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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**  
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**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 23 April 2001**

**Lundi 23 avril 2001**

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 23 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 avril 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### CHRIS HADFIELD

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I am pleased to rise and speak about a remarkable Sarnia native, astronaut Chris Hadfield, the first Canadian to walk in space. Sarnia-Lambton residents feel a special pride in his achievement, because Chris Hadfield was born in Sarnia and went to King George school.

Although Chris Hadfield left Sarnia around the age of 10, he comes back every year to visit. I have had the privilege of meeting Chris on a number of occasions.

Chris Hadfield has been considered a local hero for a long time, particularly after his first flight in 1995. He had been a household name in Sarnia long before the rest of Canada discovered who he is.

Today, if you fly to Sarnia, you fly into the Chris Hadfield Airport. Chris has taken the crest from the city of Sarnia with him into space.

In both my offices hang a photograph he took from space in 1995 of the Sarnia area. I understand he was going to try to take another photograph on Thursday at 4:15, as the shuttle went over the area.

Chris Hadfield is an example of achieving excellence and professionalism that makes him the best in the world. He has been an inspiration to many young people, and proven anything is attainable with a dream, good education, hard work and opportunity. The Sarnia-Lambton community and, I can safely say, the members of the Legislature wish Chris all the best and a safe return to earth.

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I'd like to draw the attention of all members of this Legislature to Ontario's recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day, which fell this year on April 19.

Images conjure up strong emotions. Images in the minds of Ontarians on Holocaust Memorial Day are likely predominated by the systematic destruction of European Jews associated with the Second World War. However, the minds of some Ontarians will be filled with images of the victims of genocide in Africa or the Balkans.

This is as it should be. Holocaust Memorial Day is a time to commemorate all victims of genocide and remind citizens of Ontario of the values of education and citizenship to make sure that we never allow ourselves to forget.

It is important to remember that genocide is only possible when large numbers of people abrogate their responsibilities as citizens and do nothing to stop hatred and intolerance.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations' convention on prevention and punishment of genocide recognize this. These documents recognize the civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of all citizens. More and more people around the world understand that the right to life exists above national sovereignty.

I ask all members of this Legislature to remember that shedding light on these darkest of human actions is a reflection of our willingness to create a society that will defend all its parts. It is a lesson we must take care to never forget.

#### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I was shocked and saddened last Thursday by a throne speech that included no new programs for Ontario's children.

Last September, the federal government, as part of the federal health accord, gave Ontario \$844 million over five years for children's programs. Most provinces held consultations about new programs. Some have introduced programs such as new child care options or increased support for expectant mothers. This Tory government has never even acknowledged the transfer of money.

On April 1, the federal government transferred \$114 million to Ontario to establish new programs for children and families. The government has not consulted the people or announced what new programs it will establish with the money. All this government has done for children in Ontario in the last six months is collapse the Ontario ministry for children. After years of speeches pledging his commitment to children, in February Mike Harris moved the Children's Secretariat to the already overloaded Ministry of Community and Social Services.

I have repeatedly pressed the government to announce its plan for this money. It is time to move beyond the rhetoric. The Premier should be here today to account for how these federal dollars will be spent on children.

The Ontario Liberal Party believes it is time for the government to make families and children a part of its political agenda.

#### ORGAN DONATION

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** With beautiful weather across southern Ontario, many Ontarians are spending more time outdoors anticipating the spring and summer months ahead. But for too many Canadians the hope and excitement that comes with the change in season is diminished by the sorrow and anguish that comes from waiting for organ transplant surgery.

Today marks the beginning of National Organ Donor Week, symbolized by the green ribbon.

My sister Patti, at the ripe old age of 40 years, is waiting for a new heart. She is one of 1,600 Ontarians currently on the waiting list for organ transplant surgery. Despite the success rate of organ transplant surgery, Canada has one of the lowest donor rates in the world. Here in Ontario, despite the number of individuals currently waiting for this surgery, only 406 actual donations from Ontario residents were made in all of the year 2000.

I encourage everyone in this House and across this province to sign an organ donor card or learn more about organ donation by calling your MPP or visiting [www.OrganDonationOntario.org](http://www.OrganDonationOntario.org). It is equally important that families take the time to discuss their wishes with each other to ensure that as many Canadians as possible can receive the gift of a better life.

My family and the hundreds of members of families of those who desperately need this gift of life thank every Canadian who has already signed their card.

Organ transplants save lives, maybe the life of someone you know and love. Each of us can be a hero and each of us can save lives by taking the first step and signing your own organ donation card.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I want to use my time today to make a direct plea to the Minister of Health regarding our serious health care concerns in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario.

As the physician shortage crisis worsens, particularly in Thunder Bay, it is absolutely imperative that the minister recognize that solutions, both long and short term, are being offered to him and it is clearly time for him to take action.

On a short-term basis, you must loosen the restrictions on qualified foreign-trained physicians who are eager to work in our communities. You have publicly acknowledged the absurdity of the present impasse, and I hope you will seek a solution to this on an urgent basis.

On a long-term basis, it has become increasingly clear that the establishment of a northern and rural medical school will bring many new physicians to the north. We

need your committed support to make this a reality, and I am calling on you today to make it happen. It's the right thing to do, not just for the north but for all the smaller communities in the province.

Speaking of what is right, I must make another heartfelt plea to the minister, and that is to recognize that the northern health travel grant program, as it is presently set up, is underfunded, bizarrely inflexible and in fact discriminatory.

You need to understand that northerners are absolutely offended by your government's extraordinary reluctance to fix or at least improve this program. You also need to understand that we will not give up the fight to see those improvements realized.

Minister, release your internal report, the one your predecessor has on her desk, and fix this long-neglected program. Northerners have waited long enough for fairness.

**1340**

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Government figures released at the beginning of April show that the shortage of doctors and specialists in the north has again gotten worse. There are 35 communities needing a record 120 doctors and 167 specialists—17 more family doctors and 45 more specialists than we needed in December 2000.

Despite this crisis, the government said nothing in the throne speech about what it plans to do. The government-OMA agreement has not provided one new idea to deal with the shortage, despite the commitment to do so in section 12 of the agreement. The northern retention initiative promised by this government last May to deal with the loss of doctors from northern hospitals has never materialized, and the government refuses to release the George report so that northerners will know what the expert panel had to say about the creation of an independent medical school in the north. In fact, New Democrats had to appeal to the Information and Privacy Commissioner last week to get a copy of the document because the Ministry of Health has never replied to our FOI request submitted February 19.

The media report that Mike Harris will be in Sudbury on Friday, on the same day a symposium on a northern medical school is being held. I hope the Premier will attend, and announce that his government will accept a proposal submitted by Lakehead and Laurentian universities to create an independent medical school in the north.

The government should take the present crisis and turn it into an opportunity: agree to use some of the \$65 million now spent to recruit and retain, and fund an independent northern medical school so we can train doctors where they are needed to work and live.

#### SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Today the province of Ontario moves forward with a bold new measure in community safety with the proclamation of Christopher's Law. Christopher's Law

establishes the first sex offender registry in Canada. With us in the gallery today are two residents of Brampton, Jim and Anna Stephenson, parents of Christopher, for whom the legislation was named. If you will please be recognized.

*Applause.*

**Mr Gill:** It is a great honour to have the Stephenson family here with us today.

Also in the gallery today is Peel regional police Inspector Len Favro, who was one of the lead investigators on Christopher's case; and OPP detective Staff Sergeant Charles Young, who will manage Ontario's sex offender registry. Thank you.

*Applause.*

**Mr Gill:** Since the tragic death of their son, the Stephensons have worked tirelessly with this government and other groups in bringing about mandatory registration for convicted sex offenders. They are dedicated advocates of victims' rights and have provided both the inspiration and the momentum that led to the launching of this registry.

With the proclamation of Christopher's Law today we are putting convicted sex offenders on notice. They must now register and provide local police services with critical information, including an updated address and photo. The introduction of our provincial registry gives police a crucial tool.

Unfortunately, the federal government has refused to implement a national sex offender registry, something that was a key recommendation of the 1993 Stephenson inquest. Our registry sets a benchmark in public safety for the federal government and other provinces.

On behalf of our government and my constituents, I express my gratitude to the Stephensons and all those who have worked hard to make the registry a reality. Thank you.

#### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** One, two, three, Mr Speaker; it's easy as one, two, three. This is the 123rd day this House has sat since the last election. That means an average of six days a month that this House has sat since 1999, and the Premier doesn't even deign to attend question period today. If he's going to be here, we invite him to show up.

The Premier has the worst attendance of any Premier in the history of the post-war period. The Premier of Ontario has—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Take a seat.

The member knows that by referring to people's attendance you're only going to get people barracking across from the other side. You cannot refer to people's attendance. I know it seems to be the official opposition's position to do that. If you continue, I'm going to name you and then that gentleman down there with the sword is going to throw you out. We are not going to put up with it. We are not going to start the first day with you getting up and breaking the rules so blatantly. If you do

that, the other side starts yelling and we degenerate into chaos. I'm not going to let it happen and I'm going to listen very closely, and if you do it again—this is your last warning—I'm going to name you.

Continue.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, can you point out to me the standing order that says that?

**The Speaker:** We will get the appropriate one. In the meantime, you can continue. By the time you're done, we will have it.

**Mr Duncan:** I have reviewed the standing orders, and I was not able to find a standing order that said that.

**The Speaker:** It has been a precedent long through tradition. You know that, I know that, everybody in the House knows that, and that's the way it's going to be in here. If you refer to people's attendance in here, then I can assure you that you're going to get thrown out. We're not going to start up this session like we did last time. As most of you know, I'm pretty easygoing, so I let it go. Each of you pushed it a little bit further and a little bit further. We're going to start the first day; it's not going to happen. Continue.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Just so I understand your ruling, you indicated that I could not refer to people who are in here and their attendance. Does that refer to—

**The Speaker:** It's based on precedent. You can't refer to people being here or not being here.

**Mr Duncan:** Is that just the people in here—

**The Speaker:** Don't continue on.

**Mr Duncan:** Is it all right for me to refer to the attendance of other Premiers?

**The Speaker:** No. You're not going to be able to go into what other Premiers did when they were here. If you want to finish your statement, there are 57 seconds left. You can continue.

**Mr Duncan:** The Prime Minister of Canada attends question period in the federal House 57% of the time, which I know is more than currently happens in this Legislature. Past Premiers, including Conservative Premiers, have attended question period more than 80% of the time.

We believe, on this side of the House, that question period is fundamental to responsible government and accountability. It was this government that spoke about accountability in the speech from the throne. I ask the question, how accountable is a government if its First Minister isn't able to be with us, for whatever reason? It's not as though we've been sitting since last week. We have now been off four months.

You haven't followed the standing orders. You are absolutely rejecting the principle of fundamental accountability and responsible government. You should all be ashamed of your Premier and his record.

#### CONESTOGA COLLEGE

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** Conestoga College has excelled yet again, emerging as Ontario's

best-rated college by the provincial government's performance standards.

I want to congratulate the college and their president, Dr John Tibbits, for their exceptional achievements.

Conestoga College is an impetus for growth in our riding of Waterloo-Wellington and the surrounding area. Staff and students there strive for better results, they achieve them and, in doing so, they boost Ontario's economy and quality of life.

From that tradition of improvement, Dr Tibbits has put forward a proposal to enhance the college by transforming it into a polytechnical institute, with degree-granting status.

Dr Tibbits provided me with the following facts that explain why Ontario needs this institute. First, the shortage of skilled labour is restricting economic development. Second, workers with more advanced skills are needed in Canada's technology triangle. Third, Conestoga has finished first of Ontario's 25 colleges for the past three consecutive years on the province's performance indicators. Fourth, rapid demographic and economic growth necessitate this next step. Finally, alongside three nationally ranked universities, there is a need for an institution that places a greater emphasis on applied learning that is market-driven and directed at economic development.

Dr Tibbits has submitted this proposal to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I have written to the minister on his behalf and continue to extend my unqualified support for this initiative.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, January 10, 2001, the report of the Integrity Commissioner regarding the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, was tabled.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, the Clerk received the 17th report of the standing committee on government agencies.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, January 31, 2001, the report of the Integrity Commissioner regarding the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, was tabled.

#### REQUEST FOR REPORT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that on February 16 a request by the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane pursuant to section 30 of the

Members' Integrity Act, 1994, to the Honourable Robert C. Rutherford, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion on whether the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, had contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention was tabled.

#### APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a copy of an order in council made pursuant to subsection 23(6) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, appointing the Honourable Gregory Evans as acting Integrity Commissioner, effective March 5, 2001, until a new Integrity Commissioner is appointed under subsection 23(2) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, and revoking, as of March 5, 2001, order in council number OC 2070/97 dated November 19, 1997.

1350

#### ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Earlier today, the member for Windsor-St Clair, Mr Duncan, provided me with written notice of a point of privilege, as required under standing order 21(c). I'd like to thank the member for giving me sufficient time to carefully review the matter.

I wish to advise I will be deciding on this matter without further hearing directly from the member at this time, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

The issue the member raises has to do with the attendance by a member of the executive at the daily oral question period.

This House has never imposed an obligation upon members to attend all meetings of the Legislature. Indeed, the assembly is constitutionally competent to carry out the business with a quorum of 12 members. Additionally, the Speaker is not vested with authority to compel the attendance of any member.

As we all know, the many and varied duties of being an elected member of this House often legitimately demand our attendance elsewhere. Honourable members are assumed by their honourable colleagues to have a valid, defensible and justifiable reason for being absent from the House when it is meeting. This is one of the principal reasons why it is prohibited by our traditions and by our practices to draw the attention of the House to the absence of another member.

This convention is observed for good reason, and I will say that the tenor of the member's written submission itself is in conflict with the spirit of that tradition.

For all of the above reasons, I find the member has not made out a prima facie case of privilege.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: In respect and in deference to your ruling, this is a new point of privilege arising out of standing order 21(c). This is a matter that's arisen as a result of the proceedings in this House. I wonder if you'll

hear that point of privilege. It does not have to do with the attendance of any member.

**The Speaker:** I will as long as it arises out of what happened today, and then you do not need to give written advisement of it. So I will hear it.

**Mr Duncan:** It arises out of your response to me, and I'd like to address that. We anticipated that and I'd like to address it, if I may, outside of the context of the attendance of the Premier or any individual member of this House.

Standing order 21(a) defines privilege as "the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly"—

**The Speaker:** No. The honourable member, take his seat. There's nothing new in that. That's the same part of what I just ruled.

**Mr Duncan:** But you haven't heard the whole thing.

**The Speaker:** I heard exactly what it relates to, and it is no different than what you did. You can't take something and try to say it another way and make it out to be something different. I think I was very clear in the ruling. We're not going to get into situations where I make a ruling and then you get up and appeal the ruling by going a different route. There is nothing new in what you are suggesting to me. I think I was very clear in the ruling that I just gave here today.

**Mr Duncan:** If I may, Mr Speaker—

**The Speaker:** On another point of order?

**Mr Duncan:** Your ruling does not, in my view, reflect the writings or the precedent in the British House or the Ottawa House. We have a number of questions with respect to your ruling and to deny us the opportunity to seek—

**The Speaker:** Take a seat. You may have a number of questions, but there is no appeal of the ruling. You may not like the ruling. Often the government doesn't like the rulings on some things, but the ruling is final and it's very clear. I took a look at it. I read it, and I thank the member. It's very, very clear. What you're talking about is not a point of privilege, and there's no sense going through it by any other route. It is not a point of privilege. No matter how many times you get up, it's not going to be a point of privilege and you're wasting everybody's time by continuing.

## FIRST READINGS

### MINISTERIAL TRAVEL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001 LOI DE 2001 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE RENDRE COMPTE DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This bill requires members of the Executive Council of Ontario—that is, the Premier and the cabinet—to submit to the Legislative Assembly or to the Clerk of the assembly information relating to any travel by the member on government business to areas outside the province of Ontario. The information must be submitted within 60 days of the member's return from outside the province.

Part of the information which will have to be submitted is a written summary of the purpose of the travel and of any accomplishments resulting from the travel, including a listing of all the benefits in terms of tangible investments and employment opportunities that the travel will bring to Ontario, a detailed statement of all expenses incurred by the member as well as by any staff accompanying the member, a listing of individuals and organizations contacted and with whom meetings were held and, finally, a detailed summary of the significant terms and conditions of any contract signed during the travel period.

I look forward to debate of this later on this week.

## SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'EAU POTABLE SAINTE

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to restore public confidence in the quality of drinking water in Ontario / Projet de loi 3, Loi visant à rétablir la confiance publique dans la qualité de l'eau potable en Ontario.

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

The member for a short statement.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** This bill recognizes that people have the right to clean and safe drinking water, that clean and safe drinking water is a basic human entitlement and essential for the protection of human health.

This bill would do more than anything we've seen to date to prevent another Walkerton. With this bill, all drinking water quality tests, such as those showing E coli in Walkerton water as early as February last year, would have to be posted on an electronic water registry so everyone—municipal politicians, seniors' homes, hospitals, schools, the medical officer of health, the police—would have access to test results.

The bill also enshrines in law that anyone who uses a public water system in Ontario has the right to expect to

receive clean and safe drinking water from it, and delivers on that by requiring that summaries of test results must be mailed to every homeowner with their own water bill.

The government killed the Safe Drinking Water Act after second reading in the last session. Today I hope they will see fit to act differently and give this bill fast passage through first and second readings so we can get out in the public and have public hearings on this bill.

SAVING FOR OUR CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE ACT (INCOME TAX  
AMENDMENT), 2001  
LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ÉPARGNE  
EN PRÉVISION DE L'AVENIR  
DE NOS ENFANTS (MODIFICATION DE LA  
LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU)

Mr Hastings moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for contributions to registered education savings plans / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu en vue de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les cotisations versées à un régime enregistré d'épargne-études.

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

The member for a short statement.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** The Saving Our Children's Future Act establishes a tax credit for any individual who contributes to a registered education savings plan in the amount of 10% of the qualifying contribution, to a maximum of \$100 per beneficiary annually. The credit is limited to individuals with incomes of less than \$40,000 per year or families with incomes of less than \$80,000 per year. The bill provides that the credit will be a debt due to the crown and recoverable as if it were income tax if a beneficiary does not pursue post-secondary education in Ontario.

1400

AUDIT AMENDMENT ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA VÉRIFICATION  
DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Mr Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or agencies of the Crown / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics afin d'assurer une responsabilité accrue de la part des hôpitaux, des universités et collèges, des municipalités et d'autres organisations qui reçoivent des sub-

ventions ou d'autres paiements de transfert du gouvernement ou d'organismes de la Couronne.

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

The member for a short statement.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** This bill is similar to the bill I introduced in the last session, which the government didn't pass at that point in time. It takes the words right out of the throne speech in which the government states that it will make amendments to the Audit Act. Taking into account that it was first introduced by the Honourable Ernie Eves back in the 1996 budget, I'm sure that my colleagues across the aisle will agree that this bill should be given unanimous consent so that it can be given second and third reading here today. I ask that unanimous consent be given in order to give the bill second and third reading.

**The Speaker:** Unanimous consent? No. I heard some noes.

PROTECTION OF MINORS  
FROM SEXUALLY EXPLICIT  
GOODS AND SERVICES ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES MINEURS CONTRE LES BIENS  
ET SERVICES SEXUELLEMENT  
EXPLICITES

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to protect minors from exposure to sexually explicit goods and services / Projet de loi 6, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites.

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

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** The purpose of this bill is to prevent those under 18 from being exposed to sexually explicit goods and services. It mandates the good practices already followed by most businesses in Ontario. If enacted, it would give a reasonable assurance to Ontario parents that their children will not be exposed to inappropriate influences of this nature. It is substantially the same as a bill I introduced in the last session of the Legislature.

PUBLIC SECTOR SALARY DISCLOSURE  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(FRIENDS ON THE TAKE), 2001  
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA DIVULGATION DES  
TRAITEMENTS DANS LE SECTEUR  
PUBLIC (FAVORITISME)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur la divulgation des traitements dans le secteur public.

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

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The purpose of the bill is to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996, to require the public disclosure of all salaries and benefits paid in 2001 and later years to persons appointed to hold public office by the Lieutenant Governor in Council or by a minister of the crown.

CANADIAN NATIONAL  
ANTHEM ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HYMNE  
NATIONAL DU CANADA

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act to provide for the singing of O Canada / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative pour prévoir que soit chanté le Ô Canada.

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

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** This is a re-introduction of a simple bill that I introduced in the last session asking us as Canadians to stand up at least once a week and be proud to either participate in the playing or singing of O Canada in this Legislature. As you know, in the last Legislature, after repeated requests for this to be done, the government side blocked it on four or five occasions. It is really an attempt to do what the government has asked of the students of Ontario: to participate in honouring our national anthem in schools across this province.

I'm asking for the members to do what they tell children to do, and that is to respect the national anthem in this Legislature.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, April 23, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Just a minute. I'm in the middle of the vote. We'll have the point of order after.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1410 to 1415.*

**The Speaker:** Would the members take their seats, please.

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

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Ecker, Janet	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Elliott, Brenda	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Flaherty, Jim	Parsons, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Galt, Doug	Peters, Steve
Beaubien, Marcel	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gilchrist, Steve	Pupatello, Sandra
Boyer, Claudette	Gill, Raminder	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Michael A.	Hardeman, Ernie	Ruprecht, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Caplan, David	Hodgson, Chris	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Hudak, Tim	Sterling, Norman W.
Cleary, John C.	Jackson, Cameron	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Johnson, Bert	Tascona, Joseph N.
Colle, Mike	Kells, Morley	Tilson, David
Crozier, Bruce	Klees, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cunningham, Dianne	Kwinter, Monte	Turnbull, David
Curling, Alvin	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wettlaufer, Wayne
DeFaria, Carl	Levac, David	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mazzilli, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill	

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

### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	

**The Speaker:** I know we have a new seating arrangement. Some of the members might not be familiar. The member for Oshawa and the member for Brampton Centre were in the wrong seats. What we'll ask them to do—if they could just get in their proper seats, then we will recap their votes.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The surprising thing isn't that they were in the wrong seats; the surprising thing is that those at the table actually caught it.

All in favour may cast their votes.

### Ayes

Ouellette, Jerry J.	Spina, Joseph
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**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 76; the nays are 7.

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

The government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

1420

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 1, 2, 3 and 4.

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

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I would like to ask for unanimous consent to waive notice for the following motion regarding orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move, notwithstanding standing order 30(b), that routine proceedings continue past 4 pm today but not past 5 pm, and that orders of the day shall begin no later than 5 pm.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I seek unanimous consent from this House to observe a moment of silence in commemoration of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, to allow members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour the 6 million people, most of them Jewish men, women and children who were murdered during one of the darkest periods of human history, and to reflect on the follies of hatred and intolerance.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Would all the members and our friends in the galleries please rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you. You may take your seats.

#### TRIBUTES TO FORMER MEMBERS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I would like to ask for unanimous consent to pay respect to our friend and colleague, Al Palladini.

I would also like to ask at this time for unanimous consent to pay tribute to two former members of this

House, Ellen MacKinnon and Wilf Spooner. It is my understanding that each party will speak for five minutes about each of these individuals, following the usual rotation.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we do that, we have in the members' gallery west another of our former colleagues, the honourable George Kerr, who was the member for Burlington South for a number of years. Please join me in welcoming him.

#### AL PALLADINI

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** It is a great honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Conservative caucus about a truly great Canadian, our colleague Al Palladini.

Al's story is truly representative of so many new Canadians. Through his hard work and faith in his own abilities, he raised himself from his humble beginnings to become an extremely successful businessman. But Al never forgot his earlier struggles, and I believe that's why Al never lost his appreciation for all people. He never forgot that it's not what you have, but it's the person you are that really counts.

I also believe, because of his humble background, that he always had his feet firmly on the ground. Anyone who knew Al knew that he never had an overblown sense of his own importance. In fact, it was quite the opposite with Al. I remember Al speaking to me in amazement several times on how a poor Italian immigrant like himself could rise to be elected as an MPP and then be appointed a cabinet minister and become a friend of the Premier.

Talking to Al was really always good for your soul. He also reminded you of purpose and principle and humility. As an MPP, I must say, he served his riding of York Centre with honour and dedication and rightfully had the respect of his constituents.

As the Minister of Transportation, Al presided over huge investments by the government into roads. And who can forget his infectious smile as he personally filled in potholes on highways? By the force of his own personality, Al was always able to bring together all kinds of different people and get consensus where others could not. He gained the respect of industry, of other government levels and of labour as well.

Al loved his job. Al never stopped working. I remember once hitching a ride with Al Palladini on the way to Ottawa and, unlike other people who were in cars, Al would be writing down violations of truckers and car drivers out there on the highway and they would really stop.

As the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Al was in a role he was born for. Al was a

supersalesman. He promoted economic growth and jobs and investment in Ontario and he was wildly successful. He gained respect, again, from the corporate sector, from diplomats, from everyone. We all know that Al would never hesitate to intervene when he thought it was really important for him to get his personal intervention into something, whether it was with truckers who were threatening to strike or companies that might have been threatening to fold.

But I didn't want to speak just about Al, the successful businessman or successful politician. I wanted to talk a little bit about Al Palladini, the person.

We are joined today by Al's son Franco, who is in the gallery with us today. Franco, you know that Al was very proud of you. I can't remember a time at any event where he introduced you that he wasn't proud of you; he was so proud of the man you had become.

The world knew that Al was generous to a fault. I could name thousands of charities that Al helped, but just a couple of them were the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Humber River Regional Hospital. To my knowledge, there wasn't a good cause that Al Palladini did not like. This was evidenced by the number of organizations and people who came to Al's funeral to pay their respects.

I believe the quality about Al that is most outstanding is that Al was a friend to many people. Al continually asked his friends to join him for a "bowl of pasta," as he used to say. But being Al's friend was not without its hazards and risks, because Al would always get us involved with things. We trusted Al so much that we never questioned the details. When he asked us to help him out, it was generally Norm Sterling, John Snobelen, Al Leach, the Premier or myself who got involved with some of Al's schemes. Al invited Norm and myself to help him launch Tourism Week a couple of years ago and we got skunked; we were trying to fish in Lake Ontario and we got skunked. We took our picture with an oven mitt that looked like a fish. That was Al Palladini: he always found a solution for something.

Al's favourite story was when the Premier called to offer him the position of Minister of Transportation. Al's response was, "I think you've got the wrong Al. You must mean Al Leach." And that was Al.

There is truly a void in the Legislature and in our hearts today because Al Palladini is no longer with us. I have in my office a photograph of Al and myself. Al signed it, "Amici sempre"—friends forever. In the end, it wasn't a heart attack that caused Al's death; it was because his heart had become too big for his body, and we and the people of Ontario are poorer for his loss.

1430

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I am pleased, on behalf of the Liberal caucus and my leader, Dalton McGuinty, to say a few words about our pal Al.

I smiled to myself when I knew I would have a chance to say a few words about Al. My great memory is looking across at Al, in that chair over there, with a smile on his face that lit up this room, and he never lost it. That

was Al's trademark, to me. Regardless of how tough things were—and we try to make them as difficult for the government as possible—Al never lost his smile and his sense of humour. You appreciate this in opposition. Al was always very friendly to us in opposition.

Sometimes we get into the to and fro here in the Legislature and start to take things personally; all of us do in some respect. I try to remind myself not to, but we do. Al didn't. You would go to an event with Al, and Al was there representing the government very well. But Al always set aside political differences and had a personal friendship with all of us in opposition.

He had an amazing ability to maintain his candour and spontaneity, because this place knocks it out of you. I think many of us recall that when Al was first in cabinet, he said some things that were interesting and true but seemed to be somewhat inappropriate, about "I can't give up my limousine," and whatnot. That would knock the candour out of a lot of people. Al never lost it. Many of us lose that; we are so guarded in our comments. But Al, to his credit, kept his candour and spontaneity right to the end—I don't know how he did it.

He truly is a model of achievement. Think of an individual who came to this country at 10 and built up that dealership—enormously successful—but also contributed so much to community life and then moved on to this area. He is a model of achievement for all of us. To accomplish all that in his very short life is something for all of us, and particularly for people who are new to this country—to realize that somebody from age 10 can accomplish all of that has to be a terrific role model.

He was a risk-taker. Al was bigger than life to me. Everybody in this room, at least everybody in the Toronto area, knew Al Palladini from his commercials before he got here, and they were always a bit on the risk. But even coming into politics was a risk. Al gave up a hugely successful business. Luckily he had a supportive family who were working on it, but he took that big risk because he wanted to serve Ontario and Canada.

Another lesson for me was that he kept things in perspective. I find that in this business you can lose perspective. One of the most telling things about Al was that every night at 9 o'clock he would phone his mother. We can all learn from that. When we all think back on our political careers, there is a risk that we give up the important things. As Dave Tsubouchi said, he always spoke proudly of his son, who is here with us today.

He also was able, for some reason, to keep his community activities up, while he was a busy cabinet minister, to make sure he never lost sight of his community activities. Again, many of us, if we reflect on it, give up that important part of our lives. Al never did. He did some terrific work in charity. Mr Tsubouchi mentioned the Heart and Stroke Foundation, which in hindsight was rather ironic, but also the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association, the chamber of commerce and whatnot.

We miss Al. I miss Al. He was one of the unique individuals, as I say: his smile, his sense of humour, his

eternal optimism, his ability to set aside political differences and maintain friendships.

As the Premier, I think, said at the funeral, Al also had a love of golf, which some of us share with Al. But somewhere right now, as the Premier said, he is teeing it up on the back nine, hopefully recognizing that all of us have some things we can learn from Al. I hope he is in the red numbers on the back nine.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I join with all members of the assembly in remembering the contribution of Al Palladini to this Legislature and to the people of Ontario.

I think I can safely say that all of us will miss the member from Vaughan-King-Aurora, because he was the kind of person who always made his presence felt. He had a smile and a handshake for everyone he met, regardless of their political stripe or their economic circumstances.

In fact, Al Palladini knew what it was like to make one's way in life. As many have remarked, he was an Italian immigrant who built a successful car dealership from the ground up. In business, as in politics, he was a charismatic and engaging personality and someone who traded on his sense of humour and good nature to get the job done.

I can remember when he was first sworn in as Minister of Transportation and he made the comment that we no longer needed emergency vehicles patrolling some of our highways, that if people had an emergency they could use their cell phones. Some of us on this side of the House who still don't have cell phones pointed out to him that cell phones don't work everywhere in Ontario. After question period—and I was one of the people who gave him the hardest time about that—he came up to me and said, “Is it true that cell phones don't operate everywhere in Ontario?” I said, “Yes,” and in typical Al Palladini fashion he said, “Well then somebody ought to get into the business.”

That was Al Palladini. In a few seconds that expressed his personality, his outlook and his enthusiasm. Al brought all of those qualities to Queen's Park, and I'm sure all members of this Legislature appreciated his work ethic and his desire to make Ontario a better place to live.

His political success I understand never distracted him from the important things in his life: his community and his family. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for sharing him with us. I know that I speak for all the members of the assembly when I say that Al Palladini will be missed.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I will make sure those kind comments do get sent to the members of the Palladini family.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, we will now start the rotation for the other members.

ELLEN MacKINNON

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Speaker, Ellen MacKinnon, a former member of the NDP

caucus, passed away over the past few months. I want to say a few words about the first woman MPP to represent Lambton county, who was also a school board trustee, a town councillor, a mother of seven and a grandmother while she served here in this Legislature.

Ellen MacKinnon approached every challenge with flair and vitality, and she never backed down from a challenge. Her sense of right and wrong was deeply rooted and she didn't waiver in the face of sometimes very public attacks against her personally. For example, she refused to back down from her commitment to same-sex benefits even after receiving an anonymous death threat.

Ellen struggled tirelessly in the fight for fairness for all Ontarians, and she wore many hats through her working life. She was a farmer, a bus driver, a waitress, a child care worker, a teacher, and she dedicated her life to the advancement of women's equality in her own special way. Her son Thom once said that she didn't just open the door for women, she kicked it in. Ellen faced one of her greatest personal tragedies during her tenure as an MPP, and many members of the Legislature will remember the moving statement she made here in 1992, thanking members for their support after her 35-year-old daughter died of cancer.

Former Premier Bob Rae remembered her as a force to be reckoned with in the caucus. Still, Ellen approached public life with a great sense of fun. All who knew her were inspired by her great sense of humour. Her family remained the most important thing in Ellen's life and she chose not to seek re-election in 1995, to spend more time with them.

I refer to the words of another great Canadian socialist William Irvine where he said, “I will not acquiesce to that which is. If it must be, I meet it with rebellion. With passion, love and life destroyed, my soul shall stand upon the wreck and challenge all.” I think that describes Ellen MacKinnon to a T.

1440

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** It's a pleasure for me to speak on behalf of our caucus today about the life of Ellen MacKinnon. There's no doubt that some of my comments are going to echo some of the third party leader's comments.

As we all know, Ellen passed away on February 13 this year at the age of 74. Ellen was first elected to the provincial Legislature in 1990 as the member for Lambton. Not only was she the first female representative for the riding of Lambton, but apparently she was the first woman to celebrate her 65th birthday in this House.

Ellen wore many hats during her lifetime. She was the mother of seven children, but besides that she helped raise four children on behalf of her sister. I first met Ellen in the late 1970s, when she was first elected to municipal council for the township of Plympton. I must admit that even though our ideologies, our philosophies in life sometimes differed and were not running parallel to each other at all times, Ellen had respect for my ideals and certainly I had respect for hers. We could always call

each other by first or last name, and it was always with the utmost respect. She was also elected to the Lambton school board in 1988 and 1990.

Ellen certainly liked to have a good time. I know that some people in this House knew Ellen better than I did, but I think I can speak fairly reasonably and wisely when I say that Ellen liked to have a good time, and she was not always the quietest person at all times.

As the leader of the third party mentioned, she was not immune to personal tragedy. She did lose a daughter to cancer at the age of 35.

I quote from an article about her that appeared in the local newspaper: "At one point in her life she thought she would never have time to be anything but a mother. But her resumé reads like a help-wanted column. She's been a farmer, registered nursing assistant, bus driver, waitress, babysitter, cook, school board trustee, teacher, cake decorator and municipal councillor." That's a varied career.

What about politics? Here's what she said about herself when she was acclaimed to the Plympton township council: "She went to the township office, filed the papers and 24 hours later was acclaimed. 'It was a good thing I didn't have to campaign, because I didn't know how.'"

What about politics? In closing I would like to make a comment about politics. I think her son Thom probably made the best comment, and who is better qualified than her son to make the following comment: "'I've always been proud of my mom,' says Thom. 'We always knew our mother would always be there for us, that she could juggle everything. My mother didn't just open the door for women, she kicked it in.'"

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On behalf of the Liberal caucus, it's an honour for me to pay tribute to the late Ellen MacKinnon, who served her constituents in Lambton with a good deal of distinction, with a lot of concern for their individual problems.

In 1990 a number of new faces were elected to the Legislature, and it was a time of major turmoil in terms of one government leaving office and another coming into office. You looked around the Legislature and indeed many of the people were people we did not recognize from years gone by.

She was a person I can always remember with a smile on her face, a very cordial person, a very courteous person. I guess one of the things you recognized, and Marcel would know this from his area and his relationship with her, was that she was totally unpretentious. In politics, ego tends to be part of it. We are feted by others, we see our names in the newspaper and we gain some respect by virtue of the position we have. That was something you never noticed in Ellen MacKinnon. She was always a very genuine person. She was a person you would think would have walked from her house into this Legislature, at any time during the five years she was here, never having changed as a person, being a genuine personality.

She was elected at an age when most people are thinking about retiring from politics. Yet she was prepared to come into the Legislature, having served, as we know, in Plympton township and on the Lambton county public board of education, two rather onerous positions, when you think of it, in terms of your relationship with the local people, because they are at you there, you are with them on a daily basis, and then coming to the Legislature at the age of 64, the first woman from Lambton riding. Even though today we see more women from rural ridings in this province, at one time it wasn't all that common to see women emerging from rural ridings. She was able to do so and obviously gained the affection of people in her constituency.

She was also a member of the board of directors of what today we would call the Association for Community Living, again reaching out to a group of individuals in our society who require the intervention and assistance of others. Certainly that was again an indication of the generosity of her spirit and heart.

It is mentioned in many of the stories about her that she came from the school of hard knocks. There are people from a certain era who didn't have the opportunity to get a formal education. Ellen had to quit school when she completed grade 8. She worked during wartime in the factories, as many women had to in wartime. She had a number of jobs, and we've mentioned them, not all of them glamorous, but certainly important jobs and ones which allowed her to assist in providing for her family.

What was quite remarkable as well was that while she had seven children, she raised those children to a very large extent during a period of time when she was in fact a widow—it must have been a difficult struggle—as well as helping with the raising of four other children of one of her sisters and caring for her mother-in-law who was disabled because of illness. She had to balance all of that eventually with being a member of the Legislature.

I remember that she was sitting in a seat just behind where Chris Stockwell is right now, and it was a night session, I believe. Sometimes in jest we make comments back and forth to one another, and Ellen's eyes were beginning to close on that evening. People thought, "Isn't this something of amusement." Then you find out, of course, what she was going through at that time. At that time her daughter was dying of cancer, so she was up half the night worrying about that, and going back to the constituency, worrying about all the matters she had to as a member of the Legislature. So when she stood in the House to thank members of the Legislature for their sympathy, it was truly one of the moving movements that you would see in this Legislature. Because this is a partisan place, she was genuinely surprised by the multi-partisan sympathy which was extended to her when many found out that she was carrying this personal load. She didn't reveal that; she didn't wear that on her sleeve for members of the Legislature. A lot of people didn't know that was the case, and that's often the case in this assembly, that people have burdens they do not share with others but nevertheless have them while they're doing their job.

She was a person who probably reflected her constituency more than most in an assembly of this kind: as I say, a very down-to-earth, average person within the constituency who could reflect the viewpoint of people who resided in Lambton. In politics there's what we call spin or public relations, often an artificial barrier between those of us who serve in public office and the public. That often happens out there. But with Ellen MacKinnon, what you saw was what you got: a very genuine person, a very warm person, a very affectionate person, a person with a concern for her constituents and for her family.

So to her family and to her friends, we offer today our condolences. But as important as those condolences, we offer our appreciation for sharing Ellen MacKinnon with members of this House and with the people of Ontario.

1450

#### WILF SPOONER

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** It's my honour to pay tribute to a former member of this Legislature, a member who was here from 1957 to 1968. Joseph Wilfrid Spooner, better known as Wilf Spooner, or known as Mr Northern Ontario, passed away recently at the age of 91.

I didn't know Wilf very well; I met him a few times. I guess it's somewhat fitting that George Kerr, one of his colleagues in this Legislature, is here with us today. I only wish I had had an opportunity to talk to George about Wilf prior to making these remarks. I'm certain he would have had a number of remarks to make about him.

Wilf Spooner was a very, very powerful figure in his time for northern Ontario. Wilf Spooner served in the cabinet in three different portfolios. He was the Minister of Mines, and mining was very significant and still is very significant in the Timmins area. Cochrane South was the riding he represented. He was born and raised and always lived in northern Ontario and always felt himself to be a northern Ontarian. He took the plight of the mining community and, even before he was a member of this Legislature, worked to improve the working conditions of miners and also to improve the situation for miners who suffered as a result of their work.

Mr Spooner served as the minister of what is now the Ministry of Natural Resources and saw a huge increase in the number of provincial parks during his time, which I believe was over the cusp of the 1960s.

From 1962 to 1968 he served as the Minister of Municipal Affairs. During that period of time he undertook and started, I guess, the whole roll toward the reassessment of the province, which was in a very fractured state. Now that we can look retrospectively at property assessment, I can only imagine what the hurdle was for Mr Spooner to climb over, in terms of trying to bring in the concept of market value assessment, when in fact we have only achieved that some 35 years later, in terms of completing the task, because of the tremendous political hurdles to get over.

He was also with the Robarts government at that period of time when they went through the first amalgamation of what is now the city of Toronto, creating the six boroughs across the city of Toronto.

Before he came into provincial politics, he served as a councillor and then became the mayor of Timmins. He progressed all the way through the process to then retiring in 1968 from being a member of the Legislature, after which he continued to serve on several boards. The most noteworthy was as president of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission from 1982 to as recently as 1989.

Wilf Spooner went through high school and then went immediately to work, dealing in a number of different businesses. He rose from what were very humble beginnings, not unlike our friend Mr Palladini, whom we were talking about, and came from a situation where his parents didn't have a great deal to offer him as a leg up. Wilf Spooner came from this humble background, worked hard, gained the trust of his community, gave a huge amount to this province and is a man who should be remembered as a great, great benefit to Ontario but more particularly to northern Ontario.

Wilf Spooner's life is a life to celebrate, and we should thank his family, with whom we express our deepest regrets at this time, for sharing so much of Wilf Spooner with the people of Ontario and with his community.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I'm very honoured, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, to stand in my place today to honour a fellow northerner.

I was very aware, as all northerners were, of the tremendous contribution Wilf Spooner had made as mayor of Timmins and as an activist in the city of Timmins, and then as the member for Cochrane South, as the riding was known back in the 1950s and 1960s.

When I was first elected to this House in 1985, it was the time, as Norm Sterling has just said, that Mr Spooner served as the chair of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, an appointment Premier Bill Davis had made in 1978.

As a person who had just turned 37 upon being first elected, now dealing with Mr Spooner, who was then 75 and a legend of our time, I, like others in this Legislature, was in awe of this person. In fact, he took that job so seriously, I'd say that was the heyday of that transportation commission. He really understood, as a former member of government and as a northerner, the importance of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. He oversaw the introduction of air service to many of our small communities at that time.

I remember quite fondly my colleague Michael Brown, the member from Algoma, and I being invited by Mr Spooner to come down to the Toronto harbour to the inauguration of a second car ferry service from Tobermory to Manitoulin Island. This ferry—the ONTC had purchased it from Finland, I believe—had just completed its ocean passage and had come into Toronto. Members

of the Legislature were invited to christen this boat and send it on its way to Manitoulin Island.

He was a true Progressive Conservative member in northern Ontario. He worked at establishing the first playground in the city of Timmins. He set up the prototype of our health units today as he established the first one in Timmins that was jointly funded by the province and by the local municipality. He was a visionary. He was a pioneer. He was a leader among the people of northern Ontario. He's going to be sadly missed.

On behalf of the members of the Liberal caucus, I wish to express our condolences to his family.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** It's as both a New Democrat and also as the former member for Cochrane South, now the Timmins-James Bay riding, that I rise today.

As a person growing up in Timmins, I knew Wilf fairly well as a very colourful individual who always filled the room whenever he walked in and somebody looked up to. No matter what your political stripe, whether you were a New Democrat or a Liberal, when Wilf was around there was a great amount of respect. I think most people recognized the abilities Wilf brought to politics at both the municipal and provincial level.

What we also respected quite a lot was that Wilf was one of that rare breed of politician who, yes, was a proud Conservative but who also understood that he represented a larger constituency made up of New Democrats and Liberals, and he always had the time to deal with people no matter what their issues were.

I cut my teeth in politics on the issue of mining. I worked underground in the gold mines in the Timmins area and knew first-hand the kinds of working conditions when it came to the industrial diseases that miners can contract from breathing in diesel fumes and silicotic nodules and all the other carcinogens we find underground.

A lot of people never gave Wilf credit for some of the things he did. I want to raise this particular issue. The 1950s was when we were starting to notice that there were an awful lot of dead miners. A lot of miners who worked in the Kirkland Lake area, the Timmins area, Red Lake, Balmertown and across Ontario, and I would argue across Canada, were dying at an alarming rate and at a very young age. A lot of widows and children without fathers were left in—as we called them—the Kirkland Lake camp and the Porcupine camp.

Wilf, on municipal council, where he was first a councillor, then as the mayor of the city of Timmins and eventually when he became Minister of Mines, was one of the people who was instrumental in setting up some of the building blocks that allowed us to deal with that issue over the longer term. He established, for the first time in Ontario, a chest X-ray clinic system in this province, something, unfortunately, that we don't have any more but certainly something that led toward being able to pick up the evidence we needed to determine what the problem was.

As well, Wilf didn't stop at just saying, "Let's set up a chest X-ray clinic to determine what happened to these

miners." He wanted to get to the root of it. He worked within the industry to try to get them to clean up their act, because there was a fair amount of resistance in the mining communities of the 1950s to spending the kind of money they had to deal with dust counts underground. As a result of the work Wilf did and the determination he had as the member for Cochrane South, as a representative of miners and also as a Conservative serving in the Robarts government, he was able to bring his influence and knowledge first-hand to the government of the day to start the changes that eventually much changed the underground we have today. It's certainly still not the safest place, but we have gone a long way because of the work Wilf did.

**1500**

I don't know his son, Gerald, very well—I only met him a couple of times—but I can say that Gerald continued in his father's footsteps and is now in Chalk River working in the same type of business, as an insurance broker. I had the opportunity just earlier to speak to Sister Sheila Anne, who is Wilf and Toots's daughter. She shared something with me that I think needs to be said.

Many of us in this House will know that as we come to politics, we're always very proud to take credit for things we have accomplished, whether as Premier or cabinet minister, as member of a riding or as opposition critic. Wilf was a very different kind of politician. He wasn't very big on blowing his own horn. One of the things I heard at the eulogy when I attended the church services in Timmins and when I talked to Sister Sheila Anne was that Wilf was a very shy, quiet individual who didn't toot his horn very much. That was one of the things that was really apparent, that there were many people whose lives had been touched by individual acts Wilf had done, but not a lot of people knew about it because Wilf was the type of guy who didn't toot his horn when it came to letting people know what he had accomplished.

One of the things his daughter was very proud to share with me today was that at one point a constituent in the city of Timmins went to Wilf and said, "We need to establish a blood test for mothers just recently pregnant, to screen for PKU," a test to determine a particular illness that could be passed on to the child. Wilf had been convinced by this particular individual that it was the right thing to do, so he went to the Legislature, spoke to the Premier, spoke to the Minister of Health and was able to institute that particular test, and it still exists today.

I think it says a lot about Wilf that he was known as Mr Northern Ontario and as Mr Timmins, because he was the type of individual who understood what his responsibilities were and wore elected office with a great amount of pride.

I would only say this in the end: Wilf, I have to say, was a proud Rotarian. What always struck me whenever I showed up at the Rotary for any of their events was that one of the things Wilf was proudest of was his work with the Rotary Club of Timmins and being one of the charter members. The Rotarians have it right in their saying, and

I think it applies to Wilf: "Service Above Self." Wilf certainly knew the meaning of that.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Again, I thank all members for their comments. I will ensure that copies of Hansard get sent to all the families.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** This Legislature passed the Energy Competition Act in 1998 to help meet the province's long-term electricity needs and ensure that Ontarians have a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power.

When this government came to office in 1995, we had our work cut out for us. Ontario's electricity sector was failing us. Consumers and businesses had no choice of who supplied them with power, and we went from having one of the lowest prices for electricity to the third-highest in Canada.

The monopoly we had come to rely on for safe, reliable and competitively priced electricity was no longer working. It had become out-of-date, inefficient and too expensive. Something had to be done. That's why I'm proud to stand up in the Legislature today to announce that the government is confident that the conditions necessary to open the electricity market to competition will exist by May 2002. The government is committed to an open market, while guaranteeing a safe, affordable and reliable supply.

There are some who are fundamentally opposed to opening this market to competition. Our government believes, however, that open, competitive markets are beneficial. They keep costs low, encourage innovation and benefit consumers.

There are others who share our desire to open the market, but would like to see it done even sooner. As government, we bear a responsibility to ensure the opening is done right for all involved. To do this, we're committed to opening the market at the earliest possible date, while ensuring that all the conditions required for a smooth transition to competition are met.

I'm pleased to tell you that the four principles guiding the government's vision have been or will be met by May 2002.

The first and foremost principle is protecting consumers and offering more choice. The overall market design and regulatory framework for introducing competition puts consumers first. Over the long term, a competitive market will lead to the lowest possible costs and better service for all.

The second principle is creating a strong business climate with a reliable supply of electricity. Ontario already has sufficient supply to meet our current needs. Announcing a firm market opening deadline today

provides greater certainty to potential new investors who have already announced \$3 billion in new generation projects.

Third, we will protect our environment. My colleague the Minister of the Environment has announced tough new emission caps for the electricity sector. They will be among the toughest in North America, matching the requirements of the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Also today, Minister Witmer is announcing changes to ensure that new electricity projects are reviewed in a clear and consistent manner under the province's environmental assessment process.

The fourth principle: we will encourage new ways of doing business and support the search for alternative sources of power. For the first time, customers will be able to make clean air a priority by choosing the type of power they want, including wind, fuel cells and solar. Giving people choice will help promote the demand for cleaner, greener energy.

I'm proud to announce that Ontario's electricity sector will be open by May 2002. The government is keeping its promise to introduce a competitive electricity market. We will do it, and we have put the principles in place to ensure that we do it right.

### RED TAPE COMMISSION

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Red tape hurts our businesses. It hurts job creation. Through the government's Red Tape Commission we have already eliminated hundreds of unnecessary regulations, but there is more to do. The Red Tape Commission will be doing just that with renewed vigour under the leadership of MPP Steve Gilchrist and Frank Sheehan.

According to Statistics Canada, most new jobs are created by small business. Policies and restrictions that hurt small business also hurt jobs. The Red Tape Commission will consult on barriers to small business growth and make recommendations for legislative reform. It will focus on actively seeking advice from small and medium-sized businesses. It's estimated that many small businesses spend six hours a week on government paperwork—time that could be put to better use creating jobs.

The Red Tape Commission is developing a business impact test for all new regulations proposed by the government. It will ensure that decision-makers consider the economic viability of any new regulation. The business impact test will prevent the formation of new layers of bureaucracy or red tape.

### ONTARIO YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGY

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** On another front, we all know that Ontario's economy is driven by the success of

our entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs and the spirit of innovation are vital to Ontario's continued economic growth. To help create new jobs and opportunities for our youth, our government will launch an Ontario youth entrepreneurship strategy. We want the young people of Ontario to learn that building their own business is a viable and desirable career option. The young entrepreneurs program includes an improved loan program for youth to set up their own businesses. There is an entrepreneurship teaching program for grades 7 and 8, and also public outreach.

Another key element is Summer Company. It will assist students to start their own businesses this summer through a competitive process. Student entrepreneurs will be selected and matched with mentors—these are business leaders from their community—and more details will be announced very shortly.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** As shown in our speech from the throne, our government is committed to an agenda of growth, accountability and fiscal responsibility, one that protects jobs, keeps families secure and strengthens Ontario.

We are taking action to ensure that the 11 million residents of our province enjoy the best-performing economy, with the highest quality of life.

Business people in Ontario want to create jobs, not fill out needless paperwork. We are committed to reducing red tape, and that job is never over. I am pleased to say that to date, we have: created for small businesses a short-form corporations' tax return, reducing it from a complicated and cumbersome 16 pages to just four pages; eliminated employer health tax instalments for companies with payrolls that are \$600,000 or less—in addition, self-employed individuals no longer have to pay this tax at all; reduced the number of retail sales tax returns being filed by small vendors; and created a fax-on-demand information system, providing detailed information about retail sales tax compliance and remittance guidelines.

Ontario's small business people shouldn't have to waste time trying to decipher complicated tax forms. This is why my colleague the Minister of Finance will announce that the government will review ways of simplifying tax administration procedures for small businesses, with a goal of implementing changes by 2002.

In the upcoming provincial budget on May 9, additional measures will be introduced to ensure that our province stays the course.

In addition to reducing taxes, our action plan promotes opportunity, cuts needless regulation and makes us more efficient.

In particular, we want to make sure that organizations creating jobs and investment opportunities for people in Ontario obtain the necessary assistance from the government without duplication or red tape.

### 1510

This is why I am pleased to announce today that the government will evaluate and streamline its grant programs to ensure they capitalize on joint opportunities for job creation and minimize duplication and bureaucracy.

Our goal is to be the best public service in the world. Anyone who calls a government office, sends in a letter, or walks into an Ontario government office should be served in a timely and efficient manner and by a courteous and helpful employee. Performance against these standards has and will continue to be measured.

In a recent survey measuring more than 7,000 contacts made by phone, mail or in person, we showed considerable progress in improving service in just one year. We are committed to doing better and expect our dedicated staff will continue to build on improvements in serving our public.

Building a quality organization is an ongoing and critical task. Today I am pleased to announce that the government will measure its own performance, including that of its senior management, based on service delivery and customer satisfaction. Customer service standards will include timely resolution of complaints and prompt service to citizens who write, phone or visit Ontario government offices.

To further improve our service to the public, we are also committed to becoming a world leader in delivering services electronically by 2003. We are building a better government by improving the way in which we do business. We are in fact transforming the public service in Ontario for the 21st century with the smart use of technology. We have major new initiatives underway in health, social services, resource management, transportation and justice to improve the lives of Ontarians. The actions that my colleague and I are speaking of today—more streamlining and less bureaucracy, improved customer service and more accountability—will result in better government, a government that protects jobs, keeps families secure and strengthens Ontario.

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** My statement today is about the government's adaptation to a changing world where Ontario families are busier than ever, where value for tax dollars is ever important, and where taxpayers expect and deserve convenient, prompt and professional service whether it's from a local clothing store or a provincial government Web site.

To deliver the service that taxpayers deserve, government and opposition MPPs alike must remember that structures that make sense to governments do not make sense to real people. So the government will continue to simplify and streamline its operations. Even today citizens, businesses and municipal leaders frequently must deal with several Ontario government ministries, all pursuing related objectives, or are confronted with several different programs, each addressing a similar

need. The goal will be one-window access and co-ordination among ministries.

There was a time when business transactions with the government could take up to 12 weeks. That's a 12-week delay in creating a job, or preserving a job, or completing the paperwork necessary to leverage a new investment. Now, thanks to the government's Ontario Business Connects system, you can register a new business, change business registry data and even apply for permits and licences all in a single, 20-minute computer session.

Business Connects is available at 145 terminals around the province, but the government has gone a step further by opening the service to thousands of users through the Internet.

To achieve similar objectives, the government will reduce the number of forms it uses to collect information and provide services to businesses and individuals. Remaining forms will be more user-friendly and made available electronically where possible.

Another example of this approach is our growing e-laws service. On the government Web site the government will provide taxpayers with electronic access to up-to-date versions of provincial statutes and regulations. Today, provisions are posted within two weeks of enactment, an improvement over the previous 18 months. By mid-2002, laws will be posted within 24 to 48 hours of their enactment or amendment.

The government will also become a world leader in electronic service delivery by giving citizens seamless and convenient access to government information services. Individuals and businesses will have greater choice about how, when and where they access routine government information, perform transactions, obtain advice and purchase products. They will be able to evaluate the quality of service themselves.

A service which we are going to be improving—and I would like to make an announcement about this—is the vital statistics registration and the Ontario vital statistics improvement project, known as ONVIP. This is a new initiative which will simplify that service.

Thousands of babies have been born in Ontario since this government was first elected, and to register those births, parents and doctors must go through several steps. Forms go back and forth to the registrar's office. Three months later, the parents receive a notice of birth, followed by further delays and correspondence to allow for corrections. Only then, after the statement of birth—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Sorry to interrupt. The member take his seat. Stop the clock. Order. Sometimes I know members will find things amusing, but I can't hear the minister and I'm probably 12 feet away. I would appreciate some co-operation. Sorry, Minister, for the interruption.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I believe that the registration of vital statistics via electronic means will improve this service for thousands of people and allow them to obtain birth certificates in a much more timely fashion.

With these goals in mind, we are now contacting the stakeholders to consult with them on what is needed to make these orderly changes to this system. In coming months, we will eliminate unnecessary steps and delays to make this system more user-friendly.

When people register a life event, they also expect appropriate protection of their personal privacy. Every government is learning that the new information technology creates new concerns about privacy. Privacy can be protected most effectively if we treat it as a broad public concern. We're doing that, by making the ministry responsible for the protection of Ontario consumers a ministry that is also responsible for the protection of the privacy of Ontarians. New privacy legislation will guard an individual's right to privacy protection. We can afford no less than to enact the best possible protection for the privacy of our citizens.

## GOVERNMENT INSPECTIONS

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** To meet all the challenges of the 21st century, our government has chosen to focus on three priorities: growth, fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have taken significant steps to ensure that our operations are conducted prudently and efficiently. We have cut taxes, reduced red tape and eliminated barriers to economic growth.

High-performing businesses and industries have told us that less duplication between government inspectors and auditors and streamlined enforcement will help both them and the public in Ontario. Business will be able to focus on increasing competitiveness and economic growth and taxpayers will receive a higher value for tax dollars when inspectors target those companies which pose the highest area of risk.

We all want to live in a safe society, protected from fraud, on-the-job accidents, and with a clean and safe environment. We all share in that goal. That is why today I am announcing that the government will consult broadly, with the goal of introducing a code that would protect individuals and businesses in their dealings with the government and its agencies. This code will protect the right to be treated fairly and with respect, to know why you or your business is being audited, inspected or investigated, and to be presumed to be law-abiding until the contrary is found. It will be called a declaration of taxpayers' rights.

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** As you know, our government's top priority is growth—growth in the economy and growth in jobs. That is why today I am also announcing that by June 30, 2002, the government will review the competitiveness of Ontario's construction industry, particularly the industrial, commercial and institutional sector and determine the effect of recent legislative amendments.

The construction industry is key to Ontario's economic growth and well-being. The industrial, commercial and institutional sector generates more than \$8 billion a year for our economy. In the residential sector, Ontario saw 71,521 new housing starts last year alone.

During the last session, the Legislature passed Bill 69, the Labour Relations Amendment Act (Construction Industry), 2000. The act modernizes and improves competitiveness in Ontario's \$8-billion annual ICI construction sector. It improves the ability of unionized contractors to compete in the industry by creating a more level playing field. It will also help new homebuyers by minimizing the risk of consecutive strikes in the residential sector.

Our review will determine how well these measures are working to achieve the objective of a strong and viable construction industry.

The people of Ontario are the ultimate winners. A vibrant and competitive construction industry creates jobs, spurs development and has a positive effect on all segments of the economy. Our ultimate goal is to have in place fair, balanced and flexible labour relations in the industry. We will do what is necessary to keep this important sector strong and beneficial for all of us.

1520

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My response is to the Minister of Energy's announcement on the deregulation of electricity in May 2002. I say to the people of Ontario that this is an issue of the highest stakes. It is the largest privatization ever in North America, and we're being asked to put our confidence in the Mike Harris government, a government that I think everyone in Ontario would agree—is health care in better shape now than when he became Premier? Is education in better shape now than when he became Premier? Is the environment in better shape? Are our municipalities in better shape?

We're being asked to put our confidence in Mike Harris to do this properly. Frankly, on behalf of Ontario, we don't have confidence in Mike Harris. Several months ago, my colleague Mr Conway wrote a letter to the Premier and said: "Here's what we believe should happen. Set up a select committee on the deregulation of electricity—an all-party, public committee to monitor this." Surely that's the least this government could do.

The warning signs are everywhere. Just yesterday, President Bush said, "I am anxious to get Canada's energy. I want electricity from Canada." We saw what happened with deregulation in California. It was an example where they say there was not enough generation. So here we are, embarking on this at a time when, in our opinion, the protection for the generation of electricity for Ontarians may very well not be there. So I say to the Minister of Finance, who is leaving now, have an opportunity for the public to look at this and to examine it as we go along.

We talk about competition. The government has allowed Hydro now to acquire over one-third of what's called the municipal electrical distribution companies. There's a monopoly going on behind the scenes when competition was supposed to be what this was all about.

We talk about controlling the price of electricity. The government now has an 8% increase on the cost of electricity, and it's going to go to 20%. The Provincial Auditor has warned us about this. He says it is the taxpayer who is on the hook for this debt. Ontario Hydro itself did not follow what are called generally accepted accounting principles in reporting their finances. They essentially cooked the books. They took a substantial amount of expenses and put it in the debt. The auditor said, "You can't do that."

So I say to the people of Ontario that what you're being asked to do today is put your faith in the hands of Mike Harris. I don't think many reasonable people want to run that risk. So let's do what my colleague Mr Conway said several months ago. Let's open this process up.

Just a few weeks ago, my leader spelled out the seven principles we should be following in this exercise. I looked through the principles the government took today, and they don't follow those. I urge the people of Ontario to be aware of the principles Dalton McGuinty has outlined here, to follow the recommendation we put forward to open this process up to some air. Let's not let the people who stand to make enormous money—this is the biggest privatization in the history of North America. Let's have a voice for the people and let's have an open, clear, transparent process, as my leader has suggested.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Just responding to the announcement by the Minister of Consumer and Business Services with respect to registering or making it easy to register a new announcement, new companies, new births and stuff like that on-line, I have to say that this isn't going to do one iota of improvement for small business people in Ontario. It's easy to extol on a regular basis the importance of small business in Ontario. But when it comes to helping small business in Ontario, there isn't very much that is coming from the government. There are too many other factors, and none of them that influence that growth have been addressed by the minister today. I hope that after consultation he can come back and announce the changes and reform that indeed will improve the lives of small business people in Ontario.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I want to respond to the Minister of Energy, and I want people across Ontario to understand clearly what this government is doing. This government is about to sell off what was Ontario Hydro—now Ontario Power Genera-

tion—to their corporate friends in the international energy business. I want people to understand that unlike the Liberals, who merely want to slow the process down, New Democrats oppose this sell-off of our electric energy to your corporate friends. We oppose it because it's a dirty deal—a dirty deal for consumers, for industry and for the environment.

I want people to reflect on what this Minister of Energy said three years ago when they first brought this proposal forward. He said we should follow California, that privatization and deregulation in California was an overwhelming success, that it was leading to lower electricity rates. Well, Minister, where have you been for the last three years? People in California are facing cumulative rate increases of over 70%. Billions of dollars of economic activity has been lost in California because they don't have dependable electricity. People in California are already faced with more energy brownouts and blackouts this summer, and guess what? The government of California has had to bail out this minister's energy corporate friends to the tune of over \$10 billion already, and they're now looking at ways to get control over the electricity system again, to re-regulate.

Then this minister referred to Alberta. I invite him to go out to Alberta and talk to those businesses that have to schedule their workers at midnight because that's the only time they can afford to buy electricity. For some industries the price has gone up by three and a half times.

He then referred to natural gas deregulation and said the deregulation of natural gas was such a good thing that Ontario consumers should support the deregulation and privatization of electricity. I invite the consumers of Ontario to look at their natural gas bills, which have gone up and up and which show no sign of abating.

This minister says there is lots of supply in Ontario. I don't think that's the issue. What we need to be looking at is the supply in Illinois, in Ohio, in Michigan, in New York. Minister, didn't you hear George Bush this weekend when he said very clearly that the American states don't have enough electricity? They want to get their hands on our electricity supply. That's George Bush's agenda. Are you in George Bush's pocket, or are you protecting the energy consumers of Ontario?

Minister, after you've sold off Ontario Power Generation to your energy corporation friends, where do you think they're going to want to sell the power? In Toronto, where the current price is 9.5 cents a kilowatt hour, or in New York, where they can get 23 cents a kilowatt hour, or Chicago, where they can get almost double the price here, or Detroit, where they can get almost double the price?

**1530**

Minister, what you're setting up is this: international energy corporations will gladly buy up parts of old Ontario Hydro, now Ontario Power Generation, and they will gladly take power that is produced cheaply in Ontario and sell it at double and triple the price in the United States. You know that, just like natural gas, if

consumers in Ontario aren't prepared to pay double and triple the price, in other words pay the American price, we will watch our electricity being exported. That's what you're setting up.

The manager of the paper mill in my hometown isn't noted as a New Democratic supporter, but when he comes to me and says, "Our power rate is already going to go up by 30%. We can't sustain this. We will have to lay off people," the minister should be listening.

This is not good for the environment, it is not good for our industries, it is not good for our consumers. It will satisfy George Bush. He will be happy. Your corporate friends will be happy: buy cheap in Ontario, sell expensive in the United States. They'll make a lot of money. But somebody has to look out for Ontario consumers, and it's pretty clear it's not you and it's not the Liberals, who favour this policy but just want to slow it down a little.

Get on the job, Minister. Pay attention to what happened in California and Alberta. Kill this dirty deal now.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin question period I will remind the members of our procedures. You get about a minute in total for the question. At about 50 seconds I will give you a warning, saying either, "Question" or "Answer," and then you'll have about 10 seconds to try and wrap up. We'll try to stick as closely as we can to that, and we will be using the table as a guideline. They will give me some of the signals as well. So if all members will kindly try to remember that, you've got about a minute, and at about 50 seconds we'll give you a warning. I would appreciate it if the only warning came from me, that other people don't shout out, because it gets confusing. Sometimes you don't know who's calling out. Then we'll be able to get as many questions on as possible.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question today is for the Minister of Education. It has been 124 days now since this House was sitting, and during that time the crisis that you have created in public education right across the province of Ontario has grown and indeed flourished. Schools are sapped of their spirit, we have teachers without enthusiasm and students without extracurricular activities. I want to speak to you specifically on this last point.

Last December, Gerrard Kennedy and I presented a plan to you to restore peace in our schools. That plan received tremendous support in many quarters right across the province of Ontario, but especially from parents and students themselves. Today, four months later, our children are still going to school without

basketball and soccer and after-school drama and things of that nature. I can tell you, as a parent of four teenagers, those kinds of activities are a very important part of a well-rounded education.

My question to you on behalf of Ontario's working families is, when are you going to do something to restore extracurricular activities to our schools?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** We all know the price of the so-called Liberal peace plan: that was to increase student workload yet again in order to decrease teacher workload. That's not the solution to extracurricular activities.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, if you don't like our solution, if you don't like the one that was put forward by your own task force, which you also gave very short shrift to and dismissed out of hand, then where the heck is your solution?

Since Mike Harris took office, Ontario students have suffered through 57 work stoppages involving over one million of our children. In Windsor, support staff strikes have caused kids to be out for five weeks now, in the near north kids were out for three and a half weeks until very recently, and today in Toronto the doors to 560 schools, affecting 300,000 children, are closed. You blame the boards, in typical fashion, Minister, and then you blame the unions and anybody else you can get your hands on, but you won't take responsibility.

Your throne speech was rife with references to accountability and responsibility. My question to you is, when are you going to take responsibility for the crisis you've created in public education and do something about it?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This government has set forward a very careful and detailed plan for quality education reforms in this province. We've gone through it with improving the curriculum, improving funding, improving many areas and how school boards are supported. All of those reforms the honourable member and his party have fought and have not supported. They haven't wanted to have standardized testing. They haven't wanted to have teacher testing. They haven't wanted to have a tougher curriculum that will give our students what they need. Our record on quality education is very clear. Of course we know there are groups and organizations that are opposing this. We sit down and work with our partners, as I continue to do.

I'd like to say to the honourable member that he is sadly misinformed if his critic told him we dismissed the report. We did not. I said no such thing. The other thing that—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Answer?

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

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, why don't you just be straight with us? You're not working to improve education in Ontario; you are actively presiding over its undoing. Families are worried sick about the future of public education. We've got teachers without enthusiasm, schools sapped of their spirit, students robbed of

their extracurricular activities, all of this at a time when we had laid before you a very thorough and comprehensive plan to improve student learning right across the province. We've offered that to you. You have chosen to cherry-pick from that and to put in place apparently public school choice, something we support. But in addition to that, it is very important that you continue to make necessary investments in public education. More specifically, we believe our class sizes should be smaller in those years from junior kindergarten through to grade 3.

If you want to do something to bring about real improvement in student learning in Ontario, why don't you adopt our plan?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I wish I had more time to go through his so-called plan: his plan to water down the curriculum; his plan to increase student workloads and decrease teacher workloads; his plan to spend \$1 billion—some extra, which he hasn't told us where he's going to get it from. He says he's going to give parents choice. The very things we are putting in place to make choice a reality for parents he opposes. That's the Liberal plan as opposed to what this government is doing: increasing education funding yet again. Perhaps the honourable member was too busy to notice that we have put \$370 million more new dollars into the education system because we believe that focusing resources on our kids in classrooms is extremely important. That will continue to be the way this government moves forward.

He raises the task force. I notice he didn't say anything about the other task force recommendation that asked the unions to stop preventing teachers who want to do extracurricular activities from doing them. Where's the honourable member on that particular point?

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

The question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, I want to speak to you today in some detail about your plans to introduce two-tier health care into Ontario. For me, one-tier care is a non-negotiable. It's part of the bedrock of our province. One-tier health care not only makes us compassionate and caring; the fact of the matter is, it makes us more competitive. It gives Ontario businesses a real edge.

Obviously you see things differently. You want to bring in two-tier health care. You want a Pinto plan for working families and Cadillac service for the wealthy. Now that we've brought this into the open, can you share with us your details of your two-tier health care plan, because working families are very concerned about your plans?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to correct the record in this chamber. Indeed, I have never spoken about any form of government policy in the manner in which the Leader of the Opposition has.

1540

The Premier is on record and I am on record supporting health care reform within the context of universal accessibility. Indeed, I have said time and time again that I and I'm sure every member of this caucus and practically every Ontarian believe that we should never deny medically necessary services on the basis of money, and we stand by that.

What we are for is reform of the system that will maintain its sustainability. We are looking for innovation, we are looking for best practices and we are looking for accountability. If the honourable member has a single new idea in this area, I'd be happy to hear it.

**Mr McGuinty:** You may not understand what you did through your throne speech, Minister, but you threatened Ontario's working families with two-tier health care. I'll quote from your own throne speech. You specifically said, "The federal Commission on the Future of Health Care ... must be free to consider all aspects of the system.... It should not be limited by a narrow mandate or by restrictions on discussion."

If we look at the mandate given to the federal commission, it says, "to recommend policies and measures to ensure a universally accessible, publicly funded health system." My question to you on behalf of Ontario's working families is, which constraints placed on that mandate do you disagree with, the part that says it has to be publicly funded or the part that says it has to be universally accessible?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again I say to the honourable member—the Premier has been quite clear on this; we have been quite clear on this—we believe in universal accessibility. We have a publicly funded system and parts of the system that are privately funded. They have always been privately funded. Indeed, we are not prejudging in any event. We want innovation; we want best practices; we want accountability.

I could do no better than to quote Minister Allan Rock, who says, "We must find new ways of responding to Canadians' health care needs and we must not be afraid of change; we must embrace it." That's what the honourable federal Liberal minister said. We are willing to engage in the discussion on that basis, and I encourage the honourable member to have the courage to do the same.

**Mr McGuinty:** Ontarians aren't afraid of change when it comes to protecting and indeed enhancing medicare in Ontario. They're not afraid of change. They are only afraid of your kind of change when you consistently make reference to introducing two-tier health care into the province of Ontario. Listen, the people you campaigned for at the federal level embrace two-tier health care. You cannot now be seen to be backing away from this.

I'm asking you to be upfront on behalf of Ontario's working families. They are very much frightened by your references to two-tier health care and they want to know exactly where you stand. Will you now back away from the statements made in the throne speech, which ob-

viously took issue with the federal constraints on the mandate given to Roy Romanow which said that health care, as we improve it, must be universally accessible and publicly funded? Will you back away from the statements found in your throne speech?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Obviously he and I disagree on the interpretation of the throne speech, but I encourage him to reread it. There is no mention of the phrase he uses. I have never used the phrase he uses. I have always said that no person in Ontario, indeed all of Canada, should be denied medically necessary services on the basis of money.

Here is what Roy Romanow says, "I do not, cannot and will not prejudge the outcome of the commission's work before it even starts." We're willing to engage in the dialogue based on the principles I have enunciated, based on the principles of universal accessibility, based on the principles of the fact that there are publicly funded as well as privately funded aspects of health care.

We need new ideas. We need innovation. We need to find a way to sustainability. That is why we want to change the status quo. If the honourable member is in favour of the status quo, if the honourable member wants to waltz merrily along in self-deception that the status quo is sustainable, he can do that, but we on this side of the House have the leadership of Mike Harris and will do the right thing.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, today you announced the date for your dirty deal to sell off Ontario's hydroelectricity system, but in the three years you've been working on this, all of the arguments you've presented for it, in favour of it, have collapsed.

Three years ago, when you first hatched this idea, you said that electricity prices in California had fallen because of deregulation. You said that Ontario should copy California. Minister, there's been a 70% increase in electricity prices, cumulative, in California just over the last year and people are still facing brownouts and blackouts.

Minister, will you admit you were wrong about California and your dirty deal to sell out Ontario's hydroelectricity system is wrong? Cancel the dirty deal now. Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** Ontario is not California. What's happened to California, particularly over the last three years, is you've seen demand go through the roof because of the good economic times they've had there and you've seen supply stagnate. As a result, prices have gone up in the last three years.

It was quite true three years ago, because there was a legislated price decrease to consumers, that prices had gone down at that time in California. But they've messed up deregulation in California. That's very clear. There are some 39 other jurisdictions in the world that have

done a good job of introducing competition in their electricity sectors, and prices have been lower than they otherwise would have been under the old monopoly systems.

Ontario has an adequate supply of electricity. The Independent Electricity Market Operator forecast that we have at least 10 years of adequate supply, so we won't ever be a California, and new supply is coming on-line as new generators come in.

**Mr Hampton:** How quickly the minister changes his story. It wasn't anyone over here who said that California's energy prices were going down. You said it. It was no one over here who said we should follow California. You said it.

Minister, it's not just California. Go out to Alberta and explain to Alberta factory workers, who now only work the midnight shift because that's the only time of day that the companies can afford to purchase electricity. That's what's happening in Alberta.

Minister, what are you going to say to the consumers of Ontario, the industries of Ontario, when Ontario's rates start going up as well because the international companies who want to buy up our electricity system are more interested in exporting the power than they are in selling it here at a cheaper price? What's your answer to consumers and industries?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Ontario is not California or Alberta. We have adequate supply of electricity. In fact, with the help of the Power Workers Union we expect to see Pickering units come on-line early in 2002, early next year. That will give us 2,000 more megawatts of power. Bruce Power, which the Power Workers Union has an equity stake in, announced some three weeks ago that they'll spend \$437 million of their money to bring back two nuclear units.

We have adequate supply. We have the exact opposite situation, if the honourable member would care to do any research. We have a company that generates 90% of the electricity. We've got lots of electricity. We just have exceedingly high prices and \$38 billion worth of debt that your government didn't do a darned thing about in the five years that you were in office—completely irresponsible. Prices went up some 35% while they were in office and they didn't pay down one penny of the principal of the debt. That is a disgraceful record.

**Mr Hampton:** This minister talks about supply. Well, George Bush was talking about supply this past weekend in Quebec City. What he said is they don't have enough supply in New York or Illinois or Ohio or Michigan, and he wants Ontario's supply.

Speaker, I ask you, if you could buy up one of those generating stations that the minister is going to put on the block, would you sell the power in Ontario for nine cents a kilowatt-hour or would you sell it in New York for 24 cents a kilowatt-hour?

That's what you're going to do to Ontario consumers. Ontario consumers will either pay the American price or we'll watch our electricity being exported. That's your agenda, an agenda for your energy corporation friends.

What are you going to do to protect Ontario consumers when the international energy corporations say, "We want to buy the power in Ontario but we want to sell it in New York and Chicago, where we can get a higher price"? What's your answer there, Minister?

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**Hon Mr Wilson:** The government has set up an independent market operator whose job is to protect the people of Ontario and to protect consumers and put consumers first. Also, I remind the honourable member that at any given time less than a fifth of the electricity supply in Ontario can be exported to the United States. There are only 4,000 megawatts of power, and that power has to go both ways. By the way, today we do—and we proudly do—sell energy to the United States. We keep the lights on during peak times in New York, at lunchtime and dinnertime, and we make several hundred million dollars a year, which this government, since the Energy Competition Act was passed in 1998, has been putting toward the \$38-billion worth of debt that neither the Liberals nor the NDP dealt with when they were in office.

Finally, it was the Honourable Jean Chrétien, the Liberal Prime Minister of Canada, who first talked about helping Mr Bush with his energy crisis. I want the honourable member to know that I was on the phone with Mr Goodale, the federal minister, some two weeks ago asking that energy ministers in this country be consulted. He has agreed to put a meeting together in early May, but only because of my intervention.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My next question is for the Minister of Education. In the throne speech your government preached a lot about accountability, but I want to ask you about your lack of accountability for the school system. You've been so careless with the school system that we have more labour disputes now than we have recesses in our schools. What boards are asking you to do is recognize that the funding formula is not adequate and that you need to meet with the boards of education and provide them with the additional funds that will be necessary if our schools are going to function as they should.

Minister, will you finally be accountable and agree that the funding formula needs to be opened up so that we can fund our schools adequately and are not facing labour dispute after labour dispute in the school system? Show true accountability, Minister. Do that.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** With all due respect to the honourable member, who I thought agreed with the collective bargaining process and now appears to be asking us to interfere in it, we have opened up the funding formula and given school boards over \$310 million, plus other money for pressures they have this year. We recognize the funding pressures school boards have, and we have continued to increase resources so

they can come to fair collective agreements with their support staff.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** M<sup>me</sup> la Ministre, clearly you're not dealing very well with the funding pressures. Talking about record increases in heating costs, the Toronto board alone has had \$17 million in heating costs—just them. Yes, you were very generous. You gave them \$6.5 million. The rest, \$10.5 million, has to be found in operating funds. I'm glad you're so very generous with the board, but you know they don't have the money to negotiate fairly with non-teaching staff. I know that you know that.

Another thing, Minister: every day that strikers are out, the province, not the board, makes \$1 million. That's \$14 million in your pocket and not the board's. I tell you, Minister, that you can help solve this problem today. All you have to do is send that \$14 million back and the strike will be over. Can you do that, or can you consider that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Indeed, school boards received \$40 million more this year for heating fuel costs, because we recognize that is a pressure they experience. I recognize that for the NDP the solution to everything is to simply put more money there. We recognize the need for new investments, but we also recognize the responsibility of school boards, like all our other public sector partners, to be respectful of the taxpayers' dollar. They have to live within a budget, much as families and heads of any organization do. All our school boards are being asked to handle that taxpayers' money in an accountable fashion.

We're open and transparent about where the money goes, how we fund the boards. Through the throne speech, we've made a commitment to make sure there is an auditing process that ensures those dollars are being used where they're supposed to be used, because we believe that taxpayers' money deserves to go to school boards to provide good, quality education services for our kids.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister of Health. One of the most important things Ontario families look for when they consider their health care system is to make sure they've got access to a family doctor in their community. During the past two years, the number of underserved communities in our province has grown by 25%. There are now 109 communities suffering through a physician shortage crisis. For six long and painful years, this government refused to even admit there was a problem when it came to the numbers of our doctors.

Two and a half months ago, I put out a comprehensive plan to start addressing the doctor shortage crisis in Ontario. You will know, Minister, that my plan includes new medical schools—one in the north and one near Windsor—removing barriers to foreign physicians, using more nurse practitioners and a real plan for 24-7 health care. Why haven't you adopted my plan to bring more doctors to our underserved communities?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Actually we did adopt it and announced it before he actually announced his plan, in the sense that we have already put 40 additional places in the medical schools. We have a plan to provide \$40,000 in tuition reimbursement and location incentives for medical students. We are expanding the international medical graduate program by 50% and targeting all these new positions to underserved areas and specialties. We're doubling the number of community development officers to help underserved areas. We're expanding by 25% the entry positions to two northern family medical residency training programs.

These are things we already announced a few months ago. If the honourable member repeated them in his plan, I suppose that's a good sign that at least he is only six months behind what the government is doing.

**Mr McGuinty:** I can tell you that the only thing that's expanding under Mike Harris's watch, and now on your watch, is the number of underserved communities in Ontario. You have been dithering, dillying and dallying and still we now have 109 underserved communities in Ontario. Thunder Bay is a city of 117,000 people. In that city, there are 40,000 people who are without a family doctor. Go to Windsor, go to Kitchener-Waterloo, go to Parry Sound, go to Sudbury, go to Cornwall, travel the northern part of this province and you will quickly conclude that families are in a dire predicament because they can't get access to a family doctor. You can tell me that you're doing all kinds of things, but the fact of the matter is, on the front lines in our communities Ontario families can't get Ontario family doctors.

I ask you again, why won't you implement our plan, expand our medical school spaces and begin to move forward on something other than your two-tier health care agenda and help Ontario families?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Between April 1, 1995, and March 23 this year, communities designated as underserved were successful in recruiting 267 family physicians and 171 specialists. Is it enough? No, it's not enough. Despite all the things we have mentioned so far, we believe more things have to be done. If the honourable member has any suggestions other than repeating what we already know, then we would be happy to include his suggestions in any deliberations.

This issue has been around in rural, remote and northern areas for some time. In fact, there is a world-wide physician shortage. We are competing with many other jurisdictions, not only the United States but other jurisdictions as well. I certainly will take the honourable member's comments under advisement.

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#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. Both myself and my constituents have heard you talk about the principles that will allow Ontario to

successfully open the electricity market to competition. Also today we've heard the ranting and the raging of the leader of the third party trying to strike fear into the residents of Ontario.

Minister, with the phenomenal growth that we've experienced in the province of Ontario over the last five years, I'm really left wondering, can we avoid the problems that have indeed occurred in California? Can you assure my constituents in Northumberland, and all Ontarians for that matter, that we can indeed avoid the problems that California is facing?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** Thank you to my colleague for the question. Ontario is not California. California and Alberta find themselves in a supply crunch, where they just don't have enough electricity. Neither of those jurisdictions has built any new generation plant in the last 10 years, and yet demand has gone up because they've had good economies, new businesses have moved in, lots of people have moved in and they need more electricity, but they did not plan well for the future.

The Independent Electricity Market Operator in Ontario just recently completed a study indicating that Ontario has ample supply of electricity over the next 10 years, but it is important that we begin to plan for the period when we do need more power. That study was done not taking into account the fact that Bruce Power is bringing up two nuclear units, announced some three weeks ago. It did not take into account the fact that Pickering is coming back on line in January, bringing even more power to the Ontario economy.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Minister, for all that information and for that response. That is certainly good to hear and reassuring for my constituents.

We've also had phenomenal growth here in the province of Ontario since the PCs took office back in 1995, but unfortunately we did inherit that phenomenal debt of over \$30 billion, a sum that hadn't been paid down by the previous governments.

Specifically, I am wondering if you could please describe what the difference is between Ontario and California as it relates to adequate supply of electricity to ensure the ongoing growth in jobs and the economy here in the province of Ontario.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Another significant difference is California got whacked pretty hard with the quadrupling of natural gas prices which had a natural effect of raising electricity rates. Fifty three per cent of the electricity generated in California is done so by using natural gas, so obviously when natural gas prices went up, electricity prices went through the roof. Only 4% of electricity in Ontario is produced using natural gas, so we're not hit with nearly the same impact as California.

Finally, I want to mention a quote. CIBC World Markets recently did a study and I'll quote from it. "In contrast to California, electricity market conditions in Ontario suggest that deregulation will deliver benefits to consumers, companies in the Canadian energy business and the economy as a whole." Reasons cited for their

confidence include: Ontario has a large supply of domestic electricity which is easily sufficient to meet growing demand without relying on neighbouring jurisdictions; Ontario's power prices are not susceptible to rising natural gas prices like California's; and Ontario's deregulation model is favourable to new power investment.

That's an independent study by one of the world's largest financial houses and it's favourable—

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

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Three years ago your government ordered the hospitals in Picton, Trenton, Belleville and Bancroft to amalgamate into the Quinte Healthcare Corp. These are hospitals that are 160 kilometres apart. That's like amalgamating a hospital in Belleville and Toronto.

You committed at that time that there would be absolutely no reduction in services. However, this wonderful funding formula that you use treats the hospitals as if they are all located on one site in an urban area. Picton and Trenton are at real risk of losing all but the most basic of services.

My question to you today is not how much money you're spending on health. My question is not what's on the TV ads and it's not what is going on in other provinces. My question is very simple: will you reaffirm this government's commitment to maintain all of the services at all of the hospitals operated by Quinte Healthcare Corp?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The fact of the matter is that we are committed to ensuring that hospitals, as a crucial element of our health services, do provide every service available that is needed in our system. Now, how to get there required this government, quite frankly, to make some difficult but necessary decisions about the types of hospitals in certain communities and to make sure that the hospitals that were available in our communities were in some way reorganized. We think it has encouraged the kind of accountability that is necessary for the delivery of excellent medical services at hospitals. Do we have more to do in terms of accountability? Absolutely we do.

**Mr Parsons:** Accountability is not an issue. Quinte Healthcare has nothing to be concerned about on having its books examined. But what it does know is that it is being underfunded by \$4.8 million for this coming year and cannot offer the services it previously did and wants to continue to offer.

Minister, we're asking you to put lives ahead of tax cuts. Provide the funding to allow rural Ontario to have the basic services they now have and to ensure that the citizens in rural Ontario receive the services they need for now, next year and forever—no one-time dollars. I'm asking you to commit to maintain the services. We're not

talking funding. We want absolutely no service cuts, and I want you to reaffirm that commitment.

**Hon Mr Clement:** Far be it for me to take my cue from the leader of the official opposition, but he in fact said, "I am convinced that there is enough money in the health system. I don't think we are spending it as effectively as we can." This has been a constant challenge on our part, to make sure that the money is spent effectively. Ontario spent \$8.5 billion on hospital spending last year alone, \$154 million for new medical equipment, \$121 million for priority programs, \$71 million for new operating beds. The list goes on.

Our challenge is not shovelling more money in; it is to make sure that every single dollar possible goes to patient care, goes to the care in the community that is required for Ontarians to have confidence in their health care system. I can assure the honourable member that we will never derogate from that goal.

#### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. In your statement earlier today you mentioned that the government was reviewing competitiveness in the construction industry to determine the effect of recent legislation.

Back in the fall, this House passed Bill 69, which brought in some reforms to the Labour Relations Act. I remember that this bill, which fulfilled the throne speech, committed to modernize labour relations in the construction industry, in the residential, industrial, commercial, institutional sectors of the construction industry. I also remember quite well how residents of Ontario who bought homes back in 1998 were greatly inconvenienced by multiple strikes in the residential construction sector. The industry ground to a halt that summer as trade after trade went on strike and closed down construction for months.

Minister, can you please tell us about the changes made in Bill 69 and what you expect to see?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for Peterborough for the question. Bill 69 did deal with the residential issue with respect to the ongoing strikes that caused five months of shutdown in the housing sector. It was a domino effect: one trade would go on strike for a few weeks, then as soon as they came back another went out. It caused five months of shutdowns, which of course isn't good for the unions, isn't good for the builders and isn't very good for the people who bought the houses and are waiting to get in.

Bill 69 dealt with the issue by responding to industry concerns of overlapping strikes. We sat down with the unions and we sat down with the builders and we came to an agreement that was embraced by all parties, unions and builders.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Not quite.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Yes, it was embraced by everybody. All agreements are to have the common expiry date April 30, the 46-day window for strike lockout

would end June 15, dispute resolution by binding arbitration, self-repeals after the next round of negotiations, at industry request.

What it came down to was that we did reach a consensus, a consensus with the communities involved: the unions, the builders and those people who needed their homes after they bought them. I think it was a brilliant bill and it's going to work this summer.

**Mr Stewart:** Thank you, Minister. I think many people involved in the trades also feel that.

Bill 69 also affected the ICI sector. Could you tell us a bit about what that effect could be?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** The ICI part of Bill 69 was a little more complicated and a little more difficult. There was what I thought was agreement between the parties, but in the end it had some difficulty working its way through the trades and local areas.

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The ICI target framework established a middle ground for both sides that they could live with. It allowed amendments to province-wide collective agreements dealing with financial issues, the amendments made through negotiations or arbitration process, and a final offer selection process streamlined to 35 days.

Let me be clear: we're entering into the phase of negotiations province-wide in the ICI sector. My belief is that it's got to be sector-specific and sensitive to regions. Not all regions can pay X amount of dollars for certain trades, because it isn't competitive. In my opinion, when this bill is formally targeted and set early in May, I think we'll find a middle ground and a consensus that was an agreement by all parties and will work effectively for everyone involved in that industry.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, your government recently agreed to a private contract between Cancer Care Ontario and a private, for-profit service deliverer to provide after-hours cancer treatment. In last week's throne speech and several times today, you talked about government accountability, so I'm quite sure you will agree with me that Ontarians deserve to see a copy of the agreement that you approved between Cancer Care Ontario and Canadian Oncology Services Ltd.

Today I'm asking you what I've been denied through other sources. I've asked, members of the public have asked and members of the media have asked. We have not been given this contract. Will you provide us with a copy of the contract between Cancer Care Ontario and Canadian Oncology Services Ltd?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. By virtue of the way she has asked the question, she is aware that this is an agreement between Cancer Care Ontario, which is a third-party body, and the provider. I hope she can understand why I don't have a direct line on that.

I will tell you this: there was a question raised, I believe in one of the legislative committees, about a value-for-money audit, with respect to this engagement, by the Provincial Auditor. We would be very pleased to co-operate should the auditor decide to do so. We'd be pleased to co-operate with the Provincial Auditor and provide any documentation we have available to us.

**Ms Lankin:** Look, Minister, you're the one who said four times today that accountability is an issue in spending of public dollars out in the institutions delivering health services. In your throne speech, let me tell you what you said: "Accountability is required of all institutions funded by taxpayers. Government is the servant of people, not the master. Citizens are entitled to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness about how they spend and reporting of their performance and results." I agree.

Minister, you were party to the funding agreement for this private clinic. You were party to the bonusing scheme that pays based on the number of patients seen, not the quality of care given. Are you going to tell me that you agreed to spend and fund those services with taxpayers' dollars without looking at the contract that was going to be signed? I think not, Minister.

If you believe in accountability, if you believe in the words of your throne speech, if it was more than a sham, then you'll answer this simple question. Will you provide us with a copy of the contract that you have agreed to that will spend public dollars on a private, for-profit service deliverer?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Let me repeat that we will provide all documentation if it's a value-for-money audit by an independent third party; in other words, the Provincial Auditor. We'll provide all the documentation required for the review to be a substantive and real review.

Let me just say for the record, though, why this is an important project. Cancer Care Ontario came to us with a proposal for this after-hour clinic so we would eliminate the need for cancer victims to travel outside of this country—not even this province, but this country—for treatment by our deadline of May 31 of this year. This means there are more cancer patients who will be able to stay within Ontario, close to their families, close to their loved ones, and get the cancer care they need—at no direct cost to them, because this is a publicly funded system—so they have those necessary cancer treatments here in Ontario. I refuse to apologize for that.

## GRIDLOCK

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Before I ask him my question, I would like to congratulate him on his new responsibilities and also congratulate him for having made the special effort to be back here in the House today and to be accountable in this primary source of accountability for the government.

During a lunchtime visit to Hamilton with an introduction from the member, the member did spend some time relating his personal experiences as a commuter

from the Hamilton area to Toronto and he spoke about gridlock and about the causes of gridlock. I'm wondering if the member might repeat for the benefit of this House his belief in taking responsibility for creating gridlock and relating that to growth, and whether he might also have a personal opinion, as an experienced commuter and also as an experienced member of the government, as the transportation minister, and would tell us whether, if he had left 40 minutes later, he might still have made it to question period.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** Actually, it took me an hour to get back to question period from Hamilton, so I think that particularly today there was no gridlock.

With reference to what the member was speaking about in terms of my comments down there, I reminded the members that from 1992 to 1997 I was commuting every day—and we remember who the people were in government in 1992—and it took me about an hour to get in to work in the morning. Today it takes about two hours, and that's because there are more people working in Ontario than ever before, the economy is booming and they have to travel in to work. Therefore, there's no doubt that there's going to be a slight increase in gridlock.

**Mr Smitherman:** That is a refreshing answer, especially compared to that of his predecessor, who only ever babbled on about all the tax room that had been created. But let me ask the minister whether he thinks, given all of this growth and the related experiences with gridlock he's spoken to, that investments in transportation from the government for those commuters along the QEW ought not to be a priority of this government, given the dramatic increase in gridlock that has occurred under that government's watch. And would he directly answer my question as to whether he might offer advice to any of his colleagues seeking to make travel plans between Hamilton and Toronto in the middle of the day, whether in fact they might have made it to be held accountable during question period.

**Hon Mr Clark:** This government has introduced the Smart Growth policy, which is going to be looking at the entire transportation network in Ontario.

If I may, I'd like to read into the record from a gentleman who I think has a lot of clout in this country: "I was pleased to learn of Premier Harris's recent speech in which he related his vision of Smart Growth. Ontario recognized that gridlock is an important economic and environmental problem that requires co-operative and innovative solutions. This includes providing transportation choices and planning communities, ie, managing future urban growth. The link between land use and planning and transit is something I've been talking about for a long time. It was a basic tenet of the Ontario government from 1950 to 1985"—and we know what happened in 1985. David Collenette, the federal transportation minister, said that.

We stand by our policies and we will continue to improve transportation in Ontario.

PRESTATION DE SERVICES  
ÉLECTRONIQUES

ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**M. Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex) :** I see the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has as much enthusiasm in the House as he has on the hockey rink.

Ma question s'adresse au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises. Monsieur le ministre, à la fin du mois de mars, le député de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell donnait une interview à Panorama, qui est une émission en langue française diffusée sur TFO. Au cours de cette interview, il a déclaré que si les commerces à Calgary seront en ligne à 100 % dès la fin de cette année, l'Ontario n'a « absolument aucun programme en place ».

Alors, ma question est de savoir : qu'est-ce que l'Ontario fait pour que la prestation de services électroniques soit disponible non seulement aux entreprises de l'Ontario mais à tous ses citoyens ?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I will save the people from suffering my French at this time.

I want to thank the member for the question because I think it's important that we're clear that the government of Ontario is making sure that citizens, corporate and private, get the most efficient service.

We have implemented programs like Ontario Business Connects. We have 145 sites which allow businesses to register their names, get the licence for business and change their address.

As well, we have Ontario Parks on-line, where you can register for things like a campsite, you can deal with your angling licence, your hunting licence—many electronic services.

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I invite the member for Glengarry-Prescott Russell to go to 692 Main Street East, Hawkesbury, which is just down the street from his constituency office at 151 Main Street, to our business connection information centre, and he can find out for himself.

**M. Beaubien :** Je constate que notre gouvernement a lancé plusieurs initiatives dans le domaine de la prestation de services électroniques. Pourriez-vous me dire ce que votre ministère compte mettre en place pour faire en sorte que les citoyens de l'Ontario, tant particuliers que corporatifs, aient accès à des services essentiels par des moyens électroniques ?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As I said in my statement today, this government has led North America in putting our laws and regulations on the Net. E-laws is a brand new project which we have entered into with the Legislative Assembly. It updates the laws every two weeks, when it used to take up to 18 months to get an amended copy of a law here. We are going to improve that to 24 to 48 hours on the change or amendment of a law.

Also, as I announced today, we are going to alter our registration of vital statistics for births so that this will be

done much more quickly and efficiently. People will be able to get things like their birth certificates immediately.

We are providing a number of services now via the Internet, and we're going to continue to do that. We have led in the past and we're going to lead in the future in this matter.

EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Education. On April 10 I wrote to you, Minister, and asked you to intervene, consider the interruption of classes, with the Windsor Catholic school board, at that time entering its second week of children being outside their classrooms due to a custodial and teaching assistants' strike. The strike is now entering its fifth week.

I am asking you specifically for a review of the operations envelope of funding to our Catholic board. Your own funding formula, in my view, is the root cause of the current impasse. The Catholic board is hamstrung and having difficulty negotiating because the funds are simply not there at the board level.

The last review you undertook on behalf of the Windsor public board, as an audit of our funding formula for our students, resulted in millions of dollars having to be handed back to our board because you hadn't given it sufficient money to operate classrooms.

I'm asking you today, Minister, after the fifth week of students' classes being interrupted at the Windsor Catholic board, to intervene and immediately start this review and an audit.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** We review every year on a regular basis the amount of money that goes to a school board. This board has indeed had increased resources, and the board has the difficult responsibility of trying to allocate those resources appropriately and of coming to a collective agreement with their support staff.

It is indeed a tragedy that when collective agreements are at issue in this way, students' education is interrupted. It's not fair to the kids; it's certainly not fair to the parents. We have said, on this side of the House, that parents, teachers and students have said to us that there has to be a better way to settle these collective agreements in the education sector, and I certainly agree with that. However, simply opening up the floodgates of taxpayers' money to say, "We will buy our way out of every problem," is exactly how the previous Liberal government and the previous NDP government got us into some of the funding problems that we have, and that was just as much of a threat to quality education as any strike is.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Minister, the last time your ministry did a review of a Windsor school board, your ministry had to acknowledge that the board was not given sufficient money to run that board.

I'm asking you to do a review in a similar fashion with the Windsor Catholic board, which is currently at an

impasse. We asked you weeks ago to replace the mediator, to get them talking again. You didn't even call to say, "How are you doing?" let alone, "Are we getting those students back in the classroom?"

I'm asking you very specifically. A review and audit, in my view, will show that you are underfunding our school boards. Secondly, we don't want our students being used as a political football for you to launch whatever your next education announcement might be. We want our students in our schools back in the classroom, and that means that you may well have to admit once again, with the Windsor board, that you have insufficiently funded our boards. I'm asking you to do an immediate review with our ministry staff, as you did last year, which resulted in millions more coming to our boards to run the classrooms. Minister, will you, at minimum, consider this audit for our school board?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We certainly agree with audits of school boards. The ministry made no such admission. The Windsor boards received money fairly and equitably, as all other boards do. There was no special treatment for the Windsor board; there was no special treatment for the Windsor Catholic board. That's the first thing.

Secondly, the Ministry of Labour has remained in contact with parties, is quite prepared to provide whatever assistance to settle these disputes. The only people who are playing political football with our students' education are those people who are not in schools doing what parents want them to do and that is to support our school system, to teach our kids, like many thousands of committed employees and teachers are indeed doing in many other schools across this province.

#### SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is for the Solicitor General. As we heard earlier in the House today, the province's sexual offender registry comes into effect today. I know that this is a top priority for many people across Ontario and certainly in my riding of Durham. Can the minister tell the House about this very important initiative.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** In order to protect communities from sexual predators, it is not enough to know who the predators are; you have to know where they are. Christopher's Law establishes a sex offender registry which is the first of its kind in Canada. The bill is named after Christopher Stephenson, who was murdered by a convicted pedophile who was out on statutory release.

Sexual offenders must register their whereabouts and a current photograph with the local police departments upon their release from custody and whenever they move addresses. For those who break the law, because it is the law, there are significant penalties: \$25,000 for the first offence and up to a one-year prison sentence; for the second and subsequent offence, up to \$25,000 and two years less a day.

On a personal note, it's very satisfying that in fact I introduced a private member's bill in 1992—

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

**Mr O'Toole:** I just want to take a moment to congratulate you as the Solicitor General on delivering on yet another promise. I would also like to thank you for a very comprehensive answer. Minister, I may be mistaken, but I have the impression that one of the recommendations of the jury in the Stephenson case was the formation of a national sex offender registry. It would appear from the press today and other comments that I've heard that there's something wrong here. Perhaps you could tell the House today just exactly what hasn't been done.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** The honourable member is exactly correct. As Christopher's father noted in today's press, "The federal government seems to have little interest in this issue." Despite the recommendations of the coroner's jury into the Christopher Stephenson death, they have not set up a national registry. The federal Liberals insist that CPIC, the Canadian Police Information Centre, is enough. I can tell you unequivocally that all of the police officers in this province and around the country have said, "No, it is not enough."

Our government is going to continue to press the federal government to move forward with a federal registry. But in the meantime, this is a valuable tool that our government has introduced in the defence of poor, innocent people who are victimized by sexual offenders.

1630

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. You will know that the expert panel chaired by Dr Peter George on health human resources submitted its report to your government in December 2000. On February 19, because you had not made it public, we submitted an FOI request to your ministry to try and obtain a copy of the document. We have never received a reply. In response, last week we filed an appeal with the Information and Privacy Commission to receive a copy of this important document.

Minister, northerners deserve to know what the George report said about an independent medical school in northern Ontario, so why won't you release this report?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. She asks it in good faith and deserves a good-faith answer. I recently became aware, moments before your question was asked, that this was in fact the situation. This is a situation that is new to my understanding. I can tell the honourable member and would like to tell this House that I understand a decision is imminent and that she and their caucus should be hearing shortly.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, thank you for that information. You've been the minister for some time and it's too bad that we've had to finally appeal to the privacy and information commission in order to get your attention.

Having said that, Minister, the problem is that your own figures recently released show that a record 120 physicians and 167 specialists are now needed in over 35 northern communities. Your government has done nothing, despite clause 12 in your agreement with the Ontario Medical Association signed last year, to introduce any new initiatives. Your government has not come forward despite a promise last May in Sudbury to introduce new initiatives to try and stem the loss of doctors from northern hospitals.

Minister, your government is spending \$65 million to recruit and retain in underserved areas, yet the shortage of doctors and specialists is getting worse by the day. Will you today on behalf of your government finally commit to establishing an independent medical school in northern Ontario so we can actually train doctors for where they are needed to both work and live?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Indeed, that is very similar to the representations that I and Minister Newman heard from the northern mayors we met with on April 11, as maybe the honourable member knows. I believe that meeting went very well. There was an opportunity to listen to the concerns of the mayors, and what I've been trying to do along with Minister Newman is get the points of view on the record and the solutions on the record from northerners themselves. I believe it's not only important to hear from expert panels quite frankly but to hear from citizens in Ontario. I have been in the midst of doing that and certainly will take your concerns under advisement as well.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** On Thursday morning of last week the member for Timiskaming-James Bay and myself were presented with over 1,300 petitions from a protest of 300 northerners who came down here to protest the divestiture of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. The petition reads:

"For nearly a century the Ontario Northland has fulfilled an admirable job as northern Ontario's development tool. Our communities, large and small, the businesses, the mines and mills, and the people who live, work and play or visit to the north have come to rely on the Ontario Northland to provide them with safe and efficient quality services.

"Freight rail transportation, passenger services, motor coach, marine, rail and hotel, leading edge communication technology are all vital to the future economic development of northeastern Ontario. The mayors and councils, the chamber of commerce, economic development officials, customers and employees alike are all

saying the same thing, 'The ONDC must be preserved and expanded and not parcelled out.'

"I wish to add my name to the growing number of people who want to see the re-inventing of the Ontario Northland in its continuing crown agency role in stimulating and supporting social and economic development in northern Ontario."

I'll add my name to this petition.

## CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition signed by 54 people who live in Peterborough. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commission's Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces and family resource centres."

I agree with the petitioners. I've affixed my signature to it.

## SEWAGE SLUDGE

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I'd like to introduce my page, John Trickett, who's a grade 7 student from Mother Teresa school in Courtice. He's going to take my petition to the table for me.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of the Durham riding have raised concerns over the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and other biosolids; and

"Whereas Bill 149 has been introduced by MPP John O'Toole to regulate the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and biosolids, including paper sludge; and

"Whereas Bill 149 would require that no person shall spread sewage sludge or other biosolids without a

certificate of approval or a provisional certificate of approval from the director;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 149 to amend the Environmental Protection Act and add the relevant section regarding the spreading and storage of sewage sludge."

I'm pleased to affix my name on their behalf.

#### WATER EXTRACTION

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

"Whereas we, the residents and cottagers of Bob's Lake, strenuously object to the permit issued by the Ministry of the Environment to OYMA Inc to remove 1.5 million litres of water per day from the Tay River without adequate assessment of the consequences and without adequate consultation with the public and those people and groups who have expertise and interest; and

"Whereas Bob's Lake and the Tay River watersheds are already highly stressed by the historic responsibility of Parks Canada to use Bob's Lake as a reservoir for the Rideau Canal; and

"Whereas the movement of water from the lake through the watershed for navigation purposes in the canal provides sufficient stress and problems for the lake, and this water-taking permit will only compound the stresses on the waterway;

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

"We request that this permit be rescinded until a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of water-taking by OYMA Inc on the environment, the water levels and the water needs of these communities is complete. An independent non-partisan body should undertake this evaluation."

I definitely will sign my name to this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 41 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

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

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### SCHOOL FACILITY

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** We have a serious situation in Nipigon in terms of the condition of St Edward's Catholic school. We need some capital funding from the minister. We've been campaigning for a long time to get it. I'd like to read a petition signed by hundreds of residents who are concerned parents and families and children.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas some of the children of St Edward's Catholic school in Nipigon, Ontario, are presently accommodated in a school facility that does not meet minimal building code requirements and minimal safety standards; and

"Whereas water is streaming through the foundation wall after a rain and during the spring thaw; and

"Whereas the children are breathing stale and musty air;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to allocate capital funds to the Superior North Catholic District School Board to construct a new school facility for the students of St Edward's Catholic school."

This is a very important issue. I trust the Minister of Education is listening, and I'm happy to sign my name to the petition.

1640

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the members of the Halton Handicapped Homeless Advocacy Group, are actively trying to increase the housing opportunities for intellectually handicapped individuals who are currently on a waiting list to receive residential housing.

"Within the city of Burlington, Ontario, there are 170 individuals on the waiting list. There are 40 individuals who are in dire need of residential housing today. In some family cases, these individuals are residing with their elderly and chronically ill parents, who are struggling to meet the increasing physical and emotional demands of their adult children. It is the hope of these families that housing be immediately secured.

"We are requesting that the Parliament of Ontario immediately provide a permanent place of residency for the individuals with a handicap to live. We are also making this request as it is equally profound that these families receive a sense of security to know that their loved ones will have a place to live once they are no longer here."

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

"Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

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

"That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Windsor-Essex, and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families or their agents."

I will sign this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 304 people:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors, and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

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

"To pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** During the off season, when the Conservatives were golfing, Gerry Loughheed Jr and Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care were out working. The petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I would like to thank Gerry Loughheed Jr and OSECC for garnering these 20,000 signatures.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I'm going to be happy to pass it on with Melissa. I welcome Melissa at Queen's Park.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit material in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors, and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

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

"To pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

It's my pleasure to affix my name to it.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and relates to the many school closures that my community is facing through the school boards.

"Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of many communities by closing hundreds of neighbourhood and community schools across Ontario;

"Whereas this massive number of school closings all at once will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes; and

"Whereas since 1997 Mike Harris has taken control of education funding and policy affecting students away from local communities;

"Whereas the funding formula set up by the government has unrealistic goals for occupancy, that has schools affected by the status of other schools that are far away from their students; and

"Whereas the funding arrangements by the government caused the premature and unnecessary closure of schools that are valuable to the surrounding community and to the development of the children they serve; and

"Whereas Mike Harris is pitting parent against parent and community against community in the fight to save local schools; and

"Whereas the closure of a school should be based on local decision-making and student population, with

enough time to consider all options, not complicated formulas aimed at quickly cutting money from the system;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to call on the Harris government to halt the closure of local schools in the province until fair funding rules can be established and it can be demonstrated that any closure will make the affected students better off.”

The signatures below—Carol DuPuis, Mike Frezell—many, many parents who are very dedicated to the lives of their children.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr John O’Toole (Durham):** It’s my pleasure to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit material in many commercial establishments; and

“Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit material;

“Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit material to minors;

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

“To immediately pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible.”

I am pleased to sign and endorse this important statement and to share it with Leonard, who is the page here today until May 4.

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas in 1998 the Mike Harris government forced hospitals in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Trenton, Ontario, to amalgamate into the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

“Whereas the fiscal management of each of the aforementioned hospitals prior to amalgamation was prudent, efficient and accountable to their communities;

“Whereas amalgamation and provincial government cutbacks have created a \$5-million deficit for the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

“Whereas any reduction in hospital and health care services in each of the aforementioned communities is completely unacceptable;

“Whereas this provincial government promised to ensure that the effect of amalgamation would not result in any reduction of health care or hospital services;

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

“Instruct Premier Mike Harris and Health Minister Tony Clement to provide enough funding to the Quinte Healthcare Corp that will cover the projected \$5-million deficit and ensure that quality health care and hospital

services in the long term will continue in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Quinte West.”

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I move, seconded by Ted Arnott, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us.

#### 1650

Before I begin I’d like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Waterloo-Wellington.

It is my pleasure to stand for the first time in this House on behalf of the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka and move the motion for the adoption of the address by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. I stand before the second session of the 37th Parliament with the highest sense of honour and responsibility. I am humbled by the confidence shown in me by the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka in the by-election just over a month ago. The support they demonstrated for me is also support for this government and the actions it has taken to get our riding and Ontario back on track. I can say with confidence that the electorate in Parry Sound-Muskoka supports the plan for a brighter future that was articulated by Her Honour in the speech from the throne.

Parry Sound-Muskoka is a large riding, made up of the diverse and varied views of more than 80,000 people. As their MPP, my goal is to be accountable to and available for each of them. It is my sincere hope that I am able to serve the riding with the same dedication and commitment as those who were elected before me, most of whom, I might add, sat as members of Conservative governments.

My predecessor, Ernie Eves, has a record of loyal public service that spans two decades as MPP for Parry Sound and then for Parry Sound-Muskoka. His contribution to our riding, to this government and indeed to the entire province is evident in the many advances we enjoy at home and across this province. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ernie for ensuring economic prosperity for all of the people of this province today and in the future.

My friend—and my lawyer—Bill Grimmett, who sat with many in this House, worked hard for the people of Muskoka-Georgian Bay, always putting the needs of his constituents first. Many others, like Ali Johnston, Robert

Boyer, Lorne Maeck, Ken Black and Dan Waters have set a precedent for public service that I strive to achieve.

My greatest inspiration is a man who represented the Muskoka riding with distinction and sat in this Legislature for 15 years. That man was my father. Through his dedication to family and to all the people he served, he taught me the commitment and caring it takes to be a strong representative. I am proud of the contribution he made to Ontario and I am especially proud to have this opportunity to serve as he did.

Those of you present realize it is not an easy task to give a major speech following the Lieutenant Governor's important address. I said during the recent campaign that I was not a politician or a public speaker. Today, I can safely say I am only one of these. So in preparing for this speech I looked to the words of many, including the Hansard of my father's maiden speech, given under similar circumstances in March 1972.

I noted that during his speech there were many interjections by the former member for Sudbury East, Mr Martel. Mr Speaker, let me say that I look forward to that kind of lively exchange with his daughter, the member for Nickel Belt—a second-generation debate.

In fact, I look forward to getting to know and working with members on both sides of this House. We are all here to make this province a better place for the people we represent. To paraphrase my father: the quality of the government is the sum total of the individual members' ability. Men and women of goodwill, common sense and ability are to be found in all three parties. It just so happens that the most people with these admirable traits happen to be of the same political persuasion as the Premier.

Proudly, I too sit as a member of the Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Mike Harris. I am fortunate to represent what I believe is the most vibrant and desirable area of the province. The rugged beauty of Parry Sound-Muskoka, as captured in the paintings of the Group of Seven, is renowned worldwide.

Throughout history, our natural resources and the resourcefulness of our people have combined to create a unique balance of industry and environmental protection that has served to make Parry Sound-Muskoka a riding of enterprise and opportunity. Our lakes and trees have been the source of much of this development. In 1894, our region was one of the first in Ontario to generate hydroelectric power for municipal use. Our forefathers pioneered methods of floating logs to mills and markets that expanded and improved the lumber industry. We supplied ships for the war effort and wooden boats that are still valued and collected across the continent. We built shipyards, homes and businesses, but most importantly, we built a foundation for a prosperous future.

Since 1858, when the first bridge was built across the Severn River to open up the settlement road, Parry Sound and Muskoka have been more than just popular vacation destinations; they have played an important role in the building of a nation. We welcomed people from England, Europe and Iceland, and were the gateway to the west as

settlers travelled by land across Muskoka and then by ship from Parry Sound to western Canada.

There were many, however, who recognized the natural beauty and the potential of our area and chose to stay. My ancestors were among those who settled there. Five generations of my family have called our region home. Proudly, I too chose to make it home, and I am committed to ensuring that my children and their children will have the same choice to stay in Parry Sound-Muskoka.

This government has done a great deal to improve the quality of life in our area and to create opportunities today for generations to come. In the words of Her Honour, "Since 1995, the government's plan to improve the lives of Ontario families has been consistent and clear. The plan is to strengthen the economy by cutting taxes, reducing red tape and eliminating barriers to economic growth." In Parry Sound-Muskoka, we are seeing the benefits of this plan.

In Thursday's speech, our government's commitment to preserving Ontario's rugged beauty and protecting its rich natural resources was reiterated. While that is an important priority for all of Ontario, it is especially important in Parry Sound-Muskoka, where tourism and reliance on natural qualities is our lifeblood. Tourism is a natural business for Parry Sound-Muskoka. It is our main industry, and we are the second-largest tourist destination in Canada. The government has encouraged the growth of that industry in our area. It has supported tourism marketing efforts, helped fund infrastructure improvements and, most importantly, created a business environment that has allowed people and businesses to succeed. I worked in this industry for the past 23 years, and the year 2000 was the best in that time.

As the link between northern Ontario and the south, our roads support an enormous volume of traffic. The volume increases in the summer months as visitors come to cottage country. The four-laning of highways 69 and 11 currently underway will improve safety, widen the gateways to the north and help the tourism sector by increasing accessibility to our region.

This government's Smart Growth vision announced on Thursday will help to sustain the important balance between industry and the environment that will ensure we maintain the beauty that makes Parry Sound-Muskoka unique and, at the same time, grow our economy.

The northern Ontario heritage fund has benefited our riding through investments in infrastructure like water and sewer projects, community centres, roads and bridges. The doubling of the fund to \$60 million annually opens up further opportunities for municipalities in our region to access assistance for priority projects. Northern Ontario heritage fund investment helped bring a natural gas pipeline to Parry Sound. This has been a huge benefit for local industries like Georgian Bay Forest Products, which I toured in the campaign.

Despite opposition from the parties across the floor, this government recognizes the unique challenges faced across our electoral district and recently made Muskoka

part of northern Ontario. This enabled the township of Muskoka Lakes to apply for funding to make its arena wheelchair-accessible, and it allowed the town of Gravenhurst to apply for funding for its wharf project. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has opened an office in Huntsville. I met with Bracebridge town officials last week, and they said how helpful the staff in this new office has been to them.

1700

Our government has made health care a priority across Parry Sound-Muskoka through the expansion and modernization of our hospitals and investments in ambulance services, nursing stations and long-term-care facilities. The reopening of the health centre in Burk's Falls, the new hospital planned for Parry Sound, the recently opened wing at the Bracebridge hospital, the new day-care surgery unit announced last month for Huntsville and the opening of 30 new long-term-care beds which I attended on Saturday would not have been possible without our government's support.

Health care reform is a large and complex undertaking, especially as technology changes and our population ages. This government has worked hard to ensure that the health care services provided to Ontarians are relevant and accessible, both for today and into the future.

As was pointed out by Her Honour, health care spending is currently 44% of total program spending and will increase to 60% of the Ontario government's operating budget if it continues to increase at the current rate. I support the government in its efforts to make spending in health care more accountable.

As the father of four children in Ontario's public education system—two in elementary school and two in high school—I support more flexibility and choice for parents, teachers and principals to do what is best for students.

Excellence among teachers, leadership by principals and the influence of parents do make a difference. My children have great teachers, are learning a lot, and I support our government's initiative to encourage school boards to reward high-performing teachers and principals.

As many of you know, the recent labour dispute between the Near North board of education and the support workers' union has recently been sent to arbitration. After a difficult month, school has resumed for thousands of children in the Parry Sound and Nipissing districts.

I support the many concerned parents who contacted me throughout the strike and their belief that school boards and their employees should ensure that the best interests of our children are always a top priority and that the closure of schools be avoided at all costs.

As a government, we will continue to make the investments and decisions necessary to give our children the best education possible and ensure they have the tools they need to succeed.

But only a strong economy allows us to invest in those priorities like health care and education. This is central to my beliefs and it is why I chose to run as a Progressive Conservative to represent the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka. Removing barriers to economic growth is essential to our government's plan and will go a long way to improving the standard of living and creating opportunities now and for future generations.

When my father gave his maiden speech in 1972, Ontario enjoyed the lowest personal income tax rate in Canada. You will recall that subsequent Liberal and NDP governments believed that taxes went only one way, and that was up, so they increased taxes time and time again until we in Ontario went from being the lowest-taxed jurisdiction in the country to being the highest. No matter how hard people worked, they were taking home less and less. Jobs were lost, welfare rolls swelled and families struggled to make ends meet.

Since 1995, the Mike Harris government has taken aggressive action to give hard-working Ontarians a break and get this province back on track by leading all other governments in tax cuts. Since 1995, more than 2,750 people have moved off welfare and into the workforce in Parry Sound-Muskoka. That is a drop in welfare cases of over 70%.

This past Saturday, while flipping pancakes with the Premier in Powassan, I had first-hand experience of this success. I met a constituent on the main street and he said, "Mike Harris is a good guy. He helped me out. I was unemployed and he helped me get my A licence through the work-for-welfare program, and I now have a job."

Our government's plan will continue to give people a hand up, not a handout, and create more jobs in our riding and across Ontario.

Just as this government's policies have made a positive difference for the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka since 1995, the plan announced in the throne speech last week will further assist in creating jobs and opportunities for people who live there, by continuing to honour its tax cut pledge, by further eliminating red tape for small business, by ensuring sustainable health care and quality education, by providing additional support for economic growth in rural Ontario and the north. Our plan will protect the gains that we have made over the last six years and set the stage for an even brighter future.

I dedicate myself to the goals of this government, shared by the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka: excellence in education, quality health care, the dignity that comes from a job, a high standard of living and hope and opportunity for all.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Further debate.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** It is an honour and a privilege to rise in this historic chamber this afternoon on behalf of my constituents and second the motion that graciously receives Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's speech from the throne. At the outset, I want to indicate that I'll be sharing my time with

my friend the member for Mississauga South, and I wish to thank my executive assistant here at Queen's Park, Andrew Juby, who has helped me organize my thoughts for presentation this afternoon.

I am pleased to second the motion made by our newest member, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, and I want to offer him hearty congratulations on his election victory and welcome him to this House. I was pleased to spend some time during the by-election to show my support for the member. I know that he is very well regarded by the people he's privileged to represent and he has the honour of following a very strong tradition of representation for that area, notably his father, former Premier Frank Miller, and our former Deputy Premier and Treasurer, my friend Ernie Eves.

In speaking to last Thursday's throne speech, which had as its theme 21 steps to the 21st century, I would like to make the end our beginning for my constituents in the great riding of Waterloo-Wellington, for it is in the 21st and final step referenced in the throne speech that this government commits to an enhanced role for MPPs and so recognizes the solemn obligation each MPP has to represent the needs, hopes and best interests of his or her constituents.

In my view, one of the fundamental principles that guide and motivate the changes that we are making is that a government in a modern, pluralistic democracy rarely, if ever, knows better than the citizens that it represents. We must listen and act upon the advice of our informed citizenry—our constituents who sent us here.

Since 1995 we have streamlined government and brought back fiscal responsibility and accountability. We did it because we know that's how the average family in Ontario lives and that is how they expect their government to operate and those are the principles of a government that serves the public, not itself.

Enhancing the role of MPPs is therefore a positive step toward realizing this goal: that point where government doesn't fully intrude so far into its agenda that it is not heeding the guidance and wisdom on an ongoing basis of the people that each member of provincial Parliament represents.

I am very privileged to represent a riding that is as blessed with a strong history, tremendous geography and a diversity of people and industry as is Waterloo-Wellington. Without a doubt, it is the people of my riding who are my greatest resource in doing my job as an MPP. Their advice and encouragement inspires me to work hard on their behalf and to fight for them when it's necessary to do so, whether it be from the opposition benches or from the government benches. I have taken note of their concerns about government debt, quality health care and education and the need to protect the environment and make our communities safe.

Whether at a council meeting in Wellesley township, a doughnut shop in Elmira, the chamber of commerce in Kitchener-Waterloo or after I've attended church in Fergus, I find the advice I receive from my constituents to be filled with infinite wisdom. It is with the advice of

my constituents, through direct discussion and surveys of their opinion, that I endeavour to raise constructive ideas within the government caucus, with the Premier and with the cabinet, ideas which originate from the values so abundant in our riding, values of honesty, family, love, compassion for others and a strong work ethic, the values that built Waterloo-Wellington, that built our province and that built our country, timeless values we must forever embrace, for they are the reference point for our continued efforts to build a better province with opportunity for all—for the single mother in New Hamburg struggling to give her child a better life; for the senior citizens on fixed incomes who worry about their health and the escalating cost of living; for the crippled person in a wheelchair who can't get into an old public building because it doesn't have a ramp; for the farmer who faces low commodity prices for his crops and an unsympathetic banker; for the teacher who is sick and tired of the fight between her union and the government because she just wants to teach kids; for the small business person struggling 16 hours a day and struggling to survive; for the university student working part-time to pay tuition while studying; for the infant baby born in Kitchener tonight whose parents lack the skills they need to give her the best possible start in life; for the alcoholic living in a cardboard box on a street in Toronto who needs a hand up. We must never overlook these people and write them off because they may not have voted for us. For if we do, our claim to be the rightful governing party in Ontario is diminished and we betray those timeless values I mentioned a moment ago.

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But reconciling the competing interests in Ontario's politics is never easy. We must balance our program spending with the ability of the beleaguered taxpayer to foot the bill, such that our tax levels are stimulating economic growth and progress, not retarding it. Returning to deficit financing and adding to our accumulated debt in good economic times is simply not an option. This is why I continue to call upon the government to commit itself to a concrete, long-term debt repayment plan with five-year interim targets. I have repeatedly raised this idea since this House passed my private member's resolution on this subject. Members may recall that resolution, which passed with support from all three parties in late 1997.

I was encouraged when our party's 1999 election platform included a commitment to a \$2-billion payment against the debt—encouraged but not wholly satisfied. I continue to insist that debt repayment must be taken more seriously by the provincial government. This commitment was increased in the last budget to a \$5-billion debt retirement payment during this term of office. I believe the government's commitment to begin to pay down the debt was made with some understanding that it is sound fiscal policy to pay back what we owe and that we must address the huge financial burden we are passing along to our children and grandchildren through a \$112-billion provincial debt.

My constituents in Waterloo-Wellington are astounded by the fact that interest charges on Ontario's debt now cost more than funding for Ontario's hospitals, and they want to know that the government is taking long-range steps to eliminate this enormous fiscal burden we inherited from previous administrations. In my 1999 survey of Waterloo-Wellington residents, close to two thirds of my constituents who responded said that paying down the debt should be the government's number one fiscal priority, far ahead of tax cuts. Consistent with their ethics on economic responsibility, they believe that during good economic times you pay down what you owe, period.

The speech from the throne recognizes their principles in that regard by making paying down the debt a higher priority, and I know they will be more confident about Ontario's fiscal integrity in the future when the government puts in place a concrete, long-term plan to eliminate the debt. We're hopeful that such a plan will be outlined in the provincial budget on May 9.

We in Waterloo-Wellington understand as well the crucial importance of attracting investment that creates new jobs, and we know that corporations and capital can bail out as easily as they buy in. The global economy is more mobile and competitive than it has ever been, and it's our duty to continue to create as competitive a tax structure as we possibly can.

To attract high-quality, high-paying jobs in industries that grow, we also have to implement strategies for economic development that strengthen our regional economies for the long term. In discussing strong and wise economic leadership that works to encourage the creation of sustainable jobs, I look back to 1991. I had been an MPP for about a year at that time, and a new approach to economic development was emerging for our nation's leaders. I first learned of this theory from a study conducted for the federal government, called *Canada at the Crossroads: The Reality of a New Competitive Environment*. This report, headed up by Michael Porter, a professor of business administration at Harvard University, identified weaknesses in economic development policies and put forth a new direction to build strong regional economies by fostering strong interdependent business clusters. Up to that point, the most popular economic development strategy was known as diversification, which we've all heard of, which simply tried to locate all types of businesses everywhere, regardless of whether the network or geography existed to support them. We were uncompetitive, while the economies around the world were coming together in a globally oriented marketplace. We were missing job-creating opportunities.

Porter illustrated this weakness by looking at the automotive industry in Ontario. Although Ontario had a considerable number of jobs in that sector, we had a noticeable scarcity in supply industries that would sustain and keep the auto plants competitive. To me, this meant that jobs not sustained by a strong network would always be at risk. If things didn't change, those jobs could easily be moved elsewhere in the world. The solution was to

develop clusters in a competitive environment that enabled industries to flourish as part of the network. In this way, a region's potentialities are transformed into goals because they become competitive advantages.

Something else happened in the 1990s in our part of Ontario: Honda set up an assembly plant in Alliston, and Toyota located in Cambridge. Since then, working partnerships with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, where I formerly served for about three and a half years as parliamentary assistant, have helped to encourage the supply-line industries that are flourishing as a part of a broader cluster that is poised for an even stronger future.

Last year in Elmira we celebrated the opening of YM Technologies, a supplier for Honda. In Palmerston we broke ground for the building of TG Minto, a parts supplier for the Toyota plant in Cambridge. Auto parts plants are running strong throughout our area. We have Musashi in Arthur, Jefferson Elora in Elora, and Long Manufacturing in Mount Forest, as well as Denso in Guelph, all of which have opened in the past five or six years.

Whether we look at the high-tech or automotive industries, our clusters are gaining momentum. The supply-line industries are growing, jobs are being created and those jobs are high-paying and more sustainable because they are more competitive. We need to continue to build upon regional economic strengths and potential strengths for the future in order to protect our jobs and create the new jobs we want to see created.

The throne speech makes reference to measures which are aimed at making government work better for the people it serves. This is also a key part of our pro-growth strategy. My constituents expect value for their tax dollars and understand that wise management and allocation of those dollars can create better results, more of the services they were intended to provide and a government that serves the public well because it is lean and efficient.

The government is augmenting this effort by signalling its intent to strike a task force to examine the appropriate role and place for government, looking at the services we need to deliver, and may in some instances suggest we should divest ourselves from providing services that might be more appropriately delivered by private companies in a competitive environment. It is my hope that this task force will hear good advice and strengthen the outlook for our government and how it contributes to the province's quality of life.

When I think of the need for the government to re-examine its appropriate functions, I can currently see no more appropriate a case study than that of the Conestoga dam, located in my riding. Described recently in the *Globe and Mail* as one of Ontario's largest dams, the Conestoga dam controls waterflow for the Conestoga River and the Grand River, affecting the water supply and water quality for the people in the region of Waterloo and the city of Brantford. The gates on this dam, which are normally opened and closed to control waterflow, are broken, and somewhere between \$1.2 million and \$1.5

million is needed to repair them. Without repairs there is a risk of a major catastrophe.

In the spring the dam controls the excess water to prevent flooding. Without the needed repairs the dam could fail, resulting in a catastrophic flash flood in which lives most likely would be lost.

In the summer, when the waterflow is low, the dam gates are opened to raise the levels and cleanse the water downstream. If there is a drought, which we have experienced as we know in recent years, drinking water that we take for granted could become dangerous.

Granted, these are worst-case scenarios. But they are identified as realistic by the engineers and leaders of the Grand River Conservation Authority, and I take them seriously and continue to advocate on their behalf. They, along with municipalities I am representing, have a well-founded belief that it is the province's role to be a major partner in paying for the needed repairs to those gates to make absolutely certain that these worst-case scenarios never happen. I support their position.

I have appreciated the opportunity to discuss this matter with the Premier, in a private meeting I had with him in February, and with our government caucus. I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources for meeting with representatives of the Grand River Conservation Authority for further discussions. The minister also participated in a more recent follow-up meeting that I arranged with David Lindsay, President and CEO of the SuperBuild Corp, again with the conservation authority's representatives.

Our position on this matter is clear: the province of Ontario cannot abdicate its responsibility to assist conservation authorities in necessary flood-control projects. It is of the utmost importance to the riding of Waterloo-Wellington, and I will continue to raise this issue until it is satisfactorily resolved.

The throne speech is clear on another matter. It highlighted the fact that the government is working to improve the quality of life for all our citizens and in all our regions. I am pleased that this includes an effort to promote economic development in regions that have not yet shared in the prosperity that much of the province has enjoyed since 1995, such as parts of rural Ontario and northern Ontario.

**1720**

I think this also grants us an opportunity to express our appreciation to our farm families. They provide us with a high-quality, safe and nutritious food product at affordable prices and an excellent quality of life in our communities, in my riding and throughout the province.

Many grains and oilseeds farmers have faced the possibility of being thrown out of business by global market forces beyond their control, including rich subsidies in the United States and Europe. I met with and listened to farm leaders from our farm organizations and I firmly supported getting their concerns on to the government's agenda.

I want to commend the new Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for his leadership and for the fact

that the Ontario government has contributed significantly more safety net funding for grains and oilseeds than we normally would be obligated to do under the conventional funding formula.

The throne speech also addresses new opportunities for improvement in the field of education, where we wish to empower local educators with more flexibility on what materials they use to teach and providing parents with greater school choice. These goals should complement each other by raising accountability and ultimately the quality of the education our children receive. Continuing improvement in education is not a luxury. In a highly competitive world it is a necessity. That is why I was very encouraged by the proposal to encourage boards to reward our finest teachers and principals.

In my 1999 Keeping in Touch newsletter survey I posed a question including all the pros and cons of performance-based pay for teachers. My constituents were very supportive of performance pay for teachers. Almost two thirds of the respondents indicated support for rewarding our best teachers through pay for performance. I shared this information with the Premier and our caucus, and from the Premier's response it was very clear that he was very receptive and supportive of my constituents' views on this matter.

Along with measures that enhance the quality of education, the government is also committed to restoring the full educational experience or what are known as extracurricular activities. I believe that this can be done, but it can only be done with a reasonable compromise on both sides: by the teachers' federations and by the government.

Last year I spoke as forcefully as I could within caucus to encourage a reasonable compromise that would hopefully lead to the resumption of extracurricular activities. I suggested that Bill 74 be amended if teachers' unions agreed to resume the extracurricular activities that they had formerly led and organized and if they stopped using the withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of extracurricular activities as a bargaining chip. The government responded by deciding not to proclaim the section of Bill 74 which would have made these after-school activities a mandatory job requirement for teachers as a gesture of goodwill.

Last month, the Advisory Group on Co-Instructional Activities finished its report, which I understand is subject to further study. I am hopeful that the group's advice will have a positive bearing on the effort to resolve the standoff.

It is my belief that a mediator is needed, someone with whom both sides may invest their trust, to work through recommendations from the advisory group or lay out a new course for a solution.

Last week I wrote to the Premier and copied the Minister of Education to suggest that the government ask our former Premier, the Honourable William G. Davis, to serve in an intermediary capacity aimed at restoring a full educational experience, including extracurricular activities, for Ontario students and the requisite positive environment for all concerned. If Mr Davis is unable to

serve, perhaps Dr Bette Stephenson, our former Deputy Premier, might be prepared to do so, or some other person who has the respect and confidence of both parties to this dispute. I have offered this suggestion in the full knowledge that my constituents believe that we need to resolve this problem in the interests of students and end the war of words which is counterproductive to creating the quality education system that children need and deserve.

Ontario's children deserve the best. The commitment to build upon programs like the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children initiative will improve the prospects of more of Ontario's most vulnerable children. The Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program is helping families in my riding ensure that their children reach their full potential, and I look forward to enhanced services through the proposed early years centres that were referenced in the throne speech.

In 1998, the Legislature debated and passed my resolution which was aimed at highlighting this initiative and supporting the former health minister in her effort to make wise investments which will lead to better health outcomes in the.

Following my resolution's passage, the next provincial budget committed the government to increase the funding for Healthy Babies, Healthy Children by fivefold, from \$10 million annually to \$50 million annually. This year, the budget for this program was further increased to \$67 million a year, enabling us to help more families better and longer.

A healthy beginning in life is crucial and so is strong development throughout childhood. That is why the Ontario's Promise program is, in my opinion, potentially the single most significant initiative that our government has undertaken since we were re-elected about two years ago. I say this because, like President John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps idea, Ontario's Promise has the potential to light the fire of idealism and spirit of service throughout an entire generation of young people, benefiting our province for many years to come.

Ontario's Promise was launched in Toronto last fall by the Premier of Ontario and the Honourable Margaret Marland, minister responsible for children. I was privileged to be there as well as one of the towering world figures of our time, retired US General Colin Powell, endorsed our plan to bring businesses, non-profit agencies serving children, community leaders, parents and individuals together to make and keep five promises to the province's young people. This is what Ontario's Promise is all about: building partnerships for children and youth and making commitments to them that we keep.

The heart of Ontario's Promise is a set of five basic interlocking, mutually reinforcing promises. Essentially, we promise to connect every child in Ontario with the minimum requirements they need to grow up into confident, capable and contributing adult members of our society.

These are the five promises: first, a healthy start; second, an ongoing relationship with a caring adult—a

parent, mentor, tutor, coach or other responsible grown-up who is willing to take an interest in a child; third, a safe place with structured activities during non-school hours; fourth, marketable skills through an effective education; and fifth, an opportunity to give back through community service. By learning the satisfaction of serving others, young people can also learn to value themselves.

In my recent address to the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, I appealed to business leaders to get involved, to encourage their employees to get involved, and to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of Ontario's children. I would like to suggest again, having raised this subject in the Legislature last fall, that all members support Ontario's Promise in any way that you can.

As the government looks ahead to how it can ensure that all people have access to high-quality health care, it is important to acknowledge strong leadership that has brought us to this vantage point. I want to acknowledge the vision and leadership of the former health minister, the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, who laid the groundwork for the greater efficiencies that are to be realized even as patient care has been improved. Our health dollars are spent as wisely as possible, and we have seen an unprecedented expansion of health care services in the province of Ontario. The health portfolio is, in my view, the single most challenging and difficult position in the cabinet. I wish the new minister the very best in his role in dealing with the challenges that await him as further efficiencies are found.

The Ontario Hospital Association president, David MacKinnon, was last week quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, "Hospitals have deficits because they are serving more people who are ill, not because of irresponsible spending." To a substantial degree, I agree with Mr MacKinnon's statement. This is one of the perspectives the new minister must confront. In reality, there are increasing demands being placed on hospitals which must be met. At the same time, there should be no blank cheque in the system, and the taxpayers expect a streamlined health care system that is as affordable as it is widely available.

I am strongly supportive of the call in the throne speech to move toward a national dialogue on restoring the 50-50 funding principle on which medicare was founded in the 1960s. Members may recall that I brought forward a resolution in 1999 calling for a full restoration of the funds that the federal government had cut from health care. In practical terms, it called for a restoration of the funding cut through the Canada health and social transfers since 1994-95, as well as establishing the need for an escalator clause to ensure that funding increases will keep pace with increasing costs. That position was championed by the former health minister and was eventually adopted as policy by all of the provincial governments of Canada.

**1730**

A year and a week ago, this Legislature passed my resolution with support from all parties and, in the fall of

2000, on the very eve of a federal election, the government of Canada came forward with a partial restoration of their cuts to health care and social services.

Canadians expect the federal government to provide an appropriate and responsible level of support for health care. While the partial restoration of the Canada health and social transfer is appreciated, it has by no means closed this file.

In 1994-95, the federal share for health and social services in Ontario was 18 cents on the dollar. Even with the partial restoration of funding previously cut, today the federal share of health and social services in Ontario is a miserly 13 cents on the dollar. Clearly, more needs to be done to restore a fair apportionment of health costs between the provinces and the government of Canada.

The federal government was wise to name a former Premier of Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow, who I think all of us respect, to head a commission on the future of medicare. However, Ontario's system cannot wait until the end of the year 2002 when the commission is expected to conclude its deliberations.

As I conclude, I will end with a new beginning on behalf of my constituents in Waterloo-Wellington and mention how pleased I was last month to have been named as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment. I am thrilled with the new challenges that lie ahead as we move forward, and I hope to contribute in a positive way to a vision of an Ontario that is a world leader in the sustainable protection of our environment, where the ministry and the whole government act as a guardian, promoting better human health through practices which guarantee the best possible ways of protecting our air, our water and our land. These, I believe, are important steps to take if we are to uphold Ontario as the best place to live, work and raise a family now and for future generations.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just to clarify, although this is extraordinarily unusual, under our new rules it is permitted that the time be split during this section of the debate. Normally in the past we just had the speech moved and seconded, but now we are permitting more speakers.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I do realize it is unusual, Mr Speaker. I was very pleased to be asked to speak in this debate, and I consider it a privilege and an honour because of the fact that this throne speech does indeed bring us into the 21st century with a great deal of hope and promise.

First of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague Norm Miller, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. I welcome this member as a colleague in our caucus. As I said to him after his speech a few minutes ago, my maiden speech also was the privilege of moving the throne speech. However, the outcome of my motion became quite historic actually because I moved the throne speech in 1985, at which time the Conservatives had 52 seats and the Liberals had 48 seats and, with the help of the New Democratic Party, of course the Conservative Party, after 42 years as the government of

this beautiful province, was actually defeated. My colleague Norm Miller doesn't have that concern or worry, because now this government, and indeed this party, this marvellous PC Party of Ontario, is of course into the first six years of their next 42 years of government in this province.

I also feel it's a privilege to follow my colleague Ted Arnott, the member for Waterloo-Wellington. I believe if there is one member in the Legislature of all three parties who is totally direct, objective, honest and fair about the representations of his constituents in this Legislature, it has always been my colleague and friend Ted Arnott.

What a difficult job this is that we all share, on all sides of the House, as elected representatives. But also what an honour it is for us to be in this place. I say simply that I can't believe now that I'm in my 17th year in this chamber, that here I am again speaking with the opportunity that we are given in debate in this place in the interests of the people we serve. I say simply to all my colleagues that the moment we forget why we're here, we lose and don't deserve to retain the faith and trust that the electorate put in our responsibility as elected members.

I say that, frankly, whether we are in the opposition—because surely I know; I served in opposition for 10 years, but I recognize that more than anything else we are successful in terms of the future of this province whatever role we play, and I mean that very sincerely. As opposition members we have a very serious role to play and of course it goes without saying that as government members that responsibility is enormous.

When I look back at this throne speech, which I had the pleasure of reading over the weekend, I think about where we are today in Ontario and the fact that for now into our sixth year we have had a Premier in this province with tremendous vision and frankly tremendous courage. It has not been an easy journey. It has frankly not been a job that I think any of us has envied. Yet Premier Mike Harris has been solely the captain of this ship and he has had that courage to make the most difficult decisions that needed to be made at this point in our history when we became the government in 1995.

What a tremendous achievement that was, because we were 20 members in a caucus sitting as third party; we went from 20 members to 82 members as government. Frankly, I give the success of that achievement to all of those who have worked very hard for this party and this province and particularly the 20 members of that caucus from 1990 to 1995, wonderfully endorsed by the actions, the leadership and the policy that was developed by our party, which Premier Mike Harris led us to victory with.

I may say that I don't think anyone realizes what great personal cost there is to that kind of dedicated service. Certainly this Premier is no exception in terms of the situations he has had to endure from time to time, as my colleagues in cabinet do from time to time, when issues become the focus of a great deal of concern in the province, because change is not easy. To make the right decisions, and again I say to have the courage to make

the changes, is a strength in a leader above all other strengths that is needed. In this Premier, Mike Harris, we have such a person.

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I also would like to say that I have felt very honoured to have had the opportunity to serve in the cabinet of Premier Mike Harris for the last three and a half years. It was indeed a wonderful experience after my, at that point, I suppose, almost 24 years in elected public office. To be appointed as Ontario's first ever minister responsible for children opened for me personally and for everyone who was part of our team within our caucus, within cabinet, and certainly within our staff, truly an opportunity to make a difference for the future of our children in Ontario. My deepest hope is that those programs which we initiated will blossom and expand and, as my colleague the member for Waterloo-Wellington has said, grow successfully to be the solution for the children and youth in Ontario. Certainly Ontario's Promise and the early years program obviously are two programs that I personally feel very passionate about because we see in those programs a future for children in Ontario that indeed is different from the future they had before.

The children and youth of this province deserve to have a future of security and hope and opportunity. I know that, as this government continues its commitment to children and youth, that will happen. I feel very assured about that.

I would like to briefly say that, as the member for Mississauga South, it's very exciting when we talk about job creation in terms of our local ridings. We have this incredible number today of 822,000 new jobs in this province that have come here and are now a fact of the last six years of our government. Frankly, I was very thrilled when we called to find out how many of those jobs were in Mississauga South.

Mississauga South actually is not a riding that is full of commerce and industry and business, but we still, in that number of years since 1995, have had new or expanded businesses which have created over 2,000 jobs just in our riding alone. I look at Astra Zeneca, 500 new jobs; Petro-Canada, 200 new jobs; Bodycote Ortech, 200 jobs that were retained when Ortech was sold; MFP Financial Services, which is equipment leasing, 100 new jobs; the Waterside Inn, which is a brand new hotel in Mississauga South, 150 new jobs. The Waterside Inn is very interesting because it's actually owned by Dr Bill James and his wife Astride.

Electrofuel is a new manufacturer of rechargeable batteries, 150 new jobs; an expansion of the Xerox development centre, 20 new jobs; Adamson Associates, architects, 50 new jobs; Toronto Fabricating, a cast metal manufacturer, 20 new jobs; Cancom Communications Satellite, actually a company the Premier and I had the opportunity to visit not very long ago—they are the main company for satellite communications in—100 new jobs in Mississauga South. Of course Orion Bus Industries had an expansion when they moved into the riding, and they have 250 new jobs. Finally, Royal Laser Tech, on

Lakeshore Road, is a new manufacturer of laser metal cutting—300 new jobs.

That has happened because of the climate our government has created, the fact that we amended those labour laws that stifled investment in this province, the fact that we have been able to create an environment that has encouraged investment in business and commerce and industry in Ontario. I'm very proud of the fact that that has turned around to the point where in the last two years Ontario's economy outperformed that of each G7 nation. Can you imagine that kind of achievement? We are proud of the fact that that has happened during our first five years as government.

When we're looking at caring about people, the people who live and work and raise families in Ontario, the other number I think is very significant is that we're moving up very quickly to almost 600,000 people who are no longer in the cycle of dependency on welfare. Six hundred thousand people is slightly less than the population of Mississauga. When I drive around Mississauga and look at the growth, development and jobs and the employees-wanted ads in store windows and office buildings and so forth, I think, yes, we have given those people who previously were on welfare an opportunity to live lives that give them their own self-esteem, the opportunity for their children to have parents who work like other parents do. There really isn't a better legacy we can leave these children and youth than to have parents who are role models with a work ethic because, again, we had the courage to change the direction of welfare dependency in this province.

I know I am just about out of time. I want to end by saying that I know we have this tremendous crisis ahead of us in terms of the increasing cost of health care. I saw the numbers in this throne speech in terms of the percentage of growth we are going to be faced with—27% in the last five years and a 19% increase in the next two years alone.

As a recipient of \$30,000 or \$40,000—I don't know how much open-heart surgery costs in this province, but as a recipient of life-saving surgery two years ago, I know first-hand that we have a world-class health care system in this province, and I know that with the increasing costs associated with the growing number and percentage of our population that is aging, we will also have to make some very difficult decisions there. When we make the decisions, it will only be for the reason to guarantee that there will always be universal access for patients in this province, no matter where they live or who they are. Certainly when I was in the hospital, I was thrilled to find that everyone who was there appreciated the fact that they had the opportunity, in 1999, to have access to that kind of life-saving remedy.

While this is all ahead of us, I frankly have tremendous conviction and satisfaction and confidence that the future of this province, through the 21-step plan in the throne speech, is secure because of the leadership of this caucus and this Premier in Ontario today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the motion carry? Carried.

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

*The House adjourned at 1751.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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