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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Monday 25 June 2001

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 25 juin 2001

**Standing committee on
justice and social policy**

Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001

**Comité permanent de la
justice et des affaires sociales**

**Loi de 2001 sur la sécurité
des cavaliers**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Monday 25 June 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA JUSTICE
ET DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES

Lundi 25 juin 2001

*The committee met at 1556 in room 151.*HORSE RIDING SAFETY ACT, 2001
LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ
DES CAVALIERS

Consideration of Bill 12, An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders / Projet de loi 12, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des cavaliers.

The Vice-Chair (Mr Carl DeFaria): When the committee adjourned last week, we were discussing the Liberal amendment to subsection 2(5). I understand there will be some position from the Liberal side on whether the amendment is going to be withdrawn or not.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Chair, on a point of order: Can we just clarify the status of things, please? I'm well aware of Ms McLeod's amendment, the Liberal amendment. Effectively, that refers the matter of exemptions to regulation. Are we to understand that that's been moved and seconded and we are now debating that amendment?

The Vice-Chair: That's correct. There was an issue about whether that amendment was going to be debated or withdrawn today, and that's what I'm asking the Liberal member.

Mr Kormos: May I speak further to that amendment?

The Vice-Chair: Let's have Mr Smitherman first.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Of course I'm a poor substitute today for Mrs McLeod, but this amendment is before the committee. It deals with our intention of attempting to clarify the circumstances of concern of some operators, particularly small business operators in the province who feel that without some clarification, they may be subjected to conditions which would make their businesses impossible to operate in an appropriate way. The intent of this amendment is to offer regulation that would allow for clearer interpretation of this, so as to allow the intent of the bill to move forward without having unnecessary or unhelpful intent, that being to cause concern for small business operators.

I think Ms McLeod was also looking for some clarification on one point. There seemed to be some lack of clarity around which government ministry would have carriage of this, and it might be helpful in clarifying which government ministry that is likely to be. We're thinking it might be consumer and business relations, but has that been—

The Vice-Chair: Ms Molinari?

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): In fact, the ministry that will be taking responsibility for this is the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. A representative was asked to attend today. If there are any questions, I'm sure he would be prepared to respond.

In essence, this amendment attempts to address some of the concerns that were raised in the committee. I thank the Liberal member, Mrs McLeod, for bringing this forward in a helpful way so we could get the bill passed.

I have been assured by the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services that they will take into account all the suggestions and comments raised in this committee through the presentations of the various deputations and also through the clause-by-clause process we engage in in the upcoming weeks. Several members have raised very similar concerns, and I've been assured that the ministry will take all of that into account in developing the regulations that would encompass some of the concerns that were raised.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Kormos.

Mr Kormos: Perhaps Mr Smitherman wants to respond directly to Mrs Molinari.

Mr Smitherman: All I wanted to say is that you made the offer of a representative from that ministry being here. I wouldn't mind hearing those assurances directly from the representative, so maybe just one or two quick questions would be in order.

Mrs Molinari: Mr Chair, the person from the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services here today is Ryan Bailey. I've given my assurances on behalf of the ministry, but Mr Bailey may want to comment and give the assurances from the ministry directly that what's been discussed at this committee meeting will in fact be taken into consideration when the regulations are built in. Mr Bailey is in the audience, if you want to invite him forward to get that assurance.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Bailey, please take a seat before the committee. We are debating the amendment by Ms McLeod, the Liberal amendment to subsection 2(5) of the bill. I understand that your ministry will be in charge of overseeing the regulations.

Mr Ryan Bailey: Yes, that's right. Absolutely.

The Vice-Chair: Are there any questions of Mr Bailey?

Mr Kormos: Perhaps he could identify himself, what his status is, whom he works for and so on.

Mr Bailey: My name is Ryan Bailey. I'm the issues manager and legislative assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services.

Mr Kormos: So you're political staff.

Mr Bailey: Yes.

Mr Kormos: Chair, please, this is absurd. With no disrespect—I mean, Mr Bailey is here doing his job. I have the highest regard. But this is absurd. Come on—

The Vice-Chair: Mr Kormos, if I may—

Mr Kormos: Let me finish, Chair.

The Vice-Chair: OK, go ahead.

Mr Kormos: He's political staff. Please, Mr Bailey, no disrespect; again, I have every regard for you. But he's not part of the policy end. He can't make commitments on behalf of the ministry. This is incredible. I'm glad I asked that preliminary question of Mr Bailey. I wouldn't want to be in his shoes. I don't think he makes enough money to be here having to answer, because we're going to be asking very candid questions about how the ministry has approached Ms Molinari's bill from a policy perspective, what considerations it has had of it, again from a policy perspective, what review it's made. I don't think there's even been a Hansard of this committee hearing available; I'm not sure it's even published yet, because of the de-staffing of Hansard. It's not as if the ministry staff has had an opportunity to review the Hansard and hear what's being said here.

My goodness. How fair is it to put Mr Bailey in a position to say, "Yes, committee members, I've read the Hansards and the ministry has reviewed all the considerations raised by Ms McLeod and Mr Crozier and by Kormos and by people making submissions, and the ministry right now is drafting a regulation that says, yes, the dressage riders will be exempted." That was one of the issues, Mr Smitherman: the people who ride dressage underage, even in a very disciplined context. Let me ask you, sir, are you familiar with the mom-and-pop pony issue?

Mr Bailey: I'm afraid I'm not, no.

Mr Kormos: Again, no disrespect. Do you see the problem we have, Chair? He's being very candid. I applaud him.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Kormos, let's give Mr Bailey an opportunity to answer the questions he may be able to answer. Mr Bailey, did you have an opportunity to discuss the bill and the amendment—

Mr Kormos: Wait a minute, Chair. You're the Chair.

The Vice-Chair: I'm just asking him a preliminary question.

Mr Kormos: No, no, Chair. With all due respect, on a point of order: These folks here ask the questions.

The Vice-Chair: No, I may ask a witness a question if he—

Mr Kormos: A witness?

The Vice-Chair: He's a witness before the committee, if he's here.

Mr Kormos: No, he's a person making submissions. He's a person here to answer questions. That's far from being a witness.

The Vice-Chair: I just wanted to ask some preliminary question, Mr Kormos.

Did you have an opportunity to review the bill and discuss it with policy people at the ministry?

Mr Bailey: We've had an opportunity to look at Bill 12 and we have had an opportunity to analyze its impact on the ministry. We've had our legal people look at it. We have gone that far. And we have talked to our minister about having it fall under our umbrella, and that was no problem.

The Vice-Chair: Do you feel comfortable answering questions about this amendment?

Mr Bailey: I do not.

The Vice-Chair: You don't feel comfortable answering questions?

Mr Bailey: No, I do not. I don't think I know enough about it to do Ms Molinari justice or the other members of the committee, to give you the answers you're looking for.

The Vice-Chair: All right. Ms Molinari, do you have any other comments?

Mrs Molinari: I know some of my colleagues want to speak as well. My understanding was from our last meeting that the amendment put forth by Mrs McLeod was going to be an enabling amendment for the development of regulations. The concern was that it didn't have a home with a ministry, and the committee wanted assurance that some ministry would be taking responsibility for the development of the regulations based on all the comments that were made.

It was not my understanding from the committee that the expectation was that it would be more concrete than that. It was more of a commitment to do that. In the essence of time, Mr Chair and members of the committee, it's not possible to develop all those regulations to encompass this in the time we have between now and when the House recesses. It was my understanding there was a general need for that kind of commitment from the ministry because, as of the last meeting, this bill didn't have a ministry that was going to be taking responsibility for it. That was, in essence, the concern. It was raised that what the committee needed to reach a comfort level was that a ministry would take responsibility for it and a commitment that the ministry would take into account the comments made at this committee in the public hearings and in the clause-by-clause.

There is a consistent theme in this. It's not a controversial issue. The comments that were made were not contradictory of one another. It's not something the ministry would have to look at to find which should be taken into account and which should not, because there was a consistent theme. My understanding from the committee was that we would be able to pass this with that kind of assurance.

Mr Chair, could I ask at this point in time for a short recess so we can consult and hopefully come back and be able to give you more of the answers you want so as not to delay this any further.

Mr Smitherman: Just to be helpful, it's not a question of the answers but who is delivering them that poses some concerns for us. Mr Bailey made reference to the broad range of people in the ministry who were consulted. We'd like to see someone from the ministry rather than a political staff person of the minister. That would give us more confidence. The lengthy preamble—I could nod my head repeatedly, but the point is that I'd like to ask one or two questions of the people from the ministry who had been participants in those conversations to give us the assurance that they understand the nature of the concerns we're attempting to address in the regulations. If we can accomplish that in a short recess and a director or someone like that from the ministry could come up, we'd be able to satisfy that, from our party's standpoint, quite quickly.

The Vice-Chair: I think what Mrs Molinari was saying—I was a member of the committee before we recessed last week, and the discussion was whether there would be a ministry that would take responsibility for the regulations. I think it's clear now that the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services is prepared to take responsibility for the regulations.

Maybe with a short recess, we'll be able to answer whatever questions we still have. Can we have a recess of five minutes? Is that sufficient? The committee is recessed.

The committee recessed from 1607 to 1714.

The Vice-Chair: I call the committee to order.

Mr Kormos: Thank you, Chair. There is a motion on the floor, an amendment by Mrs McLeod. I seek unanimous consent to have that motion deferred for consideration until other motions are made.

The Vice-Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to defer? Agreed.

Mr Kormos: Chair, I have an amendment to section 1 and the definition of "horse." I move that the definition of "horse" in section 1 of the bill be amended by adding "that is over 14.2 hands in height and does not include a pony" at the end.

That would mean that the definition of "horse" would read as follows:

"Horse" means any animal of the equine species that is over 14.2 hands in height and does not include a pony." That would be the new definition if this amendment were acceptable to the committee.

The Vice-Chair: Before we deal with the amendment, do we have unanimous consent to reopen section 1 of the bill? Agreed. Is there any debate on Mr Kormos's motion?

Mr Kormos: Very quickly. It is the committee's understanding—there are members of the committee who have experience and expertise, and I'm grateful to them. Mr Guzzo, Mr Beaubien and Mr Johnson have assisted in determining that 14.2 hands, written that way, means 14 hands, two inches, and that is the accepted definition of height measured at the withers—and of course we all know where the withers are. Basically, we're saying by this amendment that the helmet rule will not apply to

horses less than 14.2 hands in height, or to ponies in the rare case that you might have a pony that's 14.3 hands, for instance. We're making sure this is an accommodation of pony-ride establishments. I thank Mrs Molinari and of course Messieurs Guzzo, Beaubien and Johnson for their assistance and their attitude, because this protects people like the Careys and the Atkinses and other small pony-ride operators across the province.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Mr Kormos. Thank you for assisting us so we can deal with this matter expeditiously. Are there any further comments on this amendment?

Mrs Molinari: Just a quick comment that I appreciate all the work the committee has done on this bill. I know it's important to all of us to make sure that this gets passed and through. In the essence of time, I'm prepared to support the amendment on the floor. I also want to say that in the second reading debate of this bill some members of the Legislature raised concerns about watering down the bill. I wouldn't want it to be perceived that it was my direction. I'm accepting this as an amendment by virtue of the concerns that have been raised and in order to get the bill passed. I think that with the amendment, having the bill pass is better than not having the bill passed at all at this point. So I appreciate the work the committee has done and I will support the amendment.

The Vice-Chair: If there are no further comments, shall the amendment, as read by Mr Kormos, carry? Carried.

Mr Kormos: Chair, I have another amendment to section 1. This is with respect to the definition of "horse riding establishment."

I move that the definition of "horse riding establishment" in section 1 of the bill be amended by striking out "boards horses or" in the second line.

One of the concerns with the scope of the bill is in terms of who it caught. It's our understanding, and we support the intention of the bill, that commercial riding establishments—places that rent out horses so you can ride the horse and trot it or whatever it is you do with the horse, where the rider has control of the horse—are the establishments the committee and the author want to see caught by the bill.

Eliminating the words "boards horses or" excludes those people who merely board horses, who aren't running a riding stable or a riding academy or teaching riding lessons. They're not always there. Sure, there are big, big, big ones that have enough staff, but then there are little, little, little ones, like where I come from, where the people who run them work at jobs in addition to their farms. They're working at Atlas Steels or at General Motors and they're not even there on a Sunday when a mom or a dad take their own horse out of the stable or out of the stall and put their child on the horse. I think it's unfair for the owner of that property to be caught by this legislation. There should be a responsibility on the part of the parent, obviously, but the bill doesn't purport to do that. That's fine. I understand that the bill has to be specific about what it does.

This clearly identifies that it's commercial riding stables that have an obligation, especially when you read this in conjunction with the amended subsection 2(1) of the bill. This amends the definition of horse riding establishment, but 2(1) says "No owner or operator of a horse riding establishment"—to wit, a commercial riding stable—"shall permit any rider under the age of 18 to ride any horse boarded by the rider in the stables of the establishment or transported by the rider to the establishment unless the rider has and is correctly using the following equipment." etc.

What this does is that if you're a commercial riding stable but you board a horse, you are caught by the rule. If that's your primary purpose, running a riding stable, yet at the same time you rent out a stall—because "a riding stable" assumes you're going to be exercising control over that place—then you are caught by the bill. If you are not a commercial riding stable and somebody rents a stall from you or boards a horse, then you're not caught by the bill. So if you're like the folks I have who are raising and training race horses and they rent out a couple of stalls, the bill doesn't apply to them. Maybe it should in theory, but it doesn't. If you're somebody like my friend Diane Grenier, who has her little property but a great big barn with 10 stalls—she only has three horses; they're expensive and she rents out a couple of stalls—she's not caught by the bill because she isn't a commercial riding establishment. She doesn't run a business of renting horses for riding. They're her own horses but she rents out a stall or two to help subsidize what I'm advised is the incredibly expensive business of even keeping horses, never mind riding them or renting them out.

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: For the first time in six years, Mr Beaubien agrees with me enthusiastically.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): No, it's not the first time.

Mr Kormos: You've agreed with me before? In any event, this amendment deletes the words "boards horses or" for the reasons I've described.

Mrs Molinari: I will be supporting this as well. I have to voice my concern from the very beginning, because having consulted on this bill with a lot of the establishments, it will be perceived to some extent as watering down the bill and that was one of the things that people didn't want to happen. I repeat, to get this bill through, I would rather have it go through with the amendments than not have it at all.

I did need to make clear my views on this. What we're doing with this amendment is excluding some from the legislation and including others. My preference would have been to include them all. But I will support it in the interest of getting the bill passed. Hopefully, with unanimous support from all in the House, we can get this through before the end of the session.

The Vice-Chair: If there are no further comments, shall the amendment moved by Mr Kormos carry? Carried.

Are there any further amendments?

Mr Kormos: If I may, Chair, now might be an appropriate time to consider Mrs McLeod's amendment.

The Vice-Chair: I still have to finish carrying section 1.

Mr Kormos: Quite right. Of course.

The Vice-Chair: Shall section 1, as amended, carry? Carried.

Now we'll revert to subsection 2(5), the amendment by Mrs McLeod. Are there any comments or can we move to pass this amendment?

Mr Smitherman: We spent the last hour and a half, not writing those amendments, but waiting to have some officials from the ministry attend so we might pose some questions to them. I'm very interested in doing that.

1720

The Vice-Chair: Ms Molinari?

Mrs Molinari: In fact, ministry representatives are here. Based on the amendments we've just made to the bill, the developing of regulations that were going to be encompassing the amendments that have been made are to some extent redundant at this point, but in having spoken to some of the members I understand that there's still a desire to have this motion passed so that it would allow for some flexibility in development of regulations.

We could listen to the ministry representatives who are here, but their impression was that the amendments we just made to this bill, that are actually now in the bill itself, were going to be included in the regulations. I'm not sure what questions the committee would have for them, other than an openness to look at possibilities for regulations that would need to be taken into account once the bill is passed.

Mr Smitherman: If we were satisfied with your assurances, they wouldn't be here. I think we had some questions just to make sure that what you're articulating is clearly understood by them.

Mr Kormos: While they're seating themselves at the table—thank you, folks—I should indicate once again that we support the motion amending the bill by Ms McLeod. It provides that residual power on the part of this or subsequent governments to address problems that may arise. Indeed, now that the bill has been amended it is even more appropriate, because we don't advocate, and I don't think Ms McLeod did when she moved this, that this is the way that this should be done.

She put it forward as a stop-gap measure, as I recall, and I don't want to purport to speak for her, but I don't think she'd mind my saying that. But again, the bill has been amended now; this residual power is available. That's what these regulatory processes, in my view—and I suspect in Ms McLeod's as well—should be for: for after the fact, for cleaning up problems that might arise, not for dealing with the gist of the bill.

So, gentlemen, thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Kormos, we don't have—

Mr Kormos: I know, we don't have a lot of time, so let's go.

The Vice-Chair: Gentlemen, if you could identify yourselves for the record.

Mr Scott James: My name is Scott James. I'm with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services.

The Vice-Chair: What's your position?

Mr James: Manager of the administrative authority liaison section.

The Vice-Chair: The other gentleman?

Mr Ben Osemeke: My name is Ben Osemeke, policy branch, the same ministry.

The Vice-Chair: Right. Do you have any questions?

Mr Smitherman: Yes. Just to get, first off, a comment from you. The minister's legislative aide spoke briefly about some of the efforts that have been made within the ministry to discuss some of the concerns. I wonder if you might just tell us what discussions you've been engaged in, with respect to this bill, around the specific concerns that we're dealing with?

Mr James: With respect to the proposed amendment to subsection 2(5)?

Mr Smitherman: No, rather to the broader discussion around concerns that have been discussed at the ministry as related to the bill; not limited only to 2(5), but any other concerns. I just want to see if you've been actual participants in those discussions.

Mr James: Sure. I can say that we were consulted, I guess we've been consulted around certain options on how one could approach legislation in this area. Certainly I was consulted, and more so in the guise of looking at different types of alternative service delivery models that could be put in place for delivery of the legislation, should it be passed.

Mr Smitherman: OK. With the amendments that were just made in section 1, is there any lack of clarity around the intent there, which is essentially to well distinguish between pony ride operators and commercial stable operators?

Mr James: Sorry, you're asking is it clear who the bill is intending to capture?

Mr Smitherman: Right.

Mr James: I think that it seemed fairly clear to me.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Kormos.

Mr Kormos: OK. One, in terms of defining a horse, the amendment is intended to exclude ponies. Do you agree with that?

Mr James: I agree that was the discussion I heard. I have to say, in terms of consideration of exclusion of ponies, any discussions within the ministry on that issue, no, I have not been privy to those kinds of discussions. We would probably look to colleagues in ministries such as OMAFRA to give us advice on such things.

1730

Mr Kormos: Ms Molinari's eyebrows have raised now that you've mentioned yet another ministry. That's OK, Ms Molinari, we're going to finish this bill this evening; we don't have to wait for the Ministry of Agriculture.

But do you understand that we've tried to redefine "horse" so that it excludes ponies? We say ponies are excluded, but also we say anything that's 14.2 hands and under is excluded. That's clear, right?

Mr James: It seems pretty clear. I would assume that the policy principle there is the height that the rider is at and their risk—

Mr Kormos: You understand it's the height at the withers?

Mr James: Again, I'm not too familiar with withers, but I understand what you're suggesting.

Mr Kormos: Whither goest this committee with this bill? But we understand it's the height at the withers. I had to learn about withers, so the judge or justice of the peace who has to apply this bill should know about withers as well.

The other exclusion was making clear the focus, that the people responsible for ensuring helmets are worn are the people who run commercial riding establishments. Do you agree that the amendment has that effect?

Mr James: That was my understanding of the intent of the bill.

Mr Kormos: But what about the amendment? Does it reinforce that intent?

Mr James: Certainly it does look like it is narrowing the scope to not include people who board horses. However, I imagine that if subsection 2(5) were also passed, there would be scope to consider other types of exemptions if they inadvertently captured anybody.

Mr Kormos: But the problem is, you agree, that you and your colleague can't come here and commit the minister to any given regulation?

Mr James: Absolutely.

Mr Kormos: You and your colleague come here and you can't commit the ministry to preparing any regulation?

Mr James: That's correct.

Mr Kormos: And you can't commit the cabinet to approving any regulation?

Mr James: You're correct again.

Mr Kormos: So it would have been risky business to have assumed that just because the regulatory power is going to be included in the bill, that regulatory power would be used in the way the committee, even as a whole, may have hoped or anticipated?

Mr James: I assume that's correct.

Mr Kormos: OK. Thank you kindly.

The Vice-Chair: So we have had comments on this. Should I put the question on the amendment?

Shall Ms McLeod's Liberal motion on page 5 carry? Carried.

Shall section 2, as amended, carry? Carried.

We're going back now to section 5. Shall section 5 carry? Carried.

Shall section 6, the short title, carry? Carried.

Shall the long title of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall Bill 12, as amended, carry?

Mr Kormos: Debate.

The Vice-Chair: Debate?

Mr Kormos: Yes, very briefly. This has been a lengthy process. I want to express gratitude to the members of this committee—to Ms McLeod, Mr Bryant and Mr Crozier, who have at various times been here, Mr

Smitherman today—to Ms Molinari and to other government members on the committee. It has been an incredible learning experience for a whole lot of people. The intention of the bill was good from the get-go. It reflected a finding by a coroner's jury. I think everybody shares the view that coroners' inquest juries should be given effect, otherwise why hold them? Why go putting those people through the trouble?

I believe that the bill, as amended, addresses the issue of the jury recommendations. I understand that there were advocates saying that everybody on every horse should wear a helmet. I understand that. But there are clear issues of enforceability, there were clear issues of shifting liability, because the bill, before it was amended, by virtue of the offence, created a new tort liability on the owner of a boarding place, for instance, where that owner of the boarding place would have had no reasonable control over whether or not an individual horse owner came and got their horse out on a weekend when that owner-operator wasn't there. I don't think that's what was contemplated by the jury, or necessarily contemplated—I don't want to speak for her—by Ms Molinari.

Mr Guzzo was exceptionally helpful today in speaking with Mr Carey and in helping word these amendments. His background and experience gave him some special qualifications in that regard, and I think the committee should acknowledge his assistance to this committee.

To those who wished the bill had gone further, I say that this is an opportunity to test the level of enforcement, because it's always a concern. You can have all the statutes in the world, but if there aren't people out there enforcing them, they're not going to save lives. I recognize that helmets for youthful riders on full-sized horses will save lives. I recognize that helmets in any situation would save lives. But the problem is that from a pragmatic point of view in terms of keeping the Careys' business viable, or the Atkinses', down where I come from, in St Anns, if we hadn't had these people come forward, if the Careys and the Atkinses hadn't come forward—because they weren't invited to the committee; they just sniffed out the fact that this bill was moving forward—because of our unfamiliarity with their business, the little mom-and-pop pony operators, we could have ended up passing a bill that put a whack of people out of business. I don't think anybody on the committee would have felt comfortable doing that.

So all I'm saying when I say "lesson" is I think it's a lesson for all of us. Again, the intent of this bill was superlative, and I don't question that or the motives of the author of the bill, but I think we've learned that sometimes even the shortest and most obvious bills still warrant as complete consideration as ones that are X number of pages long.

I thank the folks who came before the committee. I thank the Atkinses and the Careys, especially Mr and Mrs Carey, who have been here every time this committee has met. They've driven in from Freulton, down near Flamborough way. These are good folks.

They've been here at every committee hearing. They've lent their expertise. They've tried to assist the committee as much as they could. The bill isn't named after them, and I'm not sure they'd want it to be. But I'm just so impressed, because they have made the committee system work. They showed up here, they persisted, they stuck to their guns, they talked to other people, they got other people to talk to members of the committee, whether it was Ms McLeod or myself, and I just want to thank them thoroughly and just as sincerely as any politician could ever muster up sincerity.

But in all sincerity, I do thank them. They have proven themselves invaluable. They've made this committee far more effective, and I hope all of us recall this committee and the contribution that two just plain folks, but exceptional in their own way, made. So my gratitude to you, and I hope you have the gratitude of your colleagues in your business, because they may never know how close they came to lining up for workfare. That's not a pleasant proposition. First they've got the cup—you know that, right? First you've got to provide a sample. It's not a pleasant proposition. But they won't know how close they came and similarly for some of your friends in the horse-boarding industry. Thank you very much to the Chair and to the committee.

The Vice-Chair: Any other comments?

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I just wanted to make a brief remark. In part of my riding there is still a lot of farming done by the Amish and Mennonites, where they use horses and so on. Part of their culture is that the youngsters—because at 16 they will start helping their fathers—will harness a team of horses, jump on one of the horses' backs, drive to a neighbour's, hitch on to their equipment and help for the day. At the end of the day, they unhook, jump on one of the horses' backs and ride home.

They will often cross a highway, they will often go along the road allowance, and there is signage and stuff like that. But part of my concern is that their headgear, in spite of safety, is usually a straw hat in the summer and a felt hat in the winter. Part of my interest in being here is that their interest is being addressed by us as well.

Mrs Molinari: I have some comments also. I want to thank the members of this committee for having endured this lengthy process. It being my first experience with a private member's bill and going through this process, I've certainly been enlightened in a number of ways. I thank all the committee for their patience and their working together in ensuring that this bill would be completed and passed, and hopefully through third reading.

I also want to thank Marcia Barrett from the Ontario Equestrian Federation, who's also been here through the whole process—through the hearings and through the clause-by-clause and whose commitment to this bill has been unwavering, and Bruce Brown, the president of the Association of Riding Establishments of Ontario, who was also one of the presenters. These two people have been tremendously supportive and helpful in the development of this bill and have allowed me the opportunity to

meet with a number of various establishments to get input in bringing this bill forward and ensuring that it would be passed.

I have some concerns over some of the exclusions that we've made to this bill. I'm not going to repeat the comments I made during the debate on the amendments, but I will say that this bill was prompted by several coroners' inquests that said there should be enough protection and safety to save lives. So the thrust and intent of this bill was to provide safety for riders under the age of 18 to hopefully not have any other serious accidents occur.

Mr Kormos talked about lessons learned in this, and certainly there are a number of lessons that we've learned. I just hope that, based on the exclusions and exemptions we've made to this bill, there won't be another lesson learned in the future; that because of some

exclusion there will not be another accident that will cause us to revisit this bill and enforce it in some way.

Having said that, I am pleased that we've concluded this, hopefully at this point in time, and we'll be able to go to third reading. I encourage all the members, and I hope Mr Kormos, as the House leader for his party, in the discussions of bringing this forward, would support this as being one of the ones that should be brought forward for third reading and passed before Thursday.

Again, I thank all the committee, and I thank you, Chair, for your assistance in this afternoon's session.

The Vice-Chair: Shall Bill 12, as amended, carry?
Carried.

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House?
Carried.

Thank you. The committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1743.

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