got the ability and the skills and the talent and the hard work, financial restrictions should not get in the way of attending university in Ontario. Mike Harris is ensuring that's the case.

Clearly what we see in this bill is another attempt by this government to benefit their rich friends, to allow the private sector to come into an area that, frankly, they have no business being in. Government should have control and properly fund post-secondary education in this province, because that's how we ensure that the gap between the rich and the poor in this province gets closer and closer, not wider, as it is under your government. Education is clearly the route for many young people to get out of lives of despair, to get out of lives where they're struggling, to get out of difficult financial situations.

**2050**

That's what brings us together. That's what made this province. That's what has made us the envy of the world, where people can come into Ontario or into Canada and be able to afford to go to university or college. That's what has made this province so great, and now Mike Harris is doing his best to break that up. Mike Harris is doing his best to ensure that we have private education, private universities in this province that are going to take away from our publicly funded institutions.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Agostino:** There's the minister of trucks yapping again. They get sensitive. You see, they don't like the idea that we start exposing the Mike Harris agenda to the people of Ontario. They don't like the idea that once again they've been caught trying to cater to their rich friends, cater to those who have continued to fund the election coffers of this government.

That's not what it's all about. It's about accessibility. It's about equality. It's about affordability. It's not about students walking out with a \$30,000, \$40,000 or \$50,000 debt. That's not what it's all about. That's not what university funding should be and that's not what a university education in this province should be.

Unfortunately, this wrong decision to go ahead with these private universities is going to drive one more nail into our publicly funded university system in this province. You should be working to enhance and build, not destroy, public universities in Ontario, and you're not going to add to public universities by turning it over to the private sector.

It is disgusting what is happening here—another attempt by this government to give up its proper role in helping young people and helping the future of this province. It is an embarrassing evening and embarrassing bill we have in front of us.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I had difficulty hearing my colleague because of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Could you determine for me whether that was intelligent heckling or boorish noise?

**The Deputy Speaker:** All members would know that only one member at a time has the floor and that heckling is always out of order, but it is especially out of order when members are not in their seats.

Questions and comments?

**Mr Clark:** The statement that the member couldn't hear the member for Hamilton East—well, the security guards down the hall in the west wing heard the member for Hamilton East. I mean, please. I've known the member for Hamilton East for some time, and he can undoubtedly do a rant, maybe even better than the member for Hamilton West. That's probably why the two of them get confused by the Speaker from time to time when they're called to order.

What's the reality here, folks? Let's back up a little and look at some of the other political rants we've heard in the past. Maybe just for a moment we might want to talk about that terrible thing, tax cuts. Here's this party, the Liberal Party, who said about tax cuts, "What you're doing is hurting the poor. You're borrowing money. It won't work. It won't create jobs." Well, you know what? Now we have Paul Martin in the federal election as the tax cut guy for the Liberals and Joe Clark a the tax cut guy for the Tories. The member for Hamilton East would be happy to know that even the NDP leader, Alexa McDonough, is promising tax cuts. All of them have admitted that tax cuts create jobs.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Clark:** The member for Hamilton East is barracking across there. They don't want to talk about the fact that they were wrong and we were right. You don't want to about it when you're wrong. You only want to use political rhetoric. I remember the land ambulance thing. "You know what's going to happen. They're going to privatize it, and we'll have American ambulances driving through Ontario." Do you remember what happened when it came through? The municipalities took it back. It already was privatized and they took it back. Do we hear anything about it now? No. It's more of the Chicken Little party. They're crying all the time, "The sky is falling." Well, it's not.

**Mr Crozier:** I feel I have to make some comment in this respect. What my colleague was trying to make a point of was that private universities are not the answer to the underfunding of universities, to the fact that the government isn't ready to meet the double cohort. There was a lot that went on in the last few minutes. It reminded me a bit of when my mother used to say—and I have to put this in the right language—that if bovine flatulence was music, you'd be a whole brass band.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments? The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** I made my comment.

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

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It's a pleasure to join in the debate on Bill 132. The member from Hamilton East talked about Harvard. As I mentioned one day, I had the pleasure of visiting Harvard and MIT, a couple of schools I wished I had money or the opportunity to go to. I too went to the University of Toronto, like the member from Durham. It's a great school—engineering, bachelor's, master's, the whole bit.

My younger daughter, who is 15 now, is going to go to university when there is the so-called double cohort, when there are going to be a lot of kids wanting to go to university, and I want to make sure the choice is there. She herself, my little one, was very impressed when she went to Harvard and MIT. She said, "This sounds like a great choice, great school, great name. I wish I could go here." On the other hand, I'm saying that perhaps we should make similar institutions available right here in Ontario.

One of the things, as you would have seen recently, is that we have a shortage of IT personnel. Many of the IT personnel, in fact more than 54%, come from India, and most of those graduates are a product of IIT, the Indian Institute of Technology. Those are private schools, wonderfully done. If we had similar schools here, privately run, maybe we wouldn't have that shortage. I certainly would encourage that when we come to that stage, when we have a shortage of skilled people, we make sure that we have the resources available. Is it up to the government to start funding these institutions? I don't think so. I think we should have private people funding those.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Agostino:** I want to thank the colleagues from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, Brant, Stoney Creek, and the member for York West who attempted to speak. I heard with great interest when the member from Stoney Creek talked about tax cuts and how they're taking credit for everything that's happened and so on, compared to the fact that Paul Martin is finally—I guess the difference fundamentally is that the tax cuts happened there once they balanced the budget; the tax cuts happened there once they reduced the debt, unlike Ontario. Understand that out of all the provinces across this country, we were the second-last province, after Glen Clark's BC, to balance the books. We came to the dance quite late.

The reality is that there is a place for tax cuts, but it's only after you get your books in order, after you get your house in order, not when you're borrowing billions of dollars to give a tax cut. I remind you what you've done to the accumulated debt in this province. You've increased it by somewhere to the tune of \$15 billion or \$20 billion since you took office, so don't give me that argument of tax cuts.

The reality, as I said earlier, is that what they're doing here is very clearly a backdoor attempt to ultimately have what are private universities competing head on with public universities, not only for students but for government money. This is where this thing is going to fall apart because very clearly the effort today by this government, as I said earlier, should be to enhance our publicly funded university system in Ontario, to help, not to cut.

You can start by restoring the \$200 million that you cut. You cut \$400 million and gave \$200 million back. Maybe we can start talking about a tuition fee rollback. Maybe we can start dealing with the heavy debt load students have now. Maybe we can talk about the 6% increase in tuition fees. Those are the approaches that should be taken right now. Let's fix and properly fund our public university system before we start giving it all away to our friends in the private sector on the government side of the House.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bisson:** I've listened to this debate tonight and it's been really difficult to accept some of the comments made by the government side. I've never seen a debate like this, where I feel that the only way I can contain my feelings and my emotions and my anger is to go sit in the lobby, because what these guys are talking about on the other side is changing the fundamental fabric of what post-secondary education is about.

We had a system in this province that we developed by way of reason. We used to have at one time a system of private education in this province, back in the bad old days, the days when the people who got the better education were the people who came from families who had more wealth. It was as simple as that. What this party is talking about doing—the Conservative Party, the Alliance party, the CRAP party, whatever they want to call themselves over there—is trying to bring us back to a

day of privilege, a day of class systems, where if you happened to be the son or daughter of a parent who happened to have the bucks to send you to private university, that's the opportunity you would get and you would be doing better than the average kid out there whose parents couldn't afford to send him. Unless you happened to be a child who had a talent in sports or a talent so that he or she could get some type of scholarship, you had no chance of getting that extra type of education.

We in this province decided at one point we would move to a public system, because we said as legislators back then—go back and read the Hansards, I say to the government members—that what we needed to do was build a quality public system of primary, secondary and public post-secondary education to give people the opportunity to learn, to give people the opportunity to excel, so that we don't necessarily look at their pocketbook as the entrance qualification to get into those post-secondary education systems.

What we've done over the past number of years is that we've managed to build a fairly good system of post-secondary education; I would even argue one of the better ones in the world. We have foreign students from around the world. I listen to these guys across the way talk about, "The only way Bob Rae was able to get an education was to run to Oxford University, and Shelley Martel went to the Sorbonne." People in all kinds of places across the world decide to go to other universities, sometimes not so much because of the excellence but because they want to study in another environment to see what is going on, to see if they can learn something different and bring it back to their jurisdiction.

You just have to go to the University of Toronto and take a look at how many foreign students we attract at the universities of Ontario. We charge them full tuition. They come in and get quality education. They go back to their own home nations and they practise what they've learned at the U of T. Of course you have students in Ontario who do the same thing. These guys argue that because we have Ontario students who decide to go to Yale or some of the other public and private universities in other countries, it's an admission that our public system doesn't work. What a joke. What a disservice. What a changing of the truth when it comes to what you guys are talking about.

The reality is that we have a good system of post-secondary education. I would argue it used to be better. I would argue we had a time in this Legislature when all members of this House—Conservatives, New Democrats and Liberals—accepted that we had to make the investments necessary to make post-secondary education the best in Canada and the best in the world. We've managed to build up fine institutions across this province, in this very city, in northern Ontario and in various parts around this province. Our graduates from our post-secondary facilities are among the best in the world. They're sought across the world, in engineering and all kinds of sciences, doctors, physicists. We have all kinds

of people who are graduating out of our post-secondary system who are among the best in the world.

For you guys to argue choice, come on, give your head a shake. It's not about choice. It's about you fulfilling your ideology: public sector bad, private sector good. It's the old argument: you Tarzan, me Jane. It's so simplistic that it's absolutely stupid. I say to the members across the way it's a disservice.

The other point of this debate that really bothers me is that when we get into one of these ideological debates that we have tended to get into more and more in this Legislature over the past four, five or six years under the Tories, when the Tories bring in legislation that basically, fundamentally changes the way we do things in this province, so that you can really see the point that this Legislature doesn't work.

What you have in this House is a government that's intent on changing the fabric of post-secondary education, and they're not about to relent for two seconds on any point because, you know what? These guys woke up one morning and they said they were geniuses and everybody out there is stupid: "Nobody else has got an opinion. Post-secondary education is something that should be sought after in the private sector, and the rest of you are a bunch of bozos."

I say to you, shame. This Legislature is supposed to work for the people of this province. It's not supposed to be working for Mike Harris and people like you, Mr Wettlaufer, and other people in this Legislature from whom I heard some things said here tonight that I find, quite frankly, regrettable. The debate in this House has gone to a point that I haven't seen in the 10 years that I've been here.

The reality is that what we're supposed to do in this Legislature on all sides of the House—Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats—is to try to find ways to make institutions and laws work for the people of this province. All you want to do is make it work for your ideology, and I think that's wrong. Yes, every party has an ideology. Yes, I understand the Conservatives have a certain take on things, as Liberals do and as New Democrats do, and that's fair game. But this Legislature is supposed to work in such a way that we're able to have a respectful debate in this House, to the point that we can find ways to accommodate the views so that whatever we build in this province is not just for the people in Mike Harris's party but for all the people of the province of Ontario.

That's what offends me about what you people tend to do in this place. You come into this Legislature and you figure you know it all. You change the rules. You're undemocratic, and you forget what your very mission is of being elected as representatives. You demean the name of politicians and you demean this institution. Some of the comments I've heard in this House tonight, I'll tell you, are just abysmal. I'm especially going to look at the Hansard for the comments of one of the Conservative members making assertions about the married life of two members of this assembly. I think that

is despicable. Quite frankly, it shows to what point you guys over there—and mostly guys in the Conservatives—are dragging back so far that your knuckles are dragging on the ground.

Mr Speaker, I say no more, because I'm upset—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I was just going to remind the member that he needed to address his comments through the Speaker.

**Mr Bisson:** I do, but I still think they're dragging their knuckles on the ground. That's how low they are.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Clark:** Mr Speaker, I can assure the assembly that my knuckles have no calluses.

From time to time I've sat in this House and I've listened to the debate degrade to deplorable levels. I've listened to rants and raves from the NDP caucus that were far lower than anything I've heard tonight. I'm not sure what's upsetting the member over on the other side, but I think he should really question why he's making the statements that he is, because I think overall, other than a little bit of fun here tonight, the decorum in the House has not been that bad.

The question I have is, what's wrong with the bill? What is it exactly that the Liberals and the NDP have so much problem with? If private institutions wish to set up shop in Ontario and consumers wish to pay for it, then that system will flourish. If the consumers don't wish to pay for it, then it will flounder.

I'd have much more respect for the opposition's position if they were raising concerns about, "We want to make sure this happens in order for this to work successfully."

The member for St Catharines made a comment earlier tonight and talked very clearly about applied degrees. He supports that. I think there were other members on that side who support that. I see the latest member shaking his head yes, that he supports that.

The member from Timiskaming—what's the compromise? If you're saying on that side that this House isn't working, I have not heard—and I ask my colleagues on this side, have you heard any compromises offered from the other side? I've heard a lot of rants, I've heard a lot of diatribe, but I have not heard any compromises. So you can't suck and blow. If you want to talk about compromise, then offer one.

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**Mr Parsons:** The issue isn't that the Liberals or the NDP oppose post-secondary education; it's the reality that the product this government wants to put on the market is not a product that's accessible to everyone in this province. The publicly funded universities now, the publicly funded colleges, have fewer and fewer low-income students able to partake and to graduate.

Now, one doesn't have to go to college or university to be a success in Ontario. All kinds of individuals have flourished without it. But the reality in statistics tells us that given the high demands of our technology world, the chances of being successful, the chances of having greater income, are clearly tied to post-secondary. If we

look at the companies that are flourishing—with the exception of the little blip of Nortel on the stock market in the past few days—the high-technology companies are absolutely craving employees, are bringing employees in from offshore.

We should be doing everything in our power in this province to make the education system accessible to everyone. As we watch the marked drop in students from families making less than \$40,000, the answer is not to bring in a competitive system that will bleed students, will bleed faculty and will bleed public money away from the public system.

The public benefits from public education. Certainly the students individually do. But collectively, this province and this country will thrive if we can attract employers from outside the country, if we can provide employers, for citizens of this province, who want to start firms. We need to make it open to everyone. Because a student doesn't have money doesn't preclude the fact that they could be a tremendous employee.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I'd like to point out that not all universities will be privatized. To think that the University of Toronto or the University of Western Ontario or the University of Waterloo or Wilfrid Laurier University or McMaster University could not compete—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** As a matter of fact, I say to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, yes, some of them do. The University of Waterloo has said that they can compete.

What I want to say is that any one of these fine public institutions can compete with the private universities. However, we have to face reality. Education is changing, just like everything else, and there will be some students who want the courses offered in a private institution. Why, for instance, are 7,700 students from Ontario going to private universities in the United States? It's because they want what is offered at those private institutions. Why are there 10,000 courses being offered on the Internet that students can take? If nobody was taking them, they wouldn't be offered. The same is true of a private university. If nobody will take the courses offered at those private institutions, then they won't be there.

We are not guaranteeing any funding. We are not going to provide any initiative whatever that a public institution would become a private institution. The Smith panel—you guys know what the Smith panel is—recommended private institutions. What would ever cause the Smith panel to recognize private institutions if it wasn't a good idea?

**Mr Sergio:** My compliments to the member for Timmins-James Bay for a wonderful presentation on Bill 132. Let me briefly say that the bill really tries to accomplish two particular things. One is changing the names of the degree, and the other is to allow private institutions, mainly from the States, to come into Ontario and set up shop. The bill as it is now does not preclude channelling funding from the people of Ontario, public

funding, into those private universities and colleges. It's right in the bill.

I'm surprised that the members from the government continue to say, "Look, if they come and they don't like it, they will fail." There is quite a bit of a difference. It's one thing to say, "Build a house and somebody will come and buy it," but it's another when you say, "Come and set up shop here," because our people, our real people, won't be able to afford it. Where are these people?

Let me say this: this bill does two very particular things. They speak about choices, giving them a choice, but they are removing the opportunity from the people of Ontario and they are negating those people that can't afford it that real choice. The other one is competition. The people of Ontario cannot compete with those universities and those post-secondary institutions. Our people can't afford it today because of the deregulation of the tuition fees endorsed by this particular government. That is why, and they fail to recognize and protect exactly that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Bisson:** I heard the comments from across the way, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling," and to a certain extent the sky is getting a lot lower. The reality is that if we open the door to the idea of allowing private sector institutions to come in and compete against public sector institutions like universities, it's the thin edge of the wedge. You get people used to that idea. The government argues on the other side, "What's wrong if people want to pay more to get a private education? Why shouldn't we allow them to do that?" The next thing we're going to argue is that maybe we should allow private sector health care and allow people to get ahead on waiting lists if they're willing to take out their wallets and take out their Amex gold cards and pay for a little bit of extra service. What's wrong with Mr Eaton or Mr Harris or anybody else who's got money asking for a little bit of privilege in our public health care system?

What we should be doing in this House is trying to figure out a way to make our public institutions work for the people of this province. We should not be concerning ourselves with trying to create a system that says that if you are from one class of society you get the Cadillac system, and if you're from the other class of society you get the poor system. That's exactly where these guys are trying to take us. I thought in this province, I thought in this country, that Canada had a vision that was different than that of the United States and a few other countries that I think are on the wrong track when it comes to providing services. These guys are about changing the very vision of what this country is all about and what this province is about.

That's what offends me about what you guys are doing. You don't have any regard for what this country is about. You have no regard for what public institutions are about. You're opening the door to allow for-profit private sector operators to come in and operate our public institutions, and at the end of the day those with the bucks are going to do well and those without the bucks



are going to do badly. You just have to take a look at the United States to see how well that bloody system works.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Clark:** Listening to the debate this evening, you'd have to wonder. I guess there are no private universities in Ontario today.

I look in Hamilton-Wentworth and we have Redeemer University College, a private college, a private university. The member continually—

*Interjections.*

**Interjection:** Tell me what they do with the profit.

**Mr Clark:** They put it back into the university.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House needs to take a deep breath. I'm now seeing government members heckle government speakers. It's going a little bit overboard. We only have about eight minutes left. The member for Stoney Creek can take us home.

**Mr Clark:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I truly do thank you for that respect.

This new law that we're talking about is a milestone for college students. It represents the culmination of years of dedicated commitment to a vision that was set out back in the 1960s. We begin moving forward. At that time, the government of the day set a clear vision for change. From that vision, a whole new—

*Interjection.*

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**The Deputy Speaker:** The member is not in his seat.

**Mr Clark:** True, the member should be in his seat if he wants to heckle. He does it so well.

That whole new era of educational opportunities was opened up for students. Expanding on the strong academic traditions of our universities, the government launched Ontario on a bold and new experiment in learning through the creation of colleges of applied arts and technology. If you think back, what would the opposition have been saying then?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Clark:** The Liberals probably had a little bit more enlightenment than the member for Don Valley East, because he clearly opposes everything that we propose.

There is no question that what began as a bold experiment has matured into a highly sophisticated network of learning institutions. No one disputes that. So now we're moving forward. We're moving forward in bringing in a system, A Road Map to Prosperity, that calls for strengthening of these linkages and a greater degree of specialization of college programs to support regional economic prosperity.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Clark:** Listening to all the barracking—and I know the people at home can't hear it. There's about a half-dozen Liberals here making a great deal of noise. On that side of the House they don't support economic growth, they don't support choice, because they know what's right.

I've spoken for some time now—there's a syndrome; I call it the Brussels sprouts syndrome. If you listen to the

opposition, they know what's best for the people of Ontario. How dare the government bring in free choice? How dare they bring in private institutions? Because they know what's best for the people of Ontario. They're far more enlightened than the government. They're far more enlightened than the students. They're far more enlightened than the 7,000 students who are taking university education in the US, as my friend Wayne Wettlaufer mentioned. The members on the opposite side would have us believe that they would rather have the 7,000 students leave Ontario, take their money and export it to the US.

I have to question where the wisdom is when private universities say, "We'd like to look at setting up shop here," because there are already private universities here.

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** No, there aren't; just colleges.

**Mr Clark:** The member for Don Valley East should check his facts out, because I have a private university in my riding.

Quite clearly we're saying, let's bring them here, let's look at this.

**Mr Caplan:** It's a college, not a university.

**Mr Clark:** Redeemer University.

**Interjection:** He doesn't like colleges over there.

**Mr Clark:** Colleges are beneath him, because again he is the master of the Brussels sprouts syndrome. He knows everything: "Eat your Brussels sprouts. We know you don't like it; it's good for you." They know more than us. The reality here is that all we ever hear is political rhetoric, "The sky is falling," and that they know more than us. That's what they're telling us. You say it time and time again.

I look out to the residents in my community, the students in my community, and I say, don't you want choice? If you want to go to a private university in Ontario, shouldn't you have that right? How dare any politician say that you don't have that right. How dare you say that because you believe the sky is falling on private universities and colleges, you want to pre-empt their right, exclude their right and say, "No, you can't do this because we fear for the end of public education in Ontario." What an incredible crock, what a charade, what a façade.

It disturbs me when we're looking at this legislation that the members opposed are just that: simply opposed because they're the loyal opposition. I give credit to a couple of members over there who said, "You know what? We like this section of the bill." The member for St Catharines said that, and the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, who I have a tremendous amount of respect for, also stated that he liked that section. The member for Don Valley East could learn from these other members who read the bills. Reading the bills is important.

I think it's important that we as a government recognize that we're moving forward, bringing competition. But we're also moving forward because we are now existing, working, in a globalized world, a world

with competition, a world where the children from the other countries are competing against our own children here in Ontario. We're no longer just competing against other kids in Ontario; we're competing across the country, across North America and around the world. So I ask the people who are watching at home, what is so wrong about what we're proposing? If you listen to the rhetoric, all they can say is that this will destroy the public post-secondary education system. It's completely redundant. As a matter of fact, on every other bill that's come through that they've opposed, the official members of the Chicken Little party have stated, "Whoa, the world is coming to an end if you do this. How dare you?"

We have examined the issues. We've listened to the stakeholders. We have suggested very clearly that we believe the students in Ontario have the right to make that choice. We believe the 7,000 students the member for Kitchener Centre spoke about who are going to the United States would rather stay in Ontario, while the Liberals would have them leave and spend their money abroad. We would rather have them spending their money here.

We would like to include the private universities here. We're talking about a bill that very clearly is defined with accountability, has very clear measurements for the universities so that they must perform, they must meet our standards, they must provide a good, quality education for our children in our province. That allows the choice.

The people who are listening at home should really ask their Liberal members why they're opposed to this. Why are they so afraid of allowing choice in Ontario? They simply don't understand that they shouldn't be directing choice. We believe the constituents in our communities have the right to make that choice, the right to make that decision, whereas you on that side of the House believe the constituents shouldn't have that right. We're going to stick with them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mercifully it's 9:30 of the clock. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2129.*

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Garfield Dunlop, Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy,  
Frances Lankin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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