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Tuesday 12 June 2001

Mardi 12 juin 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 12 June 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 12 juin 2001

The House met at 1845.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My cabinet book was removed from the top of my desk. That is a serious matter and I would like to advise the Sergeant at Arms that I would like to have his assistance immediately, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'EFFICIENCE
DU GOUVERNEMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 11, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 57, An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 57, Loi visant à favoriser l'efficacité du gouvernement et à améliorer les services aux contribuables en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This is unprecedented. Do you have his cabinet book? A minister lost his cabinet book. Somebody had better come clean. The minister misplaced his cabinet book.

Boy oh boy, do you remember when you were a little kid and you came home from school and you didn't have your mittens any more? I knew I was in big trouble. "You what? You lost your mittens?" Did you have the lecture, "You better take better care of your things, young man"? I remember that. The minister lost his cabinet book. Have you got his cabinet book, Mr Marchese? He lost his cabinet book.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): We'll read about it during question period.

Mr Kormos: Yes. Listen, there are no secrets here. Somebody up in the press gallery's photocopying it. That's what you call a leak.

We're speaking to—

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: He's only the minister of, what? There's nothing in it. It's not as if he was something. He's not much. A cabinet book's only that thick for that minister.

It's Bill 57, Speaker. I'm sorry I was distracted for perhaps a few moments of bizarre levity at the remarkable opening to this evening's session.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Perverse levity.

Mr Kormos: I'm joined here by the member for Trinity-Spadina. You heard me begin—

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): The efficiency act, Peter.

Mr Kormos: That's right. It's called the Government Efficiency Act. I presume the minister who lost his cabinet book is not the minister of government efficiency or, if he was, he ain't any more.

Regrettably, Bill 57 is deadly serious stuff. An omnibus bill with more than a few references to various bills that do pertain to relatively benign, innocuous house-keeping, but Bill 57, an omnibus bill, like every other omnibus bill that has been introduced contains within it some deadly stuff: in particular, schedule I, the amendments, among other things, to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, amendments and repeals of legislation that workers won over the course of decades and generations and amendments and repeals of sections of the Occupational Health and Safety Act that are going to put working women's and men's lives at risk. Workers are going to suffer injuries as a result of this bill, workers are going to suffer increased levels of disease as a result of this bill and, yes, workers are going to die as a result of what this government and its backbenchers are doing by way of Bill 57.

1850

Speaker, you know we sought to have Bill 57 declared invalid as an omnibus bill. We were unsuccessful in that regard. I have no quarrel with that fact. We similarly sought from the Speaker at the same time an order that the bill be severed, so that schedule I—this incredibly important bill with a disastrous impact—could be separated from the rest of the bill and dealt with separately. Again we were unsuccessful in that regard. The rules, as they exist now, simply didn't permit the Speaker to order that. We have some real concerns.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Kormos: One of the concerns we have is that the government, once again—look, you know what happened this afternoon, don't you? Bill 58: lo and behold, what do I get on my desk? Notice of a time allocation motion. You know what I'm talking about: Bill 58, dealing with paramedics, limiting the right to strike and denying them

fair, neutral arbitration, denying them arbitration and eliminating the right to strike. Only in the most totalitarian of societies, the most undemocratic of political cultures, would that be considered acceptable.

And debate of about a couple of days—I actually heard a government minister, I think it was yesterday evening, berate the opposition for daring to debate legislation. That's what this place, that's what this chamber, that's what Parliament is all about. You will understand that "parliament" comes from the Old French word, which is also the new French word, "parler," "to speak." That's the origin of the word "parliament." Last night I educated the chamber about the origins of the phrase "tinker's dam."

Mr Marchese: Tell us again, because there's a new audience.

Mr Kormos: I used the phrase yesterday in my discourse from my position here in the House. I explained the etymology of "tinker's dam," which is spelled d-a-m. I'll repeat the etymology of the phrase "tinker's dam"—I know you'll be interested—because I might, as a matter of fact I'm confident, I'll use that phrase this evening.

In days gone by, tinkers went around from village to village repairing pots. They were tin pots. The pots were worn through. You got holes in the pots. There's a hole in the bucket. The tinker literally built a dam of wet bread around the hole. When he poured the molten tin to fill the hole, the wet bread acted as a dam around the hole so that the tin wouldn't spread across the whole base of the pot. The phrases "tinker's dam" and "not worth a tinker's dam" speak to the rather less than best quality of those tinkers who would use but bread for that dam when the molten tin was poured in to fill the hole. So "not worth a tinker's dam" and "to not give a tinker's dam," as the tinker didn't when he was soldering or retinning that pot, means to care little—t-i-n-k-e-r-'s d-a-m, as in Hoover Dam.

So I say to you, Speaker, that here we are, confronted once again with legislation that confirms, as has been confirmed time after time after time, bill after bill after bill, all the way back to 1995—and I suppose the foundation, the cornerstone, Bill 26—that this government doesn't give a tinker's dam about working women and men here in the province of Ontario. It's evidenced once again by Bill 57.

You heard me mention last night that once again there was no consultation. Nobody from this government went and talked to the people who could give them input about the impact of this legislation. That's what's particularly frustrating about being told by whomever over there that we shouldn't be debating this. Please, we are obligated to debate this. We have a duty to debate this. We have a duty and an obligation and a responsibility to debate this bill exhaustively, because its impact is going to be dramatic and deadly.

There was no consultation of the 200-plus or so Ministry of Labour inspectors. Because one of the things that this bill does is it changes the law radically. One of the most hard-fought-for gains that workers have made is the

right to refuse unsafe work. It's not a thing that's taken lightly by any worker. Most workers are in non-union workplaces. They don't have a shop steward to call to say, "Hey, shop steward, Joe or Jane, come on over. You better get the superintendent"—the front-line manager, the foreman, what have you—"because look at this set-up here. I refuse to work here." You've got your shop steward standing beside you and you've got the protection of the union.

I understand the vast majority of workers in this province don't have unions. Quite frankly, with the anti-union legislation and anti-union agenda and the union-busting drive that this government's been engaged in for the last six years, there's going to be fewer and fewer workers who enjoy the protection of membership in a trade union movement and are entitled to engage in the free collective bargaining that trade unions guarantee for them.

This refusal of unsafe work is not taken lightly, and the history of that right is some decades-plus old. It's a relatively new right and it's had a dramatic impact on increasing workplace safety. The fact that a worker can refuse is some significant incentive for the employer to do more than they had done in the past to ensure workplaces are safer. The worker acquired some degree of control over his or her own safety. A critical turning point in the history of the life of workers in this province was the introduction of the right to refuse unsafe work.

This bill undermines that right in a most significant and profound way. You see, the right to refuse unsafe work is directly connected to, and the refusal of unsafe work prompted by law, an on-site inspection by a Ministry of Labour inspector. Worker refuses work, advises his or her boss, it's compulsory that an inspector be called, that the inspector come down and inspect that workplace and either shut it down or, in fact, approve for that worker to return to that workplace or workstation. It's one of the most effective ways that the Ministry of Labour has of monitoring workplaces, because they're out there in the field doing an investigation—hands-on, live, real person, visual, sight, sound, the whole nine yards.

The government says, "Oh, why are you guys debating this?" They were shrieking over there. They were shrieking, "What are you debating this for?" What are we debating it for? Because people's lives are at stake. That's why we're debating it. We're not just debating it; we're opposing it. We're fighting it with all of the, yes, admittedly reduced powers that opposition members have in this Tory chamber.

1900

You see, it's no longer compulsory for an inspector to attend at a work site where a worker refuses unsafe work. The inspector can do his determination over the phone, a hundred miles away. It's up to the inspector, with no guidelines in the legislation. It isn't as if the legislation imposes guidelines or some direction on the inspector as to when he will or will not attend a workplace to assess a worker's refusal of unsafe work. No, the inspector can say, "No, not today," "It's too early," "It's too late," "It's

raining,” “It’s too sunny,” or, “We’re too busy,” because we know that the Ministry of Labour is designed to have a complement of some 278 workplace inspectors, Ministry of Labour inspectors, but they’ve only got 200 on the job right now. We have to start inquiring about what the motive is for this, but we know what the motive is. We know it’s to undermine.

Oh, it’s all about efficiency. It’s all about Frank Sheehan’s efficiency. To that guy, efficiency means you eliminate the Employment Standards Act. That will make the workplace more efficient—yes, more efficient for bosses and for the big corporations that increasingly own those workplaces here in Ontario. Eliminate the Employment Standards Act, eliminate the 40- to 44-hour workweek—and the government has already done it: we’ve got a 60-hour workweek now. It’s like rolling the clock back 40 or 50 years. Eliminate the minimum wage: that’s Sheehan’s perspective of what makes a more efficient workplace. I don’t buy that, New Democrats don’t buy it, the member for Trinity-Spadina doesn’t buy it—not by a long shot, not by any stretch of the imagination.

It’s interesting, because notwithstanding that, this so-called Minister of Labour hadn’t spoken to any of the right people, hadn’t spoken to any of the people out there doing that job. A couple of Ministry of Labour inspectors took it upon themselves to write the minister a letter and that letter was sent by fax either yesterday or today, dated June 11. The letter politely commences:

“Dear Minister:

“We are writing you as representatives of health and safety inspectors seriously concerned about the adverse impact of the proposed changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act introduced by Bill 57.” That’s the bill we’re talking about right now.

“As well, we are seriously concerned by the lack of consultation with inspectors during the process of formulating these proposed amendments.” This comes from those very inspectors in the Ministry of Labour who are no longer going to be required, if this bill passes, to do on-site inspections when there has been a refusal of unsafe work. Referring back to the letter, “Indeed, many of us were surprised and somewhat embarrassed to learn about these amendments from our clients in the field.

“We have grave concern about the proposed changes to section 43(7) of” the Occupational Health and Safety Act—that’s the very one that deals with the requirement that an inspector attend on site when a worker has refused unsafe work—“which will now allow an inspector to investigate a work refusal without having to be present at the workplace to examine the actual work situation. As health and safety professionals, we find this an absolutely unacceptable approach that perverts the basic tenets of good investigative practice and sound health and safety and industrial hygiene principles.”

This isn’t some academic writing this. This isn’t some policy aide, political staff deep in the bowels of the ministry. This isn’t Mr Sheehan, who I suspect hasn’t seen a work site in a good many years, a real one, one where people work—if he ever did. I’ll give him the benefit of the doubt and I’ll suggest “for many years.”

Don’t shake your head; listen to the letter. You’d be wise to take heed, because you, Madam, and your support of this legislation may well leave you as culpable as the others when there’s an injury, a disease, a death, as a result of this government’s denial to workers of the right to an on-site inspection when that worker refuses unsafe work.

These inspectors carry on, “Such an approach will inevitably result in the tragic consequences that the lack of regulatory vigilance led to in the town of Walkerton.”

You’re being warned again. New Democrats in this Legislature today confronted your Premier, my friends, with the fact that he had been warned not once but twice, at the very least, in writing, about the consequences of his cuts to the Ministry of the Environment and the fact that it could lead to very serious consequences for Ontario residents. While your Premier didn’t want to deal with that fact here and now in this Legislature today, let me tell you that when he’s sworn under oath and giving testimony at Justice O’Connor’s commission in Walkerton, he can’t hide behind the rather pathetic excuses he offered up today.

Please, you’d been warned about Walkerton. You’d been warned, you’d been warned, you’d been warned, and you disregarded those warnings. You didn’t heed the warnings and people died. Not one, not two, but seven people died in Walkerton. They didn’t die from old age. They didn’t die because they were engaged in some dangerous activity like driving Mosport-style race cars. They died because they drank your water and because you didn’t heed the warning.

You’re being warned now. You’re being warned by some of those very same experts, the actual Ministry of Labour inspectors who have been out there doing those on-site inspections that you tell them are no longer going to be available as of right to workers in this province. Those inspectors are telling you that this approach, your approach, the approach in this bill, “will inevitably result in the tragic circumstances that the lack of regulatory vigilance led to in the town of Walkerton.”

“From our own experience,” they write, “we have found that what seems like a minor health and safety problem”—this is important stuff—“from an over-the-phone work refusal report generally turns out to be much more serious when we are able to investigate the circumstances directly. Indeed, the ministry’s own data will bear out the fact that the work refusal provision is used quite infrequently.”

Do you know how many times workers refuse unsafe work in this province? Do you want to know what they mean by “quite infrequently”? I suspect that on a good day the so-called Minister of Labour would have us believe—because he says, “This bill is about government efficiencies.” So just how many times do inspectors have to go out there in the field and inspect? How many times do workers exercise their right to refuse unsafe work?

Mr Marchese: It must be a lot.

Mr Kormos: Thousands and thousands of times? No.

Mr Marchese: How many?

Mr Kormos: A few hundred times a year. That comes to around, as I count it, maybe six a week, huh? That's just about one a day—one a day.

One wonders whose efficiencies this part of Bill 57 is all about. There's been but one a day, quite frankly in the total scheme of things less than one a day, across-the-board workplace refusal by workers refusing unsafe work. Listen to what inspectors have to say, that inevitably what sounds like a minor scenario when it's first reported, upon their inspection, they discover stuff that even the worker didn't recognize or identify. Do you understand? The inspectors perform an incredibly important role by virtue of that workplace inspection, and this government is saying, "No, workplace inspections are a thing of the past."

That'll be done over the phone, because what we suspect—as a matter of fact what we know very deep in our hearts and we can feel it in our bones—is that the future of professional public service Ministry of Labour inspectors is somewhat, I was going to say uncertain, but certain. We're dealing with Bill 25 in committee tomorrow. Does Bill 25 ring a bell? That's the privatization agenda of this government that will facilitate the privatization of public sector jobs, public service jobs across the board, including Ministry of Labour inspectors.

1910

This bill, and schedule I as part of Bill 57, contains far more than anybody was led to believe or anybody even dared imagine at the onset, doesn't it? It talks about eliminating workplace inspections. You see, when you have a private sector, for-profit, corporate provider of this so-called workplace inspection, you facilitate their profits by eliminating the need for them to attend at the workplace. It's not just about giving bad bosses, corporate bosses, free reign; it's about facilitating the privatization of these services and its about not caring, in the very least, what happens to workers in the process. It's all about what happened in Quebec City a month and change ago.

I tell you, Speaker, New Democrats were there, along with 65,000 or so of our friends. I tell you that that's what Quebec City was all about. It was all about eliminating the barriers to profits. It was all about lowering the bar. And this government, Mike Harris and his Tories here at Queen's Park, clearly have every intention of listening to their masters' voice. Oh no, not Mr Harris, he's like that little puppy dog I've told you about so many times in the old RCA Victor ad, with the Victrola and the puppy dog sitting there and the caption underneath says, "His master's voice." Remember that ad?

It's all about globalization. It's all about destroying the public sector. It's all about reducing workers to the role they had a century ago. It's all about bigger and better profits for multinational corporations, and it's all about workers paying the price for those profits, not only with their labour but with their sight and their lungs and their hearing and their backs and, yes, their lives.

The authors of this letter, two of the Ministry of Labour's inspectors, point out that it's quite infrequent,

"... a couple of hundred times a year, when compared to the thousands of contravention and stop work orders we issue annually. Likely, there could be many more well-founded work refusals than actually do occur," if I were to explain to you how difficult it is for workers, especially in non-union workplaces, which is the majority of workplaces, to engage in a work refusal.

They write, "As inspectors we are perplexed by the introduction of this questionable approach. While this approach may save some inspector time in the field, we find it inefficient"—inefficient—"with respect to achieving the desired end of enhanced workplace health and safety. We know that the ministry does have a staffing shortfall in terms of the number of inspectors available in the field." I already told you about that. There are supposed to be 278 inspectors; there are only 200 on the job at the Ministry of Labour. "We also have a shortage of other professional disciplines such as industrial hygienists, professional engineers, scientist and occupational health doctors and nurses. These you will recall were drastically cut from the occupational health and safety program in 1996."

Cuts in 1996 to the occupational health and safety program—this government had barely gotten their seats warmed here in the Legislature before they began cutting those very institutions, those very programs, those very jobs that protected workers' health and safety, that protected workers' lives.

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: Yes, Mr Bradley, I'm speaking again, and I expect you will be speaking again as well, because opposition members have a responsibility to expose the agenda of this government, to identify this government's agenda with the same agenda that prevailed in Quebec City five or six weeks ago. Quite frankly, it is not the opposition's job to facilitate passage of this kind of legislation, not by a long shot, not in a million years, not today, not tomorrow, not ever.

New Democrats have no qualms about saying they are firmly on the side of working women and men and their trade unions. I have no hesitation in telling you with great pride that other New Democrats and I will stand with workers and with trade unionists and their leadership. We'll stand shoulder to shoulder with them, arm in arm with them. We'll stand with them in solidarity against this government.

Mr Tilson: Have you spoken to Buzz Hargrove lately?

Mr Kormos: Yes, I have.

The authors write, "However, further limiting an inspector's vital investigative role is hardly an appropriate way to go about addressing a staffing problem." Your senior officials have been met with on several occasions. Efforts to address the issue of shortage of staff by other inspectors have been, according to the authors of this letter, "rebuffed. We have also raised our concerns about the loss of these significant support functions from these professional disciplines and our once world-renowned occupational health laboratory.

“There are many other elements to the proposed amendments that we have concerns about. For example, we do not see the virtue in repealing section 34 requiring an employer to provide notice when introducing a new substance in the workplace.”

Do you understand what they're repealing? Section 34 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires an employer to give notice when a new chemical, when a new toxin, is brought into the workplace. This government's abolishing that requirement: “Oh, it's red tape.” What the heck, it's only 80-gallon barrels of PCBs or who knows what, chemicals that you and I never even knew about or imagined, read about in our lifetimes.

You move on to section 36 and you take a look—one of the problems around here is that a whole lot of people don't read the bill, don't read the legislation. A whole lot of government backbenchers don't take the time. They rely on the polls and the cheat notes that are provided by the government spin doctors. They rely from time to time on what's called the explanatory note of the legislation. I read this explanatory note with great interest.

Section 34 is the one I just talked about. The explanatory note is what most of the government backbenchers are inclined to rely upon rather than a thorough reading and analysis of the bill. So they read, “Section 34 is to be repealed because it duplicates a requirement under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.” So what? I could care less. It doesn't suggest that it was bad law. It doesn't suggest that it didn't save lives. It says that it's paralleled by federal legislation. These guys, the Tories here, love outdoing the feds. Let them outdo the feds.

The more interesting one is the reference to section 36. Catch this. Section 36 is repealed—it's all that's written here—because it “has never been effective.” That's interesting. Just what is the section 36 that's being repealed? If this doesn't rot your socks, nothing will, because section 36, and I have it marked up right here, required the provision of hazardous material inventories. They're repealing that. In other words, a workplace that keeps these inventories of toxic chemicals, of hazardous chemicals, of dangerous chemicals, of chemicals that could hurt people and kill people, and not just the workers but the surrounding area around the factory—section 36 required those workplaces to keep inventories of the toxic chemicals they maintained in their workplace. What the government's saying is, “They didn't have enough staff to enforce it, so we're going to repeal it.”

Think about that. Think about the safety of workers. The workplace doesn't have to keep an inventory of the types of toxic chemicals that it has in the workplace, that workers are required to work with on a daily basis, be exposed to, come into contact with. It's not just the workers; it's the people surrounding the factory, the people in the homes around the factory, the people driving trucks to and from that factory, delivering stuff, picking stuff up from that factory. It's the firefighters who have to attend at that factory when there's an explosion, when there's an emergency, when there's a crisis.

The government's saying, “It's just red tape. We'll relieve you of this burden of keeping an inventory of the hazardous materials you maintain in your workplace.” Some efficiency: rolling the clock back, flipping the calendar back 50, 60 years.

1920

After this bill is passed, not only do workplaces not have to post the intake of a new hazardous chemical; they don't have to keep an inventory of existing hazardous chemicals. What is the matter with you? Why can't government backbenchers just imagine for a moment what these provisions mean and what they've done for the safety of workers in those workplaces and how repealing them is going to expose workers to the risk of disease and injury and death?

I understand many, if not all, of you will never—maybe you have been, but never again in your lives will you be in those kinds of workplaces. But, please, don't defeat this bill for yourselves. Defeat it for your kids who may end up in some of those workplaces. Defeat it for your grandchildren. Defeat it for the people you know in your church, who may work in those workplaces, or the people you know from your Kiwanis club or your Moose Lodge or whatever happens to be where you spend your time with other people who may well be working in those workplaces. Let's stop this bill in its tracks, dead in its tracks, before we deliver death to workers in their workplaces.

Understand that if any bill ever cried out for public hearings, this bill does, because it's clear that there are a whole lot of members of the Legislative Assembly who need a little bit of a crash course on what it means to work in an industrial workplace, what it means to work in the mines in northern Ontario, what it means to work in the steel mills of Hamilton, Niagara or Welland, what it means to work in places like Carborundum down in Thorold.

Have you ever been down to Carborundum, Speaker? It's one tough, dirty, dangerous job. They make the abrasive wheels you use as grinding stones, right? You know, the wheel down in your basement where you sharpen your lawn mower blade, and bigger ones for industrial use. Big, open arc furnaces full of molten material splashing about. You don't spend more than a couple of minutes in there before you start getting burns through whatever clothing you're wearing—the fumes, the gases.

I tell you, good people work hard at these kinds of jobs and support their families and pay taxes and buy homes and send their kids to college and university. That's the real Ontario. There are millions of them out there.

This is an omnibus bill. Working people are fighting back. The Ontario Federation of Labour have said they've had it up to here. CUPE has said they've had it up to here. There's going to be some retributive action by working people. The Ontario Federation of Labour and its president, Wayne Samuelson, have promised it. Sid Ryan, president of CUPE Ontario, his secretary-treasurer, Brian O'Keefe, and their workers—I was with those

workers two weeks ago, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, at their convention in Ottawa. I was at their convention when they passed resolutions condemning Bill 57 and promising this government that there is going to be workplace action and there's going to be public action to confront this government, to stop Bill 57 dead in its tracks before it kills more workers, and to stop this government in its tracks before it does more injury to the trade union movement.

It's an omnibus bill. That means workers are doing omnibus demonstrations. There's an omnibus demonstration on Tuesday, June 26, at 4 pm—I'm reading it right here: Tuesday, June 26, at 4 pm there's an omnibus demonstration to stop Bill 147 and the 60-hour work-week and to kill Bill 57, which would gut workers' right to refuse unsafe work and defer an increase in the minimum wage. Tuesday, June 26, at 4 pm at the Ministry of Labour building, right here at 400 University Avenue. I'll be there. I want folks to go out there. I want folks to care about the plight of working people. Tuesday, June 26 at 4 pm at the Ministry of Labour. Let this government know what you think about its Bill 57; let this government know what you think about its attack on working people; let this government know what you think about its attack on the trade union movement; let the Tory backbenchers and the Premier know what you think about the Tory disdain for working women and men; and let this government know that you're prepared to do whatever you've got to do to stop Bill 57 dead in its tracks before workers are struck dead by the occupational disease, accident and injury that Bill 57 and its repeal of occupational health and safety and the right to refuse unsafe work entails.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'm always interested to hear the comments of the member for Welland-Thorold. Whenever you listen to him, you always think that the sky is falling and suddenly everything is going to come to a screeching halt and people are going to die in the streets.

I want to address the comments he has made, particularly with respect to the labour legislation. What the context of the bill says is that it permits a health and safety inspector to investigate a work refusal in consultation with the workplace parties instead of being required to conduct the investigation in the presence of the workplace parties. Where there are occasions when the regional inspector is some distance away from the workplace site, it allows that inspector to make a preliminary investigation by phone, fax, written report, whatever, in consultation with both the complaining worker as well as the employer.

In a sense that happens now, where the inspector gathers the information prior to them going to the work site. What this allows the inspector to decide is whether or not it constitutes a real danger to the employee, in which case then the employee still retains and has the complete right to work refusal. But where that is not the case, where the complaint, for example, as the one

indicated by the minister the other day, was if you don't think your boss is qualified to keep your workplace environment safe, then that could be considered vexatious.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): As always, I do enjoy and listen intently to the member from Niagara Centre. He presents with passion and a deep concern for the workers of Ontario. I compliment him on his concern and his desire to make things safer for us.

I want to reinforce something he talked to us about. He reinforces, and I reinforce very vigorously in my role as Solicitor General critic, about our firefighters. We must understand that section 34 and section 36 are exceptionally dangerous to our firefighters who are trying to do a job to keep us all safe and secure. We know there are examples across the province of hazardous waste being stored and maintained in buildings across this province. We on the Liberal side have been asking, along with the NDP, for right-to-know legislation, legislation that provides that knowledge to our police departments, fire departments and emergency measures people to ensure the safety and security of those who are protecting us. With the removal of 34 and 36, nothing could be further. The reality is, our firefighters are going to be jeopardized even further, and that is not acceptable.

I had a personal meeting with the Minister of Labour when I found out the Solicitor General doesn't have authority over this information. I found out through the Minister of Labour that he has the information and that's why they've declared it red tape and useless. The reality is simple. I told him, "What about the reverse? Shouldn't the municipalities, the police chiefs and the fire chiefs have access to that information first, at the ready, in case of an emergency?" The answer from the Minister of Labour was, "All they have to do is call us. If they call us, we'll provide that information." That's reverse logic, as far as I'm concerned, when it comes to the safety and security of our citizens and in particular our firefighters. It's not acceptable. Stop the repeal of 34 and 36.

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Mr Marchese: I congratulate my colleague and friend from Niagara Centre for his long, historical connection to working people and his dedication to protect the rights of workers and to protect the health and safety of working people. He spares no effort and no energy to make sure that he tries to convince this government to do the right thing. What's criminal about what this government is doing is that they are not stupid; they know what they're doing. That's what's more criminal about what they're doing, and you have exposed the fact that these people—

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member is suggesting that there is some evil, criminal—in fact, he used the word "criminal"—intent behind what we're doing. That to me has never been parliamentary, to accuse the government of criminal activities or intent. Perhaps he wants to either retract it now or step outside of the Legislature and make that allegation outside.

The Deputy Speaker: We always need to be careful with our language in here, and if it's offensive to some

members, it might be wise to choose different words, but the member can continue.

Mr Marchese: What is criminal about what this government is doing is that they're not stupid. They know what they're doing, and I find it offensive, to say the least.

The member from Niagara Centre exposes the modus operandi of this government, which is, "Don't consult the people who are affected. We know better." Minister Stockwell is more divine than the rest of you back-benchers and the rest of Ontario citizens. He doesn't have to consult us and he doesn't even have to consult the inspectors who have warned him about the implications of going through with this bill. He has not heeded the advice of those who are charged to protect the safety of working people.

The member from Niagara Centre said that section 34 will be repealed, which was a requirement that people would be informed when new chemicals were introduced in the workplace. They're repealing that. You've got to be nuts to do that, and you've got to be nuts as well not to keep an inventory of toxic material. What sane government would do that? Thank you, member from Niagara Centre, for exposing that.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): What this bill really is, of course, is a red tape reduction bill. I think the member who spoke perhaps doesn't fully appreciate the importance to jobs, investment and growth in this province, as his government didn't some six years ago, the importance of good regulatory policy and red tape reduction to creating jobs, investment and prosperity in Ontario.

When you look at the bill, you'll find that virtually every provision is designed toward making it more efficient to do business in Ontario. It's not weakening protections for anyone, but what it is doing is saying to those who may wish to invest in this province, who may wish to consider creating jobs in this province, that their problems are going to be understood and their problems are going to be dealt with in the sense that they are going to have a regulatory regime that's going to be responsive and efficient. We're not asking anyone to not comply with the rules; quite the contrary. This bill makes it more efficient and more effective to require business to comply with the rules.

I think some of the members on the other side tend to get so involved in the detail that they do not see the overall picture—not, by the way, that they're right about the detail. They're actually quite wrong about the details, but what they—

Mr Levac: Trust us.

Mr Wood: I've heard that before, but I've declined to do it so far because I prefer to see actual proof and experience. We did have proof and experience when both the Liberals and the NDP were in power, and the experience was not particularly pleasant.

I do, however, suggest to the House that this bill is important from the point of view of good regulatory policy in Ontario. I'm sorry that we didn't hear more from the

speaker about the importance of good regulatory policy and addressing the issue of whether what's in this bill is good regulatory policy. I suggest to the House that it is.

The Deputy Speaker: Response.

Mr Kormos: There's no two ways about it: this is good legislation for corporations that want to maximize profits and don't care about the safety of workers. It's good legislation for corporations that want to maximize profits on the broken backs and broken bones and burned lungs and blinded eyes of injured workers.

See, you don't understand, Mr Wood. Minimum wage at Queen's Park, in this chamber, is some \$80,000 a year. Some of us might have worked in those industrial workplaces, but for those of us who did it's probably been a good chunk of time since we have, and most of us will never be back there. The fact is that there are a whole lot of working people out there, like where I come from and I know where you come from, who work hard for \$25,000, \$30,000 and \$35,000 a year. They sacrifice their health for that. They sacrifice their physical well-being for that. Their joints go, their limbs go, the cancers grow. Their hearing's lost. The bone replacements—come on down to where I live and I'll show you. We'll go to the mall and take a look at the grey-haired senior citizens and I'll point out every single foundry employee. They are the guys with the hip replacements and the arms that are arthritic and the hearing aids. Come on down to where I live and I'll show you the guys who worked in the mills, because they're the ones without one, two or three digits. Go on up north. I can point out to you, in Sudbury or any city up north, a forestry worker or a lumber mill worker. You can tell by the number of digits that aren't there any more. Come to a hospital in Niagara, where the cancer rate is higher than in most other places, and I'll show you what it means to the life of industrial workers who are exposed to toxic chemicals and toxic fumes and toxic gases on a daily basis.

And you want to give licence to the corporate world to expose those workers to yet more poisons? You want to take away from those workers the right to refuse unsafe work? You've picked your side, Mr Wood. I've picked mine.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Spina: You know, if I'm going to be defended from criminality in this House, then these guys are the masters of subterfuge, deception and misinformation. I grew up in Sault Ste Marie, the heart of Algoma Steel, the heart of the paper mills, the heart of logging country. Don't tell me that I can't recognize a worker who is injured or who has put a day, a lifetime, in an industrial environment. I know what's going on. I know the environment that happens.

Mr Kormos: Who stole your strawberries?

Mr Spina: Hey, you are the master. You're the know-all. If anybody suffers from arrogance, it's you, the member for Welland-Thorold. I have never met anybody with such arrogance.

The Deputy Speaker: Now, I think that should be withdrawn. We don't attack other members in this place.

Mr Spina: Defending my criminality, Speaker?

Interjection.

Mr Spina: Let me focus on the elements of this bill, since I would never call on a drug-induced lawyer to help me defend my criminalities.

From its first mandate in June 1995, the government has placed the need to cut red tape and improve government efficiency at the heart of its agenda. An important aspect of this modern approach to providing services to the public is to model the government processes according to the needs of the citizens and to the needs of businesses. In doing so, the government must always examine how it delivers services with an eye to improving the way it works. Improving customer service and reducing costs saves everybody money.

Mr Kormos: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yes, I heard the member indicate that he wouldn't retain, I believe he said, "a drug-induced lawyer." I want to tell him that his Attorney General is straight as an arrow—might drink a little bit, but has never taken drugs in his life.

The Deputy Speaker: That, of course, is not a point of order.

Mr Spina: I think what I said was that I would never hire one.

At the same time, the government improves the business investment climate and it helps to create jobs. This is why cutting government efficiency and improving government efficiency makes so much sense and continues to be at the centre of the government economic strategy. All over the world, political and economic leaders understand the necessity of reducing the barriers to economic activity and job creation and of improving customer service.

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In 1997, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which regroups many industrialized countries, published a motivating report on regulatory reform. This report stated that regulatory reform that enhances competition and reduces regulatory costs can boost efficiency. It can bring down prices, it can stimulate innovation and it can help improve the ability of economies to adapt to change and remain competitive.

This is more than just an exercise in eliminating obsolete regulations. It is a process of fundamental innovation and—dare I say it, Speaker?—really it is the renovation of government, because that's what we are here to do, to restructure. It involves the changing of the role of government from that of a controller to one of a facilitator. It involves being open and accommodating. It involves looking at what the government does and how it can be more responsive to consumers, individuals, institutions and businesses.

You know something? There's a phrase that is used all over the world in the private sector, and it's called "customer service." Do you know something the government does not have? Service to its customer, and that's the taxpayer. That's what we are in the process of changing. We must provide services that are efficient and cost-

efficient for our taxpaying public. Anything obsolete, unnecessary, redundant, wasteful or confusing that diminishes the province's economic competitiveness stands in the way of job creation, and it wastes taxpayers' time and money.

As I've mentioned, removing barriers to growth is at the heart of the government's agenda for very valid reasons, and it also tops the list of suggestions from the public about ways to improve government. According to a 1998 study called Citizens First, conducted on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Management Development and the citizen-centred service network, citizens' suggestions for improving government services correspond to the changes that we want to deliver to the people of Ontario. These citizens' suggestions for improving services include simplifying forms and documents, creating one-stop service delivery centres, reducing paperwork, providing services by computer and Internet and providing easier-to-get information for the public. This is what the Government Efficiency Act, 2001, would go a long way toward accomplishing.

For too many years, previous governments—of all stripes, I say, Speaker—built a wall of unnecessary regulations in Ontario, a wall that choked small businesses or business important to certain regions of the province. These regulations killed jobs and damaged communities, but our government had a plan and has a plan: a plan to foster a cultural shift in the way it does business with business and the way it helps communities.

As Minister Sterling, the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, said last night when he introduced this bill for second reading, Bill 57 is proposing six amendments, for example, to the Mining Act. This would help many northern communities improve their economic potential. These amendments are administrative in nature. They have the support of the Minister of Northern Development and the Mining Act advisory committee, a private sector group whose membership represents a wide cross-section of stakeholders in Ontario's mining sector, including representatives from environmental groups and from labour. It's important that it does include representatives not just from the business side but also from the environmental sector and labour.

These proposed amendments deal with the definition of a mine owner, the recording of an instrument affecting a mining claim, the replacement of an affidavit with a written notice, the surveys of mining in unsurveyed territory, the transfer of partial crown interest in mining rights by the minister to another co-owner and the minister's right to consider a surrender of mining lands once the rehabilitation work is completed. This is to simplify the business transaction process where these events surface.

This bill would provide members of the Canadian Bankers Association with clarification on situations where secured lenders may enter a mining property to inspect secured property and chattels without incurring the environmental liability. By providing certain lenders access to their secured property, it is hoped that mine

operators may more easily access financing. Let's face it, the banker is not the person who would be causing the environmental issues that might be challenged in a very legitimate way. The mining industry is unique in that mine operators are required by law to have an approved closure plan in place for site rehabilitation. That plan must be supported with sufficient financial assurance for the long-term maintenance and environmental protection of the site. No other industry faces this requirement, but it is important and it's critical in order to preserve the environment.

A closed-out mine would be allowed to have provisions for long-term maintenance and monitoring to be transferred to the crown. The necessary reclamation work would have to be complete and financial resources for long-term maintenance and monitoring have to be made available to the crown. In addition, secured lenders are not necessarily defined as owners in other industries, whereas they are under the Mining Act. An amendment would clarify ownership of the mine and this amendment would make ownership clear to secure lenders and investors in order to clarify potential liability.

By removing the wall of red tape surrounding mining companies, the government is helping many regions of the province where mining is an important and sometimes the only employer. I know that our friends in the Legislature from northern Ontario, yourself included, Speaker—there are mining communities where the economic service, the economic resources they provide to the community, the jobs they provide to those communities are important. It's important that they are able to continue to function well and successfully while still protecting the environment.

This act would also repeal many outdated regulations. Bill 57, for example, would repeal the Ontario Youth Employment Act that was passed in the mid-1970s to establish the Ontario summer employment program. The OSEP program was phased out and completely eliminated by the Liberals in 1989, but the act has been dormant since then.

The Government Efficiency Act, this act, would rescind the old Supply Acts. These acts gave the government expenditure authority during specific time periods that are now in the past. Unless these acts are rescinded, they'll continue to appear on the Statutes of Ontario listing. Almost every year, the government introduces a Supply Act to authorize payment of expenses of the public service of Ontario to a prescribed limit for a specified time, usually a fiscal year. Expenditures must be made in accordance with the votes and items of the estimates in any supplemental estimates. These Supply Acts, from 1991 to 2000, are now outdated and the authority to pay expenditures under these statutes has long expired.

From time to time, it's necessary for the government to pass a Loan Act to authorize the government to borrow funds to pay government expenses during a specified time period up to a specified limit. The Ontario Loan Act of 1997 authorized the government, for example, to

borrow funds to a limit of \$7.5 billion up to December 31, 1998. The time period for that statute has expired. As all of these acts have expired and are no longer required, it only makes sense they should be repealed. By repealing these outdated acts, this bill would clean up the over 60,000 statutes that are on the books of this province.

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The bill would give the independent electricity market operator, the IMO, explicit authority to decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to exempt a present or future market participant, including the IMO itself, from one or more of its obligations under the market rules. Without an exemption-granting ability, the IMO and the market participants would be faced with non-compliance issues that could be a barrier to existing and new market participants entering that marketplace or, in fact, if it should, it could delay the market opening.

The main purpose of the exemptions is to facilitate transition to competition at the least expense to the marketplace, and ultimately this should be passed on to the consumers. Exemptions would have a duration of not more than five years unless circumstances justify a longer exemption. Exemptions must be in place before market opening, otherwise market participants unable to meet the market rules would either be unable to participate or would do so in contravention of the law.

Parties directly affected by IMO decisions and who made written submissions to the IMO panel would be able to appeal decisions to the Ontario Energy Board. The Electricity Act, 1998, will also be amended to allow this. The IMO would conduct a review of the exemption provision no later than five years after the electricity market opens to competition and submit a report to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology who, in turn, would table the report in the Legislature.

There are 92 privately owned non-utility generators in the province, and many of these units are small in size and some, particularly in the northern part of the province, are not immediately able to meet performance requirements because of the original design of their units. Other generators would require exemptions while they update existing equipment for the provision of operational information or for voice communication requirements.

Let's not forget that Bill 57 would also increase protection for some stakeholders, notably in the renting market. I'm sure the member from Dovercourt—wherever he's from; it used to be Fort York—might be interested in this: Bill 57 would increase protection for tenants by making it an offence for a landlord to retain a rent deposit and refuse to provide occupancy of the rental unit. While most landlords do return rent deposits to the prospective tenants, they are not currently required to do so. Prospective tenants must go to Small Claims Court to get their deposit back if the landlord refuses to return it. This will make it law. By amending the Tenant Protection Act, it will require the landlord to return that rent deposit if they refuse to provide the rental unit. By making it an offence for a landlord not to do so, we are giving

prospective tenants greater protection against a clearly unfair rule.

This act would also make it an offence for landlords if they do not provide evicted tenants 48 hours to retrieve their property. Currently under the act, landlords are required to give evicted tenants 48 hours to retrieve their property. However, it's not considered an offence if they don't. Tenant stakeholder groups have expressed concern that tenants are defenceless against landlords who refuse to allow evicted tenants access to a rental unit for the removal of their property. This proposed amendment would help address their concerns and in fact make it mandatory to give them access.

We introduced these changes in response to public needs, but also because we must implement a vision of renewing public service strategies that serve people well. We proposed these changes because we recognized the soundness of the people of Ontario's suggestions on ways to improve how government works, and we deliver these important changes. If passed, it would add to the solid track record of this government in modernizing government regulations to focus on quality customer service and support business growth.

Ontario needs to continue to exercise vigilance and to act vigorously to remove job growth barriers wherever the need is identified. Since 1995, many ministries have successfully eliminated a lot of outdated legislation, but the task is not done. We must open a new chapter on our attacks to barriers to job growth. These new strategies are now addressing specific major problems that are barriers identified to business investment, to job creation and to public service delivery.

Bill 57 does just that. As members of the Red Tape Commission, and as a commissioner of the Red Tape Commission, it is always important to remind ourselves that the safety of the consumer is paramount, the safety of the worker is paramount. Getting rid of regulations that make it easier to conduct an investigation, for the communications to flow more quickly, more easily is what we're there to do.

The concern was, for example, if the inspector on a labour complaint that was brought forward were brought out to a site to conduct an on-site investigation and it turned out to be something that could have been easily handled by other forms of communication, but at the same time there was a more serious claim and work stoppage where there was in fact a danger to the employee, that inspector would be drawn off where he or she was more importantly needed to investigate the real situation where a worker was in danger.

The sky is not falling. I suggest to you that the reality is that workers continue to be protected under the labour laws of this province. I urge the members to support this bill when we complete the readings and the deliberations.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Well, as the member would realize, it doesn't matter to the government whether or not we support the bill, because the government with its majority will put the bill through and

doesn't have to amend the bill, doesn't have to change it in any way and is unlikely to do so, even though there are a couple of provisions in it that are clearly alarming, because they remind me very much of what happened in Walkerton.

I don't just draw that because Walkerton is topical; it just reminds me of the pattern that happened in Walkerton. There's a warning that people are giving you today about a couple of things you're doing that will potentially have ramifications in the future, and you're ignoring those warnings, the same kind of warnings that happened when Dr Schabas wrote a memo saying, in effect, when the government shut down the Ministry of the Environment labs, which were great labs, and turned over the testing of water to the private sector, that if the government didn't have a provision to notify the medical officer of health, then we would have a problem. It was 1996, 1997 and the year 2000 when that happened. So I found that—I know the member would have liked, if he had had more time, to make reference to that, but he didn't have that time.

Let me take the specific area where there is a concern: right now the Occupational Health and Safety Act says employers must keep an inventory of hazardous substances in the workplace, and they must provide public access to this inventory. Bill 57 repeals this section. This means workers, the public and fire safety officials will be denied access to information on hazardous materials.

Well, I'll tell you, if you have a disaster happen in the workplace, you're going to very much regret the repeal of that particular provision. I know you're going to try to say, "Well, it duplicates something else." It doesn't duplicate entirely. Not all municipalities will have access to that information; they'd have to seek it. So at the very least, that section should be changed in this bill.

Mr Marchese: To the member from Brampton Centre, it has nothing to do with whether or not the sky is falling. It's not an issue of, is the sky falling today, is it falling heavily, lightly? It's an issue of whether or not you're doing the right thing. It's an issue of health and safety. That's what my colleague the member from Niagara Centre spoke to. His concern and mine is, where are the backbenchers? What the heck are you people doing? You either know what's going on, which makes it worse, and if you don't know, what are you doing? This is an issue of health and safety.

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The fact that an inspector ought to be required to go on site when some worker says, "I refuse to work," ought to be something you'd defend. It doesn't matter whether it's one time that the inspector has to go, two times, three times, 1,000 times, 3,000 times. It's not a question of the frequency that matters. If the place is unsafe, you've got to go. That's the point of it. It's not an issue of efficiency. Efficiency is making sure the worker is protected. That's efficiency for New Democrats.

Efficiency is not to say, "My God, we need more inspectors to send on the site." The issue is, are we protecting workers adequately? That's the defence we make.

It's not a matter of whether the sky is falling; it's the matter of whether we're protecting working people. Efficiency ought to mean that we worry about their safety and about their lives, their working lives. That's what it's all about.

So when you repeal section 34, which says it was once required that workers ought to know when new chemicals are introduced—why would you do that? Don't you want workers to know if a new chemical is introduced? Don't you want an inventory of those chemicals? Don't fire workers want to know? Particularly, don't workers want to know? Why wouldn't you care? Where are the backbenchers when you need them?

Mr Tilson: I'd like to respond to the member from Brampton Centre on his comments. I don't really think the members of the opposition have read the bill.

Interjections.

Mr Tilson: Give me a chance, Rosario.

The purpose of the bill is to create efficiency. The purpose of the bill is to clarify misunderstandings in legislation. The purpose of the bill is to enable people to do business better in this province, not with more difficulty as it was in the NDP reign. That's the purpose of the bill.

The member was quite clear with that. Now, all members of the opposition keep referring to Walkerton, that tragic event of Walkerton.

Mr Marchese: It'll never happen again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Tilson: There were tragic events in Walkerton—no one's going to deny that—very sad events. People died, people were sick. It's tragic. But what went on—testimony was given, and the hearings aren't over, of course; we keep referring to this thing that's still going on, trying not to prejudice what is going on. But if you listen to the testimony that was given, things that were going on in Walkerton existed in the NDP reign and existed in the Liberal reign.

What was going on? Environmental processes were going on during that time with the thousands of employees they had. The thousands of employees they had, which they say we now don't have, were around when those things were happening. That was the testimony that was given in Walkerton. They forget to say that, but that has nothing to do with this bill. This bill is to make it easier to do business in this province, to enable more revenue to pay for the tremendous social programs that you want and that we want.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I want to pick up on the basic point that Bill 57 is about streamlining government operations, and the point about Walkerton is exactly relevant.

I want to just say to this House: what have we found out this week? What do we now know? We now know that three and a half years ago the chief medical officer for the province of Ontario strongly advised his minister, Jim Wilson, who, to his credit, agreed with the concern that this so-called streamlining of reporting significant incidents could lead to dire consequences. When Schabas

and Wilson blew the whistle inside the cabinet to their colleague, our minister, nothing was done.

Now, we are told that this Legislature should not only pass Bill 57, but we should embrace Bill 46, the Public Accountability Act. I don't expect perfection. None of us does. But I want to say to everyone in this Legislature that Walkerton is very relevant, because we now know that two people, one of them a senior public servant who happens to have been a medical officer of health for the province, and his minister, said, "Don't do this, because if you do, in my opinion," said Schabas, "you could very seriously jeopardize the public health of Ontarians." When the medical officer of health said, with his minister's approval, "Don't do this," the minister sat silent and the cabinet appears to have agreed in that silence and people died. Are there consequences? Is any honourable minister of the crown going to stand up and say, "We goofed in a serious and fatal way, and we will in the name of streamlining accept our responsibility"? Apparently not.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Brampton Centre has two minutes to respond.

Mr Spina: It's not obvious how Walkerton got in here, but it did and that is regrettable. Just for one moment I remind the member for St Catharines that labs were privatized, if I recall, by the NDP government with no controls, or at least a lack of controls, and they should have been put in place sooner.

With regard to new hazardous chemicals introduced into the workplace, there's a system out there that has been developed called WHMIS. It has proven to be one of the most successful private-sector regulatory, information-gathering systems that you could ever want. It is available in conjunction with and specifically for worker safety and for firefighters to be able to know what's there.

With regard to the inspectors and the labour environment, my friend from Trinity-Spadina, the inspector still must investigate. There is no change. The inspector still must respond to each and every claim that comes forward to the Ministry of Labour from a worker. There's no two ways about it. The reality is that the inspector now has the discretion to determine whether it is a real complaint justifying a work stoppage.

This is a good bill. I look forward to it being passed.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ramsay: I'd like to share my time with the member from Kingston and the Islands tonight, if I may.

I think we may be getting somewhere tonight in that we're peeling away the onion from this government, in a way that it is apparent that this government is sort of the gang that couldn't shoot straight, because they still don't get it. What the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke was saying was that you are embarking down the same road that you previously embarked down that caused the Walkerton incident. He capsulized that in a very succinct manner, that gave you the story where an alarm bell was ringing and your government failed to heed it.

Here you are in Bill 57, again with the zealotry that you gather up from time to time to try to make Ontario a better place to do business, as you've expressed tonight, at the cost here of occupational health and safety. You really are the gang that couldn't shoot straight. You're a government going down and it's like a slow-motion picture, watching you unfold. You're going down the same road again. Your zeal is blinding you from the true common sense you should have about what's right and wrong in managing our workplaces.

If you look at the areas of this bill, this peels back all the rights that were fought hard for over the years in order to save people's lives. In one fell swoop in Bill 57, you're erasing all that hard work. You're repealing laws and regulations that basically protect workers in Ontario. What we have here are some of the very basic protections that Ontario workers have and cherish and use every day in workplaces across this province in one fell swoop being cancelled.

2010

In section 43 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, I think probably the most well-known piece of labour legislation in this province, the right to refuse unsafe work, is basically being peeled away. When a complaint has been made, the inspector in this case, from now on if this bill passes, doesn't have to come on site and investigate the area complained about. The inspector can handle this on the telephone. I think we're going to find that this alone, taking away this right, is going to cause injury and maybe death in Ontario. I ask you, like other speakers before me, and I know speakers after me tonight are going to ask you, in fact maybe beg you, to rethink this and to not repeal this section 43. This is a very important and fundamental right.

I know you feel that peeling away some of these rights that were won over the years is somehow going to make the workplace more efficient. You know, you might be right. It might make it more efficient. I guess what I'm saying to you is, at what cost? I'd ask you to consider that cost tonight before you proceed down this road.

The repeal of section 36 right now in the Occupational Health and Safety Act has been discussed earlier this evening, that employers must keep an inventory of all the hazardous substances in their workplace and they must provide public access to this inventory. It has been explained that the employer still has to keep this inventory, but no longer is the employer compelled to pass this inventory forward to its workers and to fire and safety workers and services in the community.

I remember being the previous critic for the Solicitor General and working with firefighters with Bill 84 and really learning how important the work of firefighters is in Ontario and how much, on a day-to-day basis, they put their lives at risk, how it's so important that we do all we can for firefighters, who put their lives on the line to save us every day of their lives. Not having that inventory in their fire departments or emergency service offices is putting them in jeopardy. They must have this, and we must dictate in our law, the law that we have today, that

emergency services have a complete inventory of all the hazardous materials that they may encounter when they come to a fire or other emergency requirement.

I just can't believe that you're doing this. It's so simple. If the inventory has to be kept, then we keep the law on the books that it's mandatory that this inventory be sent, on an updated basis, to these emergency services. We not only owe that to our emergency services but we owe that to the communities that these industries and factories and offices occupy. Those whole neighbourhoods should be aware of what chemicals and substances are in those businesses, as should the emergency services. Again, I beg you tonight, you've got to keep that protection in the act. You cannot repeal section 36. You really shouldn't.

Currently, under section 34, another section of the act that you want to repeal, employers must notify the director of health and safety if they bring any new chemical or biological substances into the workplace. They must provide information about what is in this new substance. Here again, this is going to be repealed. The government says Environment Canada really replicates this service, and therefore we could abdicate our responsibility for this. I would say that the province is the first line in protecting our environment and our workplace. The province must keep this responsibility in order to protect its citizens. Again, I ask that you keep section 34 and not repeal it in this bill.

Right now employers must report accidents to the health and safety director within four days. This amended law would require this only if an inspector is notified. Common practice is that inspectors rarely investigate minor accidents; these accidents therefore will be rarely reported. So the director won't know about dangerous workplaces until something major happens.

The first signs, the foretelling, of a major workplace accident is a series of minor accidents. If the director of this act no longer is aware of all the minor accidents that are happening in this workplace, that person will not have a sense of the potential danger of this workplace until something disastrous happens. Again, we're talking about very simple reporting mechanisms that are not really that onerous and yet could have a tremendous impact upon the safety and lives of our workers.

Section 57: presently health and safety inspectors must provide copies of their reports to workers who file complaints. This amended law would only require an inspector to provide this report upon request. Again, like many laws, if you don't know what your right is, how do you know to ask for this particular report? That's why, years ago, the battle was fought and won that it's now mandatory for these reports to be given to the worker; it's the worker's right to have them. If workers don't know, they're not going to know to request this. They shouldn't have to request this, just as emergency services and fire suppression services shouldn't have to request to have these lists and inventories of hazardous substances.

Under the codes of practice—this is a new section—this would give the power to the deputy minister to

accepts codes or standards developed by industry representatives as the law of the land simply by saying so. Therefore, we wouldn't have these bills come before us any more and basically the deputy minister could decide what the current safety rules would be for Ontario workplaces. Again, that should be our responsibility as elected officials.

This is exactly what this government did when they transferred the responsibilities for water testing that resulted in the Walkerton tragedy. As my colleague earlier very eloquently expressed, it was basically tinkering with the reporting mechanisms that brought about the tragedy in Walkerton and we think, from the testimony going on, that is what the conclusions are going to be in this inquiry.

We've seen a series of actions by this government that really are going to be putting workers in Ontario at risk. They're doing this because they want to make Ontario the best place to do business. But I say to the government that if we can't have a safe workplace in Ontario then Ontario won't be a good workplace for businesses to operate in. If we start to devalue our workplaces and start to compete with the lowest common denominator in terms of labour regulations, then we're no longer going to have the Ontario we're proud of and the workplaces we're proud of. We're not going to have workplaces that can protect, as much as we can, the workers and citizens of this province.

We have to do this. This government has to stop peeling away these rights that have been hard fought for over the years and that protect our workers.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I'm very pleased to speak on this bill this evening as well. The first comment I would like to make is that it seems that this government, whenever it brings in an omnibus bill like this—and the people of Ontario should know that this is a major piece of legislation. It affects something like 20 different acts, set out in the schedules attached to the bill. Yes, some of these sections, some of the acts, may make sense. One of the members earlier said that some of these acts no longer apply and therefore shouldn't they be taken off the books? Well, OK, if you want to do that, it's fine. I'm not sure how that's going to lead to greater efficiency. There are certain sections in this bill that I'm sure anybody could support, that make sense.

But this government seems to have, in just about every omnibus bill that has been presented, at least one or two major amendments to major pieces of legislation which, if you were to quickly leaf through the bill, you may not even catch on first or second reading. It is precisely because these sections do make major changes to those bills that we on this side become very suspicious of anything the government does in the name of so-called greater government efficiency. Nobody is against greater government efficiency; we'd all like to see it. But we also want to make sure that the people of Ontario, the citizens and the workers, are protected. That's really what this is all about and what the changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act are all about.

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I went through some of these sections and took out the original statute to compare what the actual sections say now and what is being proposed. I came to the conclusion—I will go through that in a minute, section by section—that there are some major areas where the people who work in workplaces are no longer going to have the same kind of safety protections they had before.

Whenever we've asked the government members, "Why are you changing this?" rather than their dealing with a specific section and saying, "We want to change this section because of these reasons," they always make these global statements: "It's for greater efficiency," or "It's to be more competitive." They never really address the issue.

I would like to go back to something my colleague mentioned about some of these sections. Section 34, for example, says currently: "No person shall manufacture, distribute, or supply for commercial or industrial use in a workplace any new biological or chemical agent unless the person first submits to a director notice in writing of the person's intention to" do so. Then it goes on to give some other descriptions as to what should be in the notice etc.

Why does the government want to get rid of this? Give me one reason. Let a government member give us one reason they want to get rid of this section. They will say, in their briefing notes, that it's because the federal government is already doing it within the federal ministry of the environment. Well, you know what's going to happen. This is going to be another set-up for "blame the feds." If we think it's important that these kinds of incidents be reported and that a director be notified etc, then whether or not the feds have it in their legislation is totally immaterial. We should stick to it. It is a diminishing of our environmental responsibility toward the people who work in workplaces and the people who visit them.

The next section, 36, which was referred to earlier, currently states, "An employer shall make or cause to be made and shall maintain an inventory of all hazardous materials and all hazardous physical agents present in the workplace." That's a reasonable suggestion, a reasonable idea. Everyone should know if there are hazardous materials in a workplace, the workers and the people who visit that workplace. Why shouldn't they know? Everyone should have the right to know that. We should have the right to know, when we walk into a place, whether there are potentially hazardous materials stored in that place, particularly if we work there. Well, the government wants to delete that section in its entirety.

I again ask the members of the government, would somebody get up and give me one good reason you want to get rid of that? That's got nothing to do with efficiency. It may have something to do with the fact that you're making it, I suppose, to a certain extent less demanding on employers to keep that kind of inventory, but it's got nothing to do with whether a workplace is more or less efficient. That rule was put in there for a

reason, and the reason is, as I stated before, that surely people who work in a workplace or people who visit or go into that workplace have a right to know if hazardous materials are being kept there.

The next section was referred to earlier as well, subsection 43(7). This is rather cute, because if you read the change, initially you wouldn't think there's that much of a difference. The section currently says:

"An inspector shall investigate the refusal to work in the presence of the employer or a person representing the employer, the worker, and if there is such, the person mentioned in" another clause. But the operative words are "shall investigate the refusal to work in the presence" of these individuals.

What does the new section say? These three people don't have to meet to discuss this. No, there shall merely be a consultation, whatever that means. It certainly means something less than people actually being on the work site and being able to discuss this and make their own observations about these hazardous materials etc.

Again, it is a lessening, a diminishing of the environmental standards. You can go through just about every section contained in the amendments relating to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and come to the same conclusion, that it is a diminishing of the protection that currently exists in the act.

I don't think, in all fairness, that has anything to do with the greater efficiency of government or the greater efficiency of the workplace. I think what it has to do with is that if you put in those restrictions in a less onerous way, you can do with fewer inspectors, fewer directors and fewer protections for the people who work there and the others who may come into the workplace.

That's why all of this is so relevant to the point that was made earlier by the member from Renfrew North and other members when they spoke about the effect that Walkerton has had on all of us. Yes, the jury is still out as to who was ultimately responsible. But from the evidence so far that has been presented in open hearings, there can be no doubt about it—absolutely no doubt about it—that there were serious concerns by the chief medical officer of health of the province of Ontario, which he then passed on to the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Health at the time, in 1996, was concerned enough to write a letter and request changes at the Ministry of the Environment to ensure that the necessary inspection tools and methods were in effect to ensure we had clean drinking water.

It's all connected. If you lessen the standards and lessen the inspections, you are more likely to get involved in a situation that is hazardous to people's health. Obviously, we all regret what's happened in Walkerton.

So I would invite the government members to get up from their seats right now and indicate why they feel it's necessary that sections 34, 36 and 43 are being repealed in this act.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Marchese: We New Democrats share the same concerns as the two Liberal speakers. We refer you to

and remind you of the letter written by inspectors to Minister Stockwell, in which these inspectors say, "We have grave concern about the proposed changes to section 43(7) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which will now allow an inspector to investigate a work refusal without having to be present at the workplace to examine the actual work situation. As health and safety professionals, we find this an absolutely unacceptable approach that perverts the basic tenets of good investigative practice and sound health and safety and industrial hygiene principles. Such an approach will inevitably result in the tragic consequences that the lack of regulatory vigilance led to in the town of Walkerton."

You see, they alert us to the problem experienced in Walkerton. They're saying, "Please learn from your past errors. Don't do it again." Like unschooled tutors, you don't seem to learn or want to learn, because you're not learning from past experience and you're not learning from your own bad judgment you made in Walkerton with respect to the water. You're doing it again with respect to this, and these inspectors are alerting you to a looming problem that's about to occur here.

What, I say to you, is obsolete, redundant or wasteful about requiring inspectors to be on the sites to inspect an unhealthy workplace station? I've got to tell you, good citizens, if you're opposed to this, there's going to be a demonstration on Tuesday, June 26, at 4 pm, the Ministry of Labour, 400 University Avenue. We invite you to join the demonstrators if you are as concerned as we are about this issue.

2030

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I'll try to set aside some of the fears that the members opposite would like to put into the people of the province of Ontario with regard to section 43(7) and the right to refuse work. That right to refuse work is not being tampered with whatsoever in this legislation. Anybody who feels they are in an unsafe situation has the right to refuse work. When a Ministry of Labour inspector is called about a work refusal, he can talk perhaps on the phone with someone from the employer and a representative of an employee, a member of labour, about that situation. If that inspector, after doing that, feels that he or she doesn't need to go to the workplace to see at first hand the problem in question—perhaps he's familiar with the workplace, perhaps he's familiar with both the employer and employee representative, perhaps he's even familiar with the person refusing to do the work, because that person has refused to do this work several times over—then that inspector can make that decision to not go to that workplace.

So even those inspectors who write in about it, as the member says in his letter—which I have not seen, but I have no reason to doubt him—can still decide to go to the workplace and inspect where there's a right to refuse. That is the case, and the members opposite trying to fearmonger about the right to refuse are wrong, and they should not be doing that. The member actually said he doesn't care if someone refuses to do work 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 times; that inspector should still go to that work

site and inspect it. Well, that's a very good example of when an inspector may know the workplace parties and may decide he doesn't need to go to that workplace.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): The member from Kingston and the Islands is absolutely correct. Nobody is against government efficiency, nobody is against streamlining, but certainly there's a question here of responsibility. It's the responsibility of Bill 57 not to repeal certain sections, such as when the inspector should do his duty and report hazardous chemicals in any factory or plant. That section should stay, because of what happened in the Junction Triangle, I remind you, only a few short years ago.

The Junction Triangle, in the west end of Toronto, has the highest concentration of chemical companies. We have the highest incidence of sickness in people living in the area and of schools being shut down. Why? Simply because the fire department, when called in to quell fires, were not told what chemicals they were fighting. If our firemen and firewomen come in to try to fight a fire and do not have access to a list of chemicals in a factory or on a shop floor, they are exposing themselves to grave danger. We know that.

Secondly, think about this: the member from Kingston and the Islands made absolute sense when he said the new amendment would allow an inspector to investigate over the telephone and not at the workplace itself. How can you investigate? That's like saying, "Let's tax this house by driving by"; we call that windshield assessment—

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I will have an opportunity in a couple of minutes to address more fully the error of the ways of the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for—oh, Mr Marchese. I'm sorry; I forget your riding. The bottom line is that you gentlemen have voted against every red tape bill, everything we've done to relieve the barrier on small business, the things that have created 840,000 jobs in this province, that have increased our tax revenue \$11 billion.

You, sir, put in place all those barriers, building on the foundation left to you by the Liberal Party. It's not surprising that you would be upset as we dismantle all of the barriers you put in place so that people in Ontario couldn't keep money, couldn't create jobs, couldn't make this the best place to live, work and raise a family. You're just being consistent.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Kingston and the Islands has two minutes to respond.

Mr Gerretsen: I appreciate what all the members had to say, but again, he did not address the issue. He talked in generalities, as if getting rid of these particular changes is going to change everything. He already claims that his government has done so much with all of these rules and regulations still being in place, so what's he complaining about? What is he complaining about? He still hasn't given me a reason as to why an employer should not keep a list of the hazardous material that is on his site. That's what section 36 right now requires. Why should that be scrapped? What has that got to do with

efficiency of government or efficiency in running an operation?

He still hasn't explained section 34, which talks about new biological or chemical agents, why the director should not be given notification of that. What has he got against that? It seems that this happens with each and every bill. We get some generalities thrown at us that somehow it's going to improve our productivity and this, that or the other thing, but nobody on the government side ever deals with the actual amendments that are being proposed and why they are being proposed.

We've given the members of the government ample opportunity and time here today to tell us why section 34 and section 36, which make eminent sense to everybody from a safety viewpoint, are being repealed. If the next member can do that, then please take a minute from your speech and set us straight. There are many other sections like that that affect us in exactly the same way. All we get from that side are generalities; we never get down to the specifics as to why changes are being made. That's all we're asking for on this side of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gilchrist: I certainly hope the member from Kingston and the Islands sticks around and listens intently to the answer, as I listened to his question, because the answer, Mr Gerretsen, is very simple.

Let me start with section 36, the one where you suggest an inventory of hazardous products should be kept in the workplace. Well, there's a small problem. The Liberal Party passed a bill, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, in 1987. A small matter, though: you never put in place any regulations to defend and enforce the very act. There are no regulations, thanks to what you did, and quite frankly, Mr Marchese, you had five years and you didn't put in place any regulations. So the very suggestion that this bill repeals anything is, sir, a canard. It is a canard. There are no regulations attendant to that section.

What we do have in place, though, is the far more comprehensive WHMIS system. Far more chemicals are controlled. There is access for every fire department to gain a listing of all of the chemicals used under the WHMIS plan. Who told us to make this change, Mr Gerretsen? The fire chiefs themselves. The fire chiefs told us they didn't want information overload; they didn't want to know every ruddy chemical in every plant. What they did want, if they identified a manufacturer in their community where the nature of their business suggested there might be hazardous chemicals or flammable chemicals on site in that premise, is up-to-date, detailed information. Through WHMIS they get far more than they would have gotten even if you had put in place regulations, which you did not.

The same answer applies to section 34. When a chemical is first introduced to this country, under the old act, in theory, they would have told us at the same time they're telling all the other provinces. What we have very pointedly said is that, while this bill includes the provision to ultimately repeal this section, the ministry is

negotiating with the federal government so that there will be one point of contact. And once under—I want to make sure I get it correct—the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the same chemical registry will take place, but instead of making businesses do it in PEI, New Brunswick, Ontario and all the other jurisdictions, they will have done it once. But until, sir, that national registry is in place, this section will not be proclaimed. So there's two.

2040

I could keep nitpicking, and I must put on the record how outrageous I thought the suggestions of Mr Kormos and Mr Marchese were, how insulting to every labour inspector out here, the suggestion that just because they would be given new discretionary powers to decide whether a site visit was required—and we heard the Minister of Labour give the perfect example, where an employee called up and alleged that he didn't think his boss was well enough trained to be a boss. What the ministry had said was, "Fax us down the particulars, because I don't think this is something that should occasion a three-hour drive out to the factory and a three-hour drive back." It could just as easily be done via fax machine.

If you are suggesting, sir, that any one of the inspectors out there would compromise the lives of the people in the workplaces across this province, then have the nerve to say that out loud, because that's what you're implying. That is scandalous, but it's totally consistent with what you did to them under the social contract. At least you haven't changed. The elections of 1995 and 1999 didn't teach you anything. The very unionized workers you stabbed with the social contract—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: The member will kindly address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Speaker, of course through you to the members of the NDP, who were so thoroughly set upon by the very workers they insulted with the social contract, it's not surprising that today they would allege that the people who are the front-line defenders of health and safety would so frivolously disregard their obligations. It's disgusting in the extreme.

This bill in its entirety builds upon the work of the Red Tape Commission over the last four and a half years, work that has been, I think by any measure, quite remarkable in the impact it's had on the regulatory burden faced by small business and large business and individuals in this province. The Red Tape Commission has eliminated so far 50 entire statutes. They've amended 200 others. They've eliminated 1,700 regulations. I'm immensely proud to now be part of the commission, and I want to thank my colleagues and my predecessor, Mr Spina, who was the first person on the government side to speak tonight to this bill, for the great work they have done to date, and I know the commission will continue to look for every possible opportunity to eliminate the barriers that businesses face in this province.

Our fight against red tape is not unique. Many jurisdictions around the world have picked up on the example

of Ontario. But I found it interesting that a recent Harvard University-World Bank study, taking the data from the province of Ontario exclusively as the representative sample for Canada, judged that out of all the jurisdictions in the world, we were the place where small business, a prospective small business person, faced the least amount of red tape, the fewest barriers to creating new jobs and growing.

We're committed to that path, and this bill is another example of that commitment, a commitment that we've been building on since 1995 for a stronger economy, complemented by a tax cut policy that has reduced the taxes for individuals in this province by 42%, that's leading corporations down to the lowest tax of any jurisdiction in North America. I know the folks on the other side think it's just coincidence that each year for the last three-plus years, Ontario has led the industrialized world in the increase in gross domestic product—not the first in Canada, not the first in North America; the first in the world. While we're talking about educational issues around here, maybe the math class you folks went to was different than the Toronto public school I went to, but you can't get better than first place, and that is the tribute that the World Bank and Harvard University have given to the province of Ontario.

The proposed changes in this bill are a result of the practice of the Red Tape Commission to listen to the voice of the public and of business. They are calling for fairer rules, more efficient rules, easier-to-understand rules. This bill does just that. As you've heard before, this bill changes 120 regulations in 15 different ministries, and we haven't stopped there.

When we took office six years ago, we recognized that red tape was one of the biggest barriers, along with a bureaucracy that was too big and taxes that were too high. All of these things were strangling the innovation of small business.

I don't have to look any further than my own riding to see thousands of new jobs, to see the direct effects of changes from previous red tape bills. In the very mall where I have my constituency office, we have an Ontario Connects kiosk. That Ontario Connects kiosk is a visible demonstration of how this government has applied creative thinking and new technology to solve red tape problems that existed before we were elected.

Up until 1995, if you wanted to incorporate a business in Ontario, it would take roughly eight weeks. But 50% of the people who applied the first time were rejected and had to refine their applications. It took from 12 to 16 weeks for those folks. After you got your original registration, the average business then had to go to four other ministries or agencies of the government to complete all of their licence approvals. Now, as the result of a previous red tape bill, the Ontario Connects kiosk will register a new business in Ontario and give that information to every other agency that needs it in under 20 minutes. Not 16 weeks—20 minutes.

At the same time, previous governments said that we couldn't trust restaurants and bars. Even though Visa or

MasterCard had trusted them with one of their pieces of plastic, we couldn't trust them. I don't know what we were thinking in terms of how we would suffer, because we would get our money from Visa or MasterCard if those cards were allowed, but both the previous governments turned down proposals from the hospitality industry to do just that.

We took a different tack and in one fell swoop we improved the cash flow for bars and restaurants in Ontario by \$300 million, money that could be applied to improve their premises, hire more staff, lower their prices, increase their promotion. Any number of opportunities were given to them. Some \$300 million was freed up in just one sector of our economy.

We chuckle about a number of the things we inherited, which we've cleaned up through bills such as Bill 57 here today. When we were elected, if you were filling out a mining claim up in northern Ontario, one of the most important industries in this province, the previous government said, "We know what colour pen you should have to use. You have to use red ink." Now, I know that the previous government used to get a volume discount buying red ink, but it's taking it to an extreme to expect people to use the same colour to fill out their government forms.

And who can forget the classic example of the requirement that tour buses in Ontario had to carry an axe. That regulation dated from a time when buses had wooden floors and no emergency door. So what happened when buses got to the US border? Well, axes were considered a dangerous weapon. Of course, guns are OK in the United States but axes are a dangerous weapon. So the bus driver would stop and either hide the axe in a little cubbyhole he or she knew about somewhere on the bus or, more likely, they would go up to the side of the road and hide the axe in the bushes, to be retrieved on the return trip. What a ridiculous imposition on another important aspect of the Ontario economy. So that regulation was repealed.

We've got some very important initiatives in this bill, though, that I must draw to the attention of the members opposite and anyone listening. In this bill, for example, we've given new abilities for the ministry to add third parties to the list of those for whom it is an offence to provide false statements to the Ministry of the Environment. The reason for this is that a number of statutes have been created over the years that actually use third parties to do the testing or the review of particular programs.

Perhaps the best example is the Drive Clean program. It's obviously delivered by third parties, namely, garages. They in turn supply the information to another arm's-length entity which is not currently a crown agent and that entity controls the database on behalf of the ministry. Since the Ministry of Transportation relies on that data for making its licensing decisions, it's clear that the information submitted to that database must be honest and accurate. This bill will guarantee that anyone supplying information to the ministry, even arm's-length people who aren't government employees, will be required to be

honest. I guess the members opposite disagree with that standard.

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The bill also contains an amendment to authorize the Ministry of the Environment to establish and require the payment of administrative fees under certain acts such as the Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act and the Pesticides Act. This notice is put on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry, so we have guaranteed that there will be even greater opportunities for public input and awareness if fee changes are ever contemplated in the future.

The government obviously disagrees with members of the opposition who would suggest the status quo of hiding behind far less visible regulations as the means to change fees for the public as the way to go. In fact, one of the members opposite suggested the new format for considering the establishment of fees was inappropriate. The problem with their argument is that it's already the practice in other ministries and has been for many years. For example, the Ministry of Natural Resources uses the fee structure as part of the fish and wildlife licence. It's also used in the Aggregate Resources Act and 23 other acts administered by the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. So the suggestion that this mechanism to address the setting of administrative fees is inappropriate obviously flies in the face of existing government practices and practices that applied even under previous governments.

There is another section to this bill that's being opposed by members opposite. These would be the same members who, day in and day out, suggest that they are the voice of municipalities, they are the voice of the public, and somehow we're going against the public interest with the pieces of legislation we bring forward. Well, the amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act are in this bill at the express request of the city of Hamilton, supported by countless other municipalities that have said they want greater municipal representation on their conservation authorities. In voting against this bill, the members opposite will be saying to the good burghers of the city of Hamilton, "We disagree. We don't think you should have the majority say in your own conservation authority. We don't think you should have the right to even set the number of members on the conservation authority. Leave the status quo. Make it far more bureaucratic, far more red tape."

Instead, we've taken a different tack. We trust the municipalities and we're going to give them these expanded opportunities to decide for themselves what is the appropriate number of people and what is the right ratio between public members, city councillors or any other criteria they want to apply.

But perhaps the most important aspect of this bill and the one that truly troubles me when I hear members opposite suggesting they will not be supporting this bill is the changes that would deal with what's called the hiatus problem under the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996.

There is a situation right now where if both parties have decided to register a support order with the Family Responsibility Office, and there is an exchange, obviously, of funds between the two parties, and let's say after some period of time there is an understanding that the system is working well, that the payer can be trusted, and the payee decides they will remove themselves, by mutual agreement, from the actual oversight of the Family Responsibility Office and the payment will occur between the two parties directly, that power exists under the act to respect their personal views. That doesn't change.

The problem has been that in the period after they have left the plan, if there is ever a default and the two parties return to the Family Responsibility Office, in that hiatus, there has been some doubt about whether or not there was the regulatory authority to have the Family Responsibility Office recover any shortfall in funds.

I'm proud to say that the Family Responsibility Office had in fact been making every move to recover those funds. The problem is, a recent Divisional Court order set aside the ability for the FRO to do that. While that case has been appealed, the appeal won't likely be heard until fall of this year. Let the lawyers duke it out this fall, but it's far more important to deal with the issue of making sure the sole-support parent—usually the sole-support woman—gets the funds they deserve.

The fact of the matter is, in voting against this bill you jeopardize the ability to collect any funds owing during the hiatus period. To the members opposite, I think that is utterly shameful. So if you don't agree with that section, have the temerity to stand up and say why. Otherwise, I submit to you that is one of the most important changes we are proposing under this act and, I would think, is obviously worthy of your support.

I think we have addressed the concerns, although having asked whether he was going to stick around—I know it's not appropriate, but he posed the question—unfortunately, Mr Gerretsen chose not to remain to hear my speech. But I want to make it clear—

Mr Levac: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I do believe it's still inappropriate to address anyone's attendance in this place.

The Acting Speaker: It's a point of order.

Mr Gilchrist: Loath as I am, I should never fall into the bad habits of Mr McGuinty or Mr Duncan in that regard. I appreciate the reminder from one of their colleagues, Mr Levac, and hopefully the same message will go back to the front benches of the Liberal Party.

Mr Maves: He got himself in Hansard.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes, Mr Levac did prove he was here today and got himself in Hansard.

The bottom line is, concerns have been raised by both the Liberal and NDP members, and I have addressed them here. If they have any new concerns that they haven't raised yet in the over two hours that they've had an opportunity to put forward their views, I hope they'll take the opportunity to raise them in the next rotation. Otherwise, having addressed those concerns, I submit to

you this is about good government, this is about less regulation for business in Ontario, this is about finding new efficiencies and ensuring that this economy continues to thrive and prosper as no other economy in the world. I'm certainly going to be supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): This is quite a big bill, and there's quite a lot in it. There's one aspect of it that actually hasn't been discussed or debated very much at all, and that relates to the Ministry of Community and Social Service and, may I say, the minister's commitment to the developmental services sector and the challenges they face.

As some members may know, in recent years a number of employees and their trade unions who receive funding from Comsoc under the Developmental Services Act have applied to bargain under the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act. HLDAA deems hospital workers to be an essential service, as I think everybody here knows, and strikes are prohibited as a result. But in return, labour disputes go directly to binding arbitration with an impartial panel of arbitrators.

In Bill 57 the government is amending HLDAA so this mechanism does not apply to employees who receive community and social services funding under the Developmental Services Act. These agencies will now all have to barter under the Labour Relations Act with no choice to apply under HLDAA, which I think could mean the potential for long strikes or lockouts as a prolonged bargaining process takes place. Therefore, those people with disabilities who receive care from these workers could be denied service while bargaining was taking place.

As far as I'm concerned, the move in this particular area is an affront to the so-called lauding of the developmental sector that Mr Baird has done so frequently. Ministers Baird and Clement have said repeatedly that disability issues are a priority for the government, and yet they're removing the employees from essential-service status, which I think puts the citizens receiving those services at risk. I believe this is simply another move by the government to circumvent responsibility and accountability which is covered in HLDAA. This is something that needed to be brought up and, I think, will probably be discussed by a few other members. But that concerns me. We know the challenges that are out there in the developmental services sector. Minister Baird talks about those challenges. Some of the unions that have bargained under HLDAA have a right to do so. This is something that removes that. It hasn't been discussed much, and I think it should be.

2100

Mr Marchese: I know the member for Scarborough East would like the opposition, of course, to raise other issues, and we would like to. But we're so limited in terms of our ability to debate issues. We've got a couple of minutes. I've got a two-minute response here. We had a lead from my friend from Niagara Centre. We haven't got much time, and you've got to focus your energies.

You can't, of course, ramble about every aspect of this big, 100-page bill. That's why we focused our energies on the matter of occupational health and safety. I refer you again, M. Gilchrist from Scarborough East, to the letter written by the inspectors to your buddy Chris Stockwell, who sits in front of you more or less.

They say the following: "From our experience, we have found that what seems like a minor health and safety problem from an over-the-phone work refusal report generally turns out to be much more serious when we're able to investigate the circumstances directly. Indeed, the ministry's own data will bear out the fact that the work refusal provision is used quite infrequently."

Then they say, "Likely, there could be many more well-founded work refusals than actually do occur."

These are the inspectors. I'm not saying this. These are people in the field, on the front lines. You guys have to listen to them, if you don't listen to us.

They also say, "We do not see the virtue in repealing section 34 requiring employers provide notice when introducing a new substance in the workplace." They say the same thing of section 36.

I'm not saying this, members for Niagara Falls and Scarborough East. Your inspectors, who work for you and your minister, are saying this, and they're saying you're not listening to them. They're in the front lines. How could you not be consulting the very people who are involved in giving you a better understanding of occupational health and safety?

Mr Maves: The member for Trinity-Spadina actually proves by his comments that he's not listening. Under the bill, if it passes, it will be at those inspectors' discretion whether or not they want to visit the workplace. The member gave the example that someone could call in with a right to refuse 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 times and said the inspector should have to go each and every time. We think that's nonsense. We think an inspector would say that's nonsense. That inspector, who is probably familiar with the workplace after the first 1,000 times he's been there and seen the refusal to work, would talk to the employer representative, talk to the employee representative and say, "Oh, it's that one again. I don't have to come," and he wouldn't go to the workplace to see the work refusal.

Back in 1997, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, I consulted with labour groups and business groups. I did quite a tour for a couple of weeks—I believe it was in July 1997 after I became the parliamentary assistant—following my colleague Mr Baird. I had meetings in Niagara Falls with representatives of business and chambers of commerce. Later on I met with members from the CAW and from district labour councils. We'd talk about the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I was in Windsor and Cambridge and Kitchener and Waterloo and all kinds of different areas.

The employers would talk about the right to refuse and say it unfortunately gets abused often, where people will use it as a labour relations tool. In the afternoon, after meeting with business and hearing this, I'd turn to the

labour gentlemen. After 20 minutes of getting to know one another I told them, "You know, I used to work at General Motors and I know the guys used to put their eyeglasses in their pockets all the time," we would talk about these things and they'd say, "Yes, maybe it does happen now and then." They wouldn't admit it happened as often as business claimed it did, but they admitted it happened.

This just makes the whole system a lot more logical and leaves discretion with the inspector.

Mr Levac: I want to start by explaining clearly my earlier point of order. I came to this place and was told the rules by the Clerk. I have great respect for this place, and I think we need to raise that level. If we start dropping down to the level of trying to call each other names and using inappropriate language in this House, we remove the right of citizens to believe we're doing very useful work here. I rose on a point of order to try to bring decorum into this place and will continue to do so, believing that following the rules is an important aspect of what makes us parliamentarians in this place and for the people of Ontario to understand that I hold it very sacred and dear. Anyone who wants to make fun of it can continue to do so. The people will hear and very clearly understand that there are still people in this place who want to follow the rules.

Further, the member for Scarborough East is trying to explain to us that sections 34 and 36 were easily explained away by saying that the fire chief said, "It was too much information and we didn't want to deal with it." I don't know if he talked to the firefighters. The professional firefighters have made it very clear to me in my discussions with them that they do indeed want to make sure that section does not get repealed. They fear for their lives.

The member for London West made it very clear that this whole bill, every piece of this bill, sections 34 and 36 included, are job killers. It kills jobs, it kills growth and it kills the ability for those companies to make money. I'm telling you right now, I want to go on record, and I will stick to this record, that if you repeal sections 34 and 36, you are going to possibly kill people. It's not acceptable that people who have used this section have asked that information of the Minister of Labour time and time again. Within section 36—the Minister of Labour spoke to me personally and said, "All they have to do is ask us for the information and we'll give it to them." That's reverse logic. Give it to all those municipalities now.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Scarborough East has two minutes to respond.

Mr Gilchrist: To Mr Levac, I don't know what more we have to say. If it was so important to you and the other members of the Liberal Party, why didn't you ever put in place a schedule? There is no power to do what those firefighters are suggesting is important.

If they are under WHMIS, let me suggest to you—and I don't know at what level in the fire department you're talking but Al Speed, the fire chief of the largest municipality in this province, when asked during the Hickson

fire in my riding, one of the largest fires in the province's history and certainly in the last decade, whether he had all the information of every chemical in the place, he said, "Absolutely." The fire department has absolute access to WHMIS—no different than anyone else in the public—and they are availing themselves of that opportunity. If your fire department isn't, I strongly suggest that they consult the Ministry of Labour and find out how to do that. But, sir, I don't believe that this is something unknown to any fire department in the province.

The bottom line is in both those cases we're talking about cleaning up a regulation that you folks never enacted, and it's duplicating the far more comprehensive WHMIS plan.

To Mr Gravelle, if you don't understand the difference about the arbitration process taking place for all of the other agencies that are delivering those important services and the handful that had been incorrectly defined as hospitals, if you really can sit here and look us in the eye and say that those agencies are hospitals, then, sir, I would have to question your judgment. The bottom line is, they're now all going to be treated consistently. They all will still have the same ability to go to arbitration, but the ridiculous comparison with hospitals will be eliminated for that handful and the double standard will be eliminated.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this debate this evening. I'm just going to check with the whip, but I believe it would be a 20-minute time slot as opposed to what is currently showing. There we go. I want to be sure I don't run over time, Mr Speaker, because you'll recognize that in this last participation of the evening I am, as my colleagues are, attempting to deal with another omnibus bill. This government's specialty is omnibus bills. I've come to think of them as being the sons or daughters or grandsons or granddaughters of Bill 26, which is one of this government's original pieces of legislation, and which I, for one, am determined to keep in people's memories because I have seen very few pieces of legislation that come from this government which have not been based on some change that was initiated in that original piece of legislation, Bill 26.

You'll recall, Mr Speaker, that Bill 26 was a piece of legislation that we were compelled to have one of our members sit in this House overnight just to try and stop from being passed with no hearings, no consultations, in a brief period of time before the House was adjourning for Christmas. We finally managed to get two weeks of hearings on that omnibus bill, which has brought about truly significant changes in major pieces of legislation.

While we have had a series of omnibus bills since then, we haven't been able to have any members sit in the House overnight because of course the government changed the rules so that we had no ability to force the government to take even omnibus bills on major pieces of legislation into committee and into hearings.

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Tonight I'm not sure whether or not anybody would classify the act and the changes to the acts here as being, for the most part, major changes. I'm certainly going to want to focus my comments on the Occupational Health and Safety Act changes, in part because of my concern with the changes that are proposed and in part because I see it as part and parcel of a pattern this government has adopted of being prepared to take significant risks with the safety of workplaces and the safety of our environment.

But before I focus my remarks on the occupational health and safety components of this bill, I want to recognize the fact that this omnibus bill actually deals with, if I counted correctly, 47 different acts. One of the acts I noticed is the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act. I don't think I've seen a reference in the House to the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act since the current Premier, in his filibustering days, decided to hold up the Legislature by reading into the Hansard the name of every lake and river in Ontario. I think that filibuster had something to do with the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, but I'm not quite sure.

The ability Mr Harris, now Premier, used as an opposition leader to hold up pieces of legislation which you genuinely believe should not be proceeding in too rapid a way is an ability that's simply been taken away. I'm not sure that any of us would have chosen to use the reading of lakes and rivers into the Hansard as being a way of holding up important legislation, but it was the way Mr Harris chose. Now he sees no reason to have any lengthy debate in the House, which is why we've had a whole series of time allocation motions.

It should come as no surprise that we had a time allocation motion again this afternoon. If there are any paramedics watching this evening, I think it's important they know that the government has brought in time allocation on Bill 57, the bill that significantly changes the way in which collective bargaining for paramedics in this province will be carried out. It's a bill we have serious concerns with, as do the paramedics, because we believe it is going to lead to significant labour unrest.

We've had a time allocation on that bill. It will go to committee for one day next Tuesday—at least there's a hope in committee to make amendments—and then come back to the House for one day of third reading. That's the way the government deals with significant changes to legislation that affect a great many lives and, indeed, I would contend, when you're dealing with something like paramedics, the safety of the population of Ontario.

I'm not going to speak to all 47 acts tonight. I am going to concentrate on those parts of this omnibus bill which I think are of serious public concern in terms of public safety.

I noticed the member for Scarborough East was talking about our opposition to the Conservation Authorities Act. I'm not sure that any of my colleagues have spoken about the Conservation Authorities Act, so I'd be interested in knowing what the member for Scarborough

East thinks we are objecting to. Maybe we should be objecting to it if he's so concerned about our opposition to that part of this omnibus bill.

I noticed that one of the things he said about that conservation act change was that it was supported by the city of Hamilton. His statement was—and I wrote it down because I was so intrigued by it—“We trust municipalities and we are prepared to give them more responsibility.” If that isn't the understatement of a Conservative government member. This government has more than entrusted municipalities with far more than the municipalities ever asked to be handed.

The Planning Act is another of the acts that's addressed in this bill. It has something to do with the way in which upper-tier municipalities can devolve responsibility for Planning Act approvals to lower-tier municipalities. I have a number of those lower-tier municipalities in my riding. In fact, I don't really have an upper-tier municipality. We have something called district area services boards but we haven't been forced to amalgamate into an upper-tier municipality yet. Do you know what those lower-tier municipalities are telling me about the changes to the Planning Act, one of which is in this omnibus bill? They're telling me they've been given this new responsibility for planning approvals. They don't mind being given the authority for planning approvals, but they haven't been given any of the money that the province used to spend on the planning approvals process. It seems to them that that's a somewhat unfair shifting of the responsibility.

The member for Scarborough East, who spoke just before me, waxed eloquent about the economic success of Ontario and how the elimination of inefficiencies and barriers to business was a key factor in that economic success. I've looked at the 47 acts and I honestly can't find anything in this bill that is going to be recognized internationally as the removal of a barrier to business success.

If that's what the Harris government is going to found its future economic policy on, these changes in 47 acts, ranging from the Architects Act to the Courts of Justice Act to, let me see, the Funeral Directors and Establishments Act, some change to the Electricity Act—it would take me my entire 20 minutes to read all the 47 acts that are being changed by this bill, so I won't do that—I'm just not sure that the member for Scarborough East can hold this act up as something which is a significant step in international recognition of Ontario's openness for business.

What I do believe is that this act is yet another initiative on the part of the Harris government which is an abandoning of responsibility to ensure that there are safe procedures in our workplace, and that is what I want to focus my remarks on this evening.

I want to start, though, with the repeal of section 43. I recognize that sections 36 and 34 have been the focus of much of the discussion, but section 43 also caught my eye. Section 43 says that whereas under the current law workers have the right to refuse unsafe work, they have the right to have the workplace investigated by a Ministry

of Labour inspector, and they have the right to be there during an investigation, the amendment in this bill will allow an inspector to investigate over the phone and not at the workplace itself.

I simply do not understand how an inspector can investigate a workplace safety complaint if he's not there. I suppose the worker still has the right to be there, but it doesn't help very much if the inspector is not there, actually looking at the situation which is the focus of the complaint. It seems to me like one of the most ludicrous amendments that I've seen to a piece of legislation. As ludicrous as it might be, it could have serious consequences in that the investigator investigating the complaint, not being in the location to be able to actually look at the complaint and judge the seriousness of it, may make faulty decisions about the safety of the workplace.

I know that this government has done some very strange things in the past, things that don't make sense. There's a reference in Bill 57, again because it's an omnibus bill, to the Family Responsibility Office. The member for Scarborough East made some explanation of why that particular change is in the bill. I don't have a need to get into that, Mr Speaker, because whatever this change is, it's not going to address the sheer chaos that this government introduced when they made a decision about dealing with family responsibility, the enforcement of court-ordered payments for child support that meant regional offices where people could actually walk in, sit down with an enforcement officer, discuss the situation, and the enforcement officer in turn could go into the community to deal with the issue. This government changed that so that in my community that regional office was shut down. It was replaced by a telephone call, a telephone call dealt with here in Toronto. This House has had a litany of examples that come from every constituency office. They would come from the government constituency offices too, if the government members were allowed to bring forward criticisms of their own government. But certainly opposition members have brought forth example after example of the sheer chaos that continues to reign in the enforcement of court-ordered child support, because you can't deal with people in such real situations over the telephone. The regional offices were far more effective in dealing with those situations because they knew the reality of the people and the reality of the situations.

I submit that in the same way, having a Ministry of Labour inspector deal with a complaint about workplace safety over the telephone is going to be fated to be totally ineffective and in fact potentially dangerous. Let this be offered as yet another of the warnings to the Harris government that they may, some few years down the road, have cause to wish they had heeded.

The same concern, I believe, applies to any discussion of the repeal of section 36 and section 34. Section 36 says that employers must keep an inventory of hazardous substances in the workplace—that's what is currently in the bill—and they have to provide public access to that information so that people know not only what is in the workplace but that they have access to that. There's an

inventory of what's there and the public has access to it; there's an awareness of what the risks are. Bill 57 repeals that section so that you don't have to keep an inventory any longer and you don't have to provide public access.

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The member for Scarborough East says, "Don't worry, it's all in WHMIS." I don't see how this particular duplication, if that indeed is what it is, does anything except add to the assurance that that inventory will be kept and that the people who are in that workplace will be made aware. We're not just talking about access by police and fire to information about hazardous substances in the workplace; we're talking about the employees who are in that workplace being aware. We're talking about people who may be on a more incidental basis in the workplace being made aware of potential hazards. I just don't understand why you need to bring in a legislative change to remove something which—my office hasn't gotten a lot of calls about this. Nobody has come to my office and said, "This is an onerous responsibility. It's interfering with our ability to do business, and as a result of that we're not being recognized internationally any longer as a place that's open for business." Nobody has come to my office and said, "This is a really significant barrier."

What I know will come to my office is that if there is an accidental workplace spill, if there's an accidental contact with a hazardous substance, and this government repeals a provision of the act that provided an assurance that there would be an inventory and there would be a public awareness of the presence of hazardous chemicals or hazardous substances in the workplace, this government saw fit to repeal that.

The other thing, and maybe it's an even greater concern, is that currently employers must notify the director of health and safety if they bring any new chemical or biological substances into the workplace. Bill 57 removes that requirement. Again, the government says it's a duplication. They say it's a duplication because Environment Canada demands the same thing. I would argue as strongly as I possibly can that there must be a direct reporting to the Ontario government of any potential hazard that's created by bringing new chemical or biological substances into the workplace. I don't trust a process which is going to have Environment Canada notified and then Environment Canada in turn has to notify the Ontario government of a potential danger.

The reason I feel so strongly about this—and my colleagues have spoken to this—is that we spent a good part of this day recognizing what we now know to have been the inaction of a government that was warned repeatedly of inadequacies in its reporting procedures on water testing.

I think you've all seen the story that was in the Canadian Press today based on a story that was on the CBC, and we know the Walkerton situation. We know that Dr Richard Schabas, the province's top medical officer in 1997, wrote to the health minister of the day, Jim Wilson, regarding the lack of legal requirements in the reporting of bad test results. Dr Schabas said at the time that with

privatization of water testing there needed to be a legal requirement to have bad test results reported to the local medical officer of health, and he called the lack of any requirement a serious oversight. Those warnings went unheeded by five different ministers of the government and nothing was done about reporting of water testing results, a protocol for clear reporting lines, until seven people died in Walkerton.

I'm not prepared to accept an argument from the government that says that for some greater administrative ease, to eliminate duplication for the sake of eliminating duplication, we are now going to have reports of dangerous, hazardous substances in the workplace made to Environment Canada in the hope that Environment Canada will put in place a protocol that would report back to the province of Ontario. That's not good enough. There is no reason not to have direct reporting.

Nor is there any reason to repeal section 52 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which says now that employers must report accidents to the health and safety director within four days. The amendment in this bill would require this only if an inspector is notified. What that means, since inspectors rarely investigate minor accidents, is that the minor accidents will rarely be reported. That means the director isn't going to know about dangerous workplaces until something truly major happens.

I don't think we should be setting up a legislative system which removes safety precautions and substitutes an inadequate reporting mechanism, whether it's in the repeal of section 34, letting Environment Canada take the responsibility of reporting dangerous substances in the workplace, or whether it's the repeal of section 52, in which employers only have to report accidents if an inspector has already been notified. I don't think we need to remove those safety provisions and create a situation in which we are not alerted to a problem until something major happens. Surely we don't need more deaths.

I guess I'm particularly concerned about this because there are so many situations in which the government has taken action and has been warned that those actions are going to compromise health and safety. I think of the nursing home situation: again, a weekend story, a tragic story of two men having been beaten to death in a nursing home. Do you know how many times in the last six years we have warned this government of what would happen when they removed the regulations, the minimum nursing requirements for nursing homes? Do you know how many times we've raised the issue of the concern that people working in nursing homes have about the safety of their patients and indeed about their own safety? But the government doesn't choose to heed any of those warnings. It doesn't take them seriously. They probably think it is just some sort of shoddy ploy in order to get more money for the nursing homes. And so we had another tragedy over the weekend.

Ambulances and emergency room crises: how many days and weeks and months have we tried to make this government understand the seriousness of the emergency room situation and the fact that we have people who are

being shuttled from hospital to hospital because there is no room for them at a hospital, when we have hospitals 100 times more often on critical care bypass this year than they were in a similar period last year, 100 times worse in terms of people not being able to get a place in an emergency room when they're critically ill? And yet this government doesn't act.

How many times have we tried to make this government understand that the reason emergency rooms are telling patients they can't come in is because there is literally no room for them in the hospital? We've had two inquests already on deaths because of the emergency room crisis. We have three investigations and another inquest currently being undertaken by the Ontario coroner, and that's in the greater Toronto area alone. And yet the government doesn't heed the warnings.

How many situations do we have to face, how many deaths, how many inquests before this government is prepared to hear warnings and take reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of people in Ontario,

whether it is in their workplace, in their homes or in the communities in which they live?

If there were more time, I would like to discuss the issue of community and social services and the withdrawal of community and social services workers from HLDAA. I recognize that this is something which places community and social services workers, people who provide developmental services care to individuals with disabilities, in the same kind of bargaining framework as other employees of Comsoc. But I do want to recognize that it comes at the same time that the government is mistreating ambulance workers, other health care workers, in terms of essential services. I think one of the goals of this government is to get rid of essential services workers. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. It now being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2130.

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Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Vacant

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

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

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