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of Ontario
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 5 June 2001

Mardi 5 juin 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 5 June 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 5 juin 2001

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BROWNFIELDS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES FRICHES CONTAMINÉES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 4, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 56, An Act to encourage the revitalization of contaminated land and to make other amendments relating to environmental matters / projet de loi 56, loi visant à encourager la revitalisation des terrains contaminés et apportant d'autres modifications se rapportant à des questions environnementales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): The floor goes to the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the brownfields bill. This legislation, as I indicated yesterday in response to another member's intervention, is legislation that initially, when I heard about it and saw a report emanating from a committee, I was quite enthusiastic about. Having read the legislation and having heard representations from people who would be directly impacted by it, that enthusiasm was considerably dampened and makes it difficult to support this kind of legislation, because it simply doesn't go far enough. It doesn't provide the relief that is needed because it is such a small step forward.

I think the minister would like to see this go to committee and receive some input and perhaps have some amendments placed. There is a possibility we can improve the legislation if that be the case, but as it is now, it represents to a large extent a downloading upon municipalities. It helps them out a bit in some ways, but they have to assume new responsibilities that could be onerous financially, and if that sounds familiar, it most certainly is.

One of the reasons we want, if possible, to see what are called brownfield sites—old industrial sites I guess is the best way of putting it in many ways—redeveloped is that often they are in the midst of communities, in the midst of municipalities where development should take place. Far too often in recent years we've seen urban

sprawl moving further and further from the core of major municipalities and even of mid-sized and smaller municipalities in this province. It became an issue in the United States to a certain extent in the last election campaign in various contests between gubernatorial candidates. Even in the federal election campaign, the presidential candidates talked about the issue of urban sprawl and its detrimental effects on America, and certainly we could say here.

Most of us live in communities, if we are living in mid- to larger-sized communities, that are urban. Most of us live in communities where the downtown isn't what it once was. Mr Speaker, you're from Hamilton. The Hamilton Spectator, CH TV and your radio stations that deal with talk and with public affairs have talked about downtown Hamilton which was at one time, as was downtown St Catharines, as was downtown anywhere in Ontario, a thriving place. It was the centre of action. It was a retail hub. There were service businesses there. People resided very often in the businesses where they were located. Piece by piece these downtown areas were dismantled as there was a movement, particularly of commercial development, to the suburbs. This of course had a very detrimental effect on downtowns and there is land available now for some redevelopment to take place.

I should say that there was a period of time where we talked about urban renewal and what people really meant was getting a bulldozer in, knocking down the old buildings that had some historic and heritage connotations and value, and putting up some new structures. That may have provided some new buildings in some of our downtown areas, but it made us lose many of those buildings which were very attractive.

1850

The city of St Catharines has St Paul Street, which is our main street; it winds through the middle of the city. From time to time we see some new businesses located there and we're pleased with that. Many of us can recall from our childhood going down to the downtown area and seeing some of the major department stores down there and seeing some other retail businesses which brought people to the core of the city. Now what we see far too often, in my view—some disagree—is a movement of the mega-stores to the periphery of the city. It seems to me I read that the city of Guelph is in one of these battles, where, I think it's a Wal-Mart in that particular case, wants to locate at the edge of the city instead of in the downtown part of the city. One of the councillors on Guelph council is fighting this particular

battle. Indeed, there have been some court cases that have taken place where I think the major metropolitan store, the mega-store—a department store, we would call it—has to provide information on their profits and their sales to see what the effect is on other businesses. So anything we can do that would encourage the redevelopment of our downtown cores is of benefit.

What used to happen at one time was some industrial types of businesses would locate right in neighbourhoods and people would walk to work. Not everybody had a vehicle in those days and it was often convenient to locate these businesses right in the downtown area or a downtown neighbourhood. As time went on, some of these businesses closed; some of the industries moved out to the periphery or into industrial parks. They weren't always as clean a business as we would like them to be today when they've vacated the property. They provided jobs, but in many cases—I think of English Electric in St Catharines—there were PCBs left in the neighbourhood as part of that operation. It wasn't that the company wanted to leave PCBs there; it was part of the operation of a plant.

In Port Colborne there is an issue that's of some significance among people who live next to the Inco plant. They found high levels of nickel and various forms of nickel in the soil and even in the households. The people, particularly in the Rodney Street area as they call it, have had not only the Ministry of the Environment confirm this but also an independent consultant hired by a lawyer representing people in that community against various government agencies because of contamination.

If we're going to redevelop properties of that kind, we obviously have to clean them up. This is where the problem arises. If you are a developer wanting to look at a property of this kind for redevelopment, you may rub your hands in anticipation because of the location and the potential, but your legal counsel will always tell you that it is a dangerous move to try to redevelop this land if there is a possibility of some serious contamination that has to be remediated or perhaps even removed.

Financial institutions have been reluctant to lend money to these developers because they feel that it's risky, first of all, and second, if the development fails and they end up being the owner of the property, they may well then be responsible for the cleanup of that land, and that could be a substantial cost.

I think the government looked at this and said, "Let's try to find some way to redevelop the lands." In the city of Toronto we think of the port lands, the east port in Toronto, industrial lands and so on that have to be redeveloped. The reason there's some interest in those today is the potential of the Olympic Games coming to Toronto in the year 2008 and having to use those lands. But in your community of Hamilton, Mr Speaker, in mine of St Catharines, in that of my friend from Sudbury who has huge smelting and refining operations with Falconbridge and Inco, and in virtually any community you can find that has a major industry, there's a potential for contamination of that land.

How do you solve the problem? The minister brought forward a bill he hopes will provide the basis of that solution. I use the word "basis" because I think an awful lot has to be added to the bill. We're going to try to help him out once it gets to committee. I suspect that, first of all, the deputy ministers, the civil service, were warning, "Don't go too far with this." Then other ministries will be saying, "Watch it. Be very careful. Don't get out on a limb on this." Yet in general the government wishes to see these lands developed. There's good reason for this. We don't want that urban sprawl, as I say.

In our area, the Niagara Peninsula, a good deal of the farmland has been paved over. It's sad to drive along old Highway 8 now, which used to be a scenic drive, and look at commercial and residential development on lands that should be used for farmland. I've always said, and I think most rural members would agree with this and I think many of the urban members, that if you're going to save the farm you have to save the farmer. You have to provide the necessary supports to the farming community to make their operations viable, because they provide something essential to us, and that is food for us to consume.

I look at the Niagara Peninsula, which was once full of tender fruit trees, grapes and so on. There's still a lot there, but so much of it is developed now. I had a tourist coming through the other day who had travelled through New York state and said, "I thought New York state was what was developed, but I drove through most of New York state and you couldn't see any development around, until you get into that area between St Catharines and Toronto, and particularly Stoney Creek, or now Grimsby, and Toronto and you see all this development taking place on good farmland."

Why is that important farmland? First, in many areas there are soils conducive to the growing of tender fruit and grapes, but second and even more important probably, there's a microclimate there, a special climate, that allows tender fruit to grow 27 days longer without frost—this is on average—below the escarpment than above the escarpment. I believe we should be saving these lands. I shake my head in amazement when I watch municipal councils making decisions on almost an inch-by-inch basis to develop lands. There are always people who come in with the argument, "Well, nobody's farming it." Of course not. You leave it lie for a while, the developer buys it, lets it lie for a while and then says, "Nobody's farming it." If you can have an obnoxious use there, even better, because people then accept development. That's most unfortunate.

We passed a resolution in this House not long ago that I brought forward, and I was pleased to see very heavy support for it. I saw it brought forward and approved, yet I know that on a week-by-week basis municipal councils make decisions that can pave over farmland just for development purposes. They always think somehow that the net benefit is there to the community, when sometimes there's in fact a net cost to that development that has taken place.

There's also a need for public transit. This is all part of a package: brownfields development, and public transit issues as well. It encourages people to not get involved in urban sprawl if people can travel by public transit. It means we don't have to keep widening the roads as often as possible. You've travelled the roads, Mr Speaker, from Toronto to Hamilton and you've been into the Niagara Peninsula and you see the roads widening and widening, yet the traffic just keeps increasing. We obviously have to have the provincial government get back in the business, the investment and the operations, of public transit in this province. It will help the air quality, it will help in reducing the consumption of fuel and it will help to preserve our agricultural land, and that is certainly needed.

1900

We have the Niagara Escarpment, a real gem, and I fear when I hear some of the proposals that are coming for the Niagara Escarpment. You're soon going to have a shopping centre full of—if not side by side—commercial developments of some kind or other if we're not careful, if we don't preserve that appropriately.

So one of the components is the component that's called brownfields. I want to be helpful to the minister in making some suggestions on how this legislation can be improved.

For the members who weren't here last night—I know the member for Burlington came in just to hear this at this time—I want to share with the members of the House the comments of Dianne Saxe. Dianne Saxe was a prosecutor with the Ministry of the Environment when I had the honour to be the minister and she did an excellent job. I believe she was on the committee that made recommendations on this and I want to share some of her concerns with the legislation. I suspect that if you were to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a confidential basis, he would tell you that he would want to see these improvements.

Here's the problem she sees with this legislation. First of all, "Innocent purchasers get some protection from government orders, 'but no protection at all from prosecution or civil suits.'" That sends a chill down the spines of those who want to develop that property. They're afraid of those civil suits; they're afraid of those prosecutions.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): When did she say that?

Mr Bradley: She said this subsequent to the legislation coming forward.

She said that, "While there's some protection regarding on-site contamination, there's no protection for off-site problems, 'a huge problem for any site with groundwater contamination.'" In other words, if you've got an old industrial site and whatever it is—the chemical, the substance—has made its way down into the groundwater, there may be legal obligations for the owner of that property. Therefore that owner is going to be looking for some protection.

"There's no protection for officers and directors and corporations that might consider getting involved in

brownfield redevelopment." Again, now that you can sue directly the officers of a company, they're going to be a bit reluctant to put their financial necks on the line if they feel there's going to be a significant legal suit.

She goes on to say, "There's no assurance that innocent buyers will be able to get mortgage financing for contaminated sites." I dealt with that a little earlier, saying why the financial institutions are apprehensive.

"There's no deadline on the province for completing reviews of cleanup plans, meaning developers may face 'long, unpredictable delays [sometimes] years' after buying a property." That costs the developer money to buy that property, to pay the interest on the money that was borrowed for it.

This is once again why we have to build up the Ministry of the Environment, so it has the staff and the financial resources to undertake activities of these kinds, so that we can see that development take place.

She also says, "And on the matter of who pays, the result is pretty much as expected. 'Municipalities will be able to provide some financial assistance for rehabilitation of contaminated sites,' Saxe says, 'though the province isn't planning to help.'"

She says that, "This legislation, unlike much important business, will go to committee for hearings. The government should come armed with a slew of amendments and a commitment to share the cost. Otherwise this bill will represent little more than an attempt to appear to be acting on a major problem without actually doing much. The Mike Harris government has already put too much legislation of this kind on the books."

I think her advice, her counsel, is very good on this issue. If the government wants to make a meaningful step forward, they will participate financially.

We used to have in this province an environmental contingency fund or a superfund, as they would call it in the US, where contributions were made and could be used for cleanups of this kind. I think the re-establishment of an environmental contingency fund would be very valuable in this particular case. I don't think the person who's buying the property to redevelop it should have to take all of the risk and incur all of the costs, when in fact the benefit is going to be to the entire community.

Municipalities can help a little bit, but they're already strapped for cash. The provincial government, which has lots of money to give away in tax cuts—\$2.2 billion to the corporations, \$235 million spent on self-serving, blatantly political advertising and now a new scheme of giving money away in terms of a tax credit—all this money that's available could be invested in properties of this kind, in helping to clean up these properties and making them paying propositions for the government. They would be yielding tax dollars back to everybody, it would be of benefit to the community and we could help stop urban sprawl.

The Acting Speaker: It is now time for questions and comments.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to offer my comments in terms of what

the member for St Catharines has been speaking about. I would like to say that his comments with respect to public transportation and air quality certainly strike a note in terms of my riding.

I certainly believe in public transportation. We've been trying to get GO Transit back into my riding, the city of Barrie, ever since the NDP government, I think it was in 1992, cut off service from Barrie. We have worked very diligently in recent years to save the track. When the federal government set out their plans to destabilize the railway industry in this country we were able, with the efforts of the city of Barrie, to purchase the line with provincial contributions and that track has remained intact from Bradford-West Gwillimbury to the city of Barrie. The city of Barrie is a part of the passenger rail advisory committee as a consultant, studying the benefits of rail transportation in the area.

I'd also add, with respect to highway transportation, that there was a recent public meeting in my riding with respect to expanding the highway on the 400 corridor within my riding. They were looking at eight to 10 to 12 lanes. I certainly voiced my opposition with respect to what I consider is quality of life and air quality within my riding. I'm totally against that amount of highway traffic coming through my riding, and I don't think it's in the best interests of not only my riding but in terms of the planning that goes through that area. I think the member for St Catharines is right on point on the air quality.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'd like to thank the member for St Catharines for providing his excellent insight into Bill 56, the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act. All members in this House would do well to listen to the former Minister of the Environment, our present critic, but an activist for sound environmental policies. Whether he was the minister or as a critic or as an independent member, he certainly is one who speaks with conviction and with passion about our environment and how to protect it, so I thank him for offering many, many suggestions to us.

I would suggest that the member for St Catharines grew up in Sudbury. He truly appreciates the job our community had to undergo in order to heal our landscape in the greening of Sudbury. I think it's a lesson for this province, this country and in fact the world to come to Sudbury and learn how to do it properly.

When Sudbury first started this initiative, we were given the tools to do it. The tools involved financial resources from the province of Ontario. It is impossible to heal the landscape and to revive brownfields without a firm commitment from the province of Ontario to help municipalities do it.

The Conservative government has downloaded so much on to municipalities that there is no more. The municipalities cannot stretch themselves any more. So if this government is truly interested in ensuring that this brownfields statute law amendment comes into play and is a meaningful piece of legislation, it has to increase the tools, give the municipality more tools, and one of those tools is additional financial resources.

1910

Mr Marchese: I want to say to the member for St Catharines, let it not be said that we do not, from time to time, agree with Liberals. I wanted to say to the member for St Catharines that this very evening, he and I are in agreement on this particular bill.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Friends again?

Mr Marchese: It's not a matter of friends again, not friends again. It's just that sometimes we agree and sometimes we disagree. Is that not the case, member from St Catharines?

On this issue, I happen to agree with his reservations. I think he's right to point out some of those reservations. He named Dianne Saxe, a former prosecutor in the Ministry of the Environment, who is now a corporate environmental lawyer and is probably doing OK in that sector, probably getting better paid there now than she was when she was working for you, Jim. God bless. But she has obviously written to various people about her concerns, and I think her reservations need to be taken into account.

It's for that reason that the former prosecutor is asking for hearings. Mr Bradley is calling for hearings and New Democrats obviously agree with the hearings, because it will give people an opportunity to express their concerns or reservations and, yes, if you're going to proceed along these lines, their ideas on how to improve what you have presented to this Legislature and the public so we can move forward with the full support of not just the opposition parties but of many who want to move on the redevelopment of these brownfields.

So I say to the member for St Catharines, we are in agreement with your reservations, and I'll be speaking to that shortly.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): When I was a relatively young person, probably eight or nine years old, we were going to the Quinte exhibition in Belleville.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): How long ago was that?

Mr Parsons: Today is my birthday, thank you very much. I appreciate those compliments.

Mr Chudleigh: But how many years ago?

Mr Parsons: Thirty-nine plus GST.

Just as we got there, my younger brother, as was his way, did something incredibly stupid and my father turned around and we went home. We were so close. This bill has so much potential. It's so close that I feel the same sense of frustration. It could almost achieve what we wanted.

We have taken some of the finest properties in Ontario and damaged them—not irreparably, but we've damaged them. All too often, it has been wonderful property along the riverfront. Here we have an opportunity to remedy that, to take land that should be in use so we don't have to take prime agricultural land, land that not only should be put back into use because it preserves agricultural land but land that is in the right location, in the downtown core, in an area where people want to be. Yet the magic

wand that needs to be there to make this happen is money.

Municipalities that are already struggling aren't going to have the money to do what needs to be done, to restore that land back to useful things.

To promise SuperBuild—I think SuperBuild exists so we can have photo opportunities and media events and reannounce and reannounce. In fact, the major reason for SuperBuild seems to be to pave more agricultural land and make new highways. It's actually quite counter to this bill, which wants to restore damage that has been done to our earth.

I concur with the member for St Catharines, with the reservations. Unfortunately, there have to be the finances to restore it, and this bill doesn't provide those.

The Acting Speaker: I think I speak on behalf of all members when I extend to you best wishes on your birthday.

The member for St Catharines now has two minutes to respond.

Mr Bradley: I appreciated the comments of the members for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, for Sudbury, for Trinity-Spadina and for Prince Edward-Hastings. As members can see from last night and tonight, this isn't a highly partisan debate. It's not charged with partisan rhetoric. It is reaching out and trying to help the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who I think is trying to achieve something positive in terms of this kind of brownfields development.

The member who represents Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford really homes in on a problem for communities like his. I've been up that way. I can remember when it was single-lane either way up Highway 27, and now it's a multi-lane highway going through the communities he represents. There's no question that adds to the kind of air quality you see, which is less than desirable sometimes. It simply affects adversely in many ways the quality of living we can have in any one of our communities.

I would like to see GO Transit, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who can speak to the Minister of Transportation and the Premier, extended to places like Barrie and St Catharines-Niagara Falls and so on, with provincial funding and assistance. I'll be the first to compliment the provincial government if indeed that is the case, regardless of what political stripe it happens to be.

Sudbury is a good example of a community that, with provincial assistance, saw a lot of greening of that community, which at one time was badly damaged by some of the pollutants that were around there. The member for Trinity-Spadina would know of the Niagara neighbourhood and the south Riverdale neighbourhoods which were cleaned up when they had contamination from lead smelters. It can be done, but brownfields development is only one component of a multi-faceted plan.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Marchese: I'm happy to speak to this bill, the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act, on this day,

Tuesday, at 7:20. Good citizens, welcome to a political forum. I want to say immediately, to dispel any misunderstanding about what we are talking about tonight, that brownfields are not fields covered in excrement. That's not what we're talking about. It appears like a euphemism for that. Often here in this Legislature we use so many acronyms and we speak so abstractedly about so many issues that we assume 90% of you, maybe 80% of you, understand what we're talking about. I'm convinced those of you watching, before we started this debate, had no clue what brownfields are. That's why I said it could be a euphemism for fields covered in excrement.

I wanted to dispel that right off the bat and say that, as New Democrats, we are supportive of an initiative that begins to deal with these old contaminated sites. Contaminated sites are not helpful, healthy or good for anyone. Whether you live in the city, the suburban areas or wherever you are, if they're contaminated, it's a problem and they need to be dealt with by government. That's why, as an initiative, it's important to begin to present it here for debate. But as the member from St Catharines mentioned, it doesn't go far enough, and that's our concern as New Democrats as well.

Good citizens, the province has had a whole lot of money in the last five or six long years to deal with so many concerns that plague us as citizens, yet the province refuses to pony up to deal with them. In fact, all this government does is whine about the federal Liberals not delivering on their obligation as a federal government to support the poor province of Ontario to deal with the concerns in health, to deal with the concerns in transportation, to deal with issues of housing, to deal with everything and anything you can imagine. The federal Liberal government at one point was supportive financially of the provinces to deal with some of these social obligations.

But to put all the blame on the federal Liberals is simply not fair, because Mulroney started that in 1990 when those, dare I say, hapless New Democrats at the time, plagued by a recession beyond the control of any political party—but we happened to be there and we take responsibility; quite right—said to Mulroney, “We need your help. We need the money we used to get from you, particularly now that we're in a recession when there's very little money coming in. For you, federal Tory government, to get out of the field of helping provinces is simply irresponsible. How can you do that?”

1920

I remember Harris and Stockwell and others on their side saying, “Stop whining, Bob Rae. You've got the wheel. Start driving. You're in control.” To hear Mr Harris constantly whining like a little baby here in the Legislature and attacking the federal Liberals for not giving them enough is just—oh, my God, to see them cry like that is just a pitiful sight.

Why do I say this? I say this because Harris has had five or six years of a good economy, enough money generated by a healthy economy to be able to put it back into areas of transportation, health, housing and, yes,

even this very issue of the redevelopment of these brown-fields.

So to Mr Harris, to the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to all these people because you're all in it together, I say just release some of that money. Release some of the money you've got for some good social causes. Yes, if brown-fields is an important initiative for you, pony up. Spend some of the money. Take back some of the money you've given to your special interest buddies and put it into the redevelopment of these sites, because we need your help.

I am convinced that the cities, as pleased as they are by the initiative, are going to say when we come to the hearings, "We need more. You're saying to municipalities that we have the power to give tax relief to any corporation, any developer that says, 'We want to redevelop your site.' We're supposed to say, 'Here you go,' and give them tax relief. But we need help."

I am convinced they will come to the committee hearings and say, "This is a good initiative. We're happy to help, but we need you, the province, to help us a little." I'm telling you why they're going to come and ask for that support from the province. It's your downloading of so many responsibilities that you've passed on to the cities. Housing: 100% of housing is now in the hands of the cities, paid for by the city taxpayers, the property owners whose taxes have been jacked to the point that they're screaming bloody murder. Transportation has been downloaded to the cities. They're saying that the property taxpayer is so fed up with paying taxes out of the property tax base that they're unwilling to co-operate with the cities. Public health—another downloaded responsibility. Cities have no money. They're broke.

So now you're going to the cities saying, "Here you go, cities. We're going to redevelop the brownfields, and boy, have we got an idea for you. We're going to give you the power to provide tax relief so those who want to redevelop those properties might, as an incentive, be induced to do so." Of course there's some logic to it. Naturally, if the corporate sector, the private sector, the developers, redevelop some of these sites, it's a revenue-generating idea, so of course they like it. To the extent it is possible, to the extent it works, to the extent it's economically feasible, I'm convinced the cities are going to say yes. But it's still a dumping measure. It's still a measure that says to the city, "Here, you can do it," as opposed to, "Here, cities, this is what we are going to do together, because we know you're financially strapped. We know you can't do it alone. Yes, we have money, billions of dollars, and we're going to help you." If you said that to the cities, to the opposition parties and to the public, they'd all be joining you.

That's why we are delighted with public hearings. It's amazing how the government decides in advance when we're going to get public hearings on something and when we're not. By and large, it's a good initiative. While you might be criticized somewhat—or a lot, because though it's a good initiative they're going to say,

"You'll have to put in more money"—it's still an initiative that people are going to like.

So you know what you're doing in calling for hearings. We support that, because we want to hear from the board of health from the city of Toronto and from public health generally, throughout, all those involved in public health, not just the cities and municipalities and citizens but those who have a concern around public health, and particularly in Toronto the board of health. We want to hear what they have to say.

While we agree with the reservations expressed by Dianne Saxe, the now corporate environmental lawyer, the then prosecutor for the Ministry of the Environment, agree with some of the concerns she states about initiatives around liability, where this government says they're going to have to be somewhat lax with respect to issues of liability, and while many people agree with that, I suspect Saxe has been saying it doesn't go far enough, that the issues of liability may have to be broad, very broad, to provide the incentive to the private sector to get involved.

She's got concerns. I appreciate that, and we need to hear from people like her. But we want to hear from so many others who, I have no doubt, will have concerns. Yes, for developers who want to develop a site, freedom from liability for pre-existing contamination, provided that a record of site conditions has been filed; that's good. If a developer comes in and says, "We want to develop a site that's been contaminated by someone else," they shouldn't be liable. I appreciate that.

Of course, the people who left the site contaminated have gone, abandoned those sites; they probably didn't pay their taxes so they had to abandon it. God bless them. This is the private sector for you, good citizens. These sites were owned by some private developer who decided at some point just to go belly up and abandon the site. And do you know who's left holding the bag? You, good taxpayers. Cities are left holding the bag, provinces are left holding the bag, while they go away scot-free. That's the private sector for you. From time to time they do these things. We have no way, of course, of recovering the money from these people, because they're gone, gone far away from the grasp of the law and from the grasp of any regulatory measure that might have been in place. I decry the fact that so many of these corporate malevolents leave these sites contaminated and leave it to the good citizens of Ontario, the good citizens of any municipality, cities on their own, to have to deal with these problems.

But of course now that we have the site, we've got to deal with it. In the city of Toronto we expect one million more people to come here and want to settle here in the next 15 or 20 years. I know people want to be in the city of Toronto. I know that. I see it in the riding of Trinity-Spadina. Professionals want to come and live in the city of Toronto because they love the city life. God bless them. I love it too. That's why I'm living downtown. They all, it seems, want to be close to their workplaces, I suspect, many of them in Trinity-Spadina.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): Where in Rosedale do you live?

Mr Marchese: No, no. This is south of Dupont, please. Not Rosedale. We're talking south of Dupont all the way to the lake, the western boundary being Dovercourt, the eastern boundary being University Avenue, this side of the Legislature. We're not talking about the rich folks north of where I am. I'm in a modest area—

Hon Mr Runciman: What's your house assessed at? Where do you live?

Mr Marchese: I'm on Montrose, south of Bloor, by Christie Pits, where there's a whole lot of baseball going on.

Hon Mr Runciman: You live with all those free enterprisers.

Mr Marchese: Please. I'm talking about people's desire to live downtown, and I think that's good for us. Imagine. So many other cities in the US—it's not good to look there for examples, because for the last 20 or 30 years they've ruined their cities; people have flocked away from their cities. Whereas in Toronto, unlike American cities, we've kept people here in a very residential community in the heart of downtown Toronto. People want to be here, and I say this is great. We need to redevelop these old, contaminated industrial sites which are called brownfields. We need to redevelop them because there are positive effects of so doing. But people are saying, "We need you, province, we need your help."

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That's why I said initially, in terms of our reservations around this particular issue, that we can't do it alone. Cities cannot take this social obligation on their own, but they take this obligation on. Why? Because they are keenly interested in avoiding urban sprawl. That's why redevelopment of these old sites is so critical, because it can keep people here in the city of Toronto. It will keep people so close to their workplaces that they won't have to drive for miles and miles—in kilometres, the now rule. I think that's wise.

More and more people in the city of Toronto ride their bikes as opposed to taking their cars to work. It's a healthy thing for society that so many in downtown Toronto are conscious of that, that they walk and take bikes to work as opposed to going to and fro by car, unlike so many of these Tories, dare I say.

Of course, avoiding urban sprawl is an important issue. But here you have—

Mr Chudleigh: Do you ride your bike?

Mr Marchese: Yes, I do, from time to time. I do that often.

Mr Chudleigh: Do you claim mileage for your bike?

Mr Marchese: Speaking of mileage, I wonder how many of you fine Tories collect on your mileage bill. We should look at that.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: I'm sure that if you looked at some of those things more than one would be embarrassed in this place.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Runciman: We recall some things.

Mr Marchese: You recall indeed, and do you know what—

The Acting Speaker: Order. Please take your seat. The Minister of Economic Development will please come to order. Thank you. The member for Trinity-Spadina may continue.

Mr Marchese: We should indeed, Minister Runciman from Leeds-Grenville, check into those mileage forms that some members fill in. It would be full of surprises, no doubt.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Don't throw rocks, Rosario.

Mr Marchese: No, I was referring the rocks back. Rather than throwing them, I was just turning them back.

People in the city of Toronto want to avoid urban sprawl indeed, and when this government proposes to build highways and more highways as a way of dealing with issues of smart growth, a whole lot of people in the city of Toronto are saying, "This is a dumb idea." If you want to help the environment you pour money into public transit as opposed to pouring money into more highways in those areas outside of Toronto where we're trying to preserve farmland, in the areas where the moraine is, rather than building highways around those regions. A whole lot of people are saying, "It's dumb that Conservatives could dream of suggesting that smart growth means creating more highways in those sensitive areas of Ontario. That's not smart growth. We know it isn't. Smart growth is supposed to be environmentally sound by way of the projects you propose, not destructive of the environment, as you are proposing through your suggestions of more highways.

You can't play with the usual kind of language which you do. I say to the good citizens, when these people hear language that purports to say something, it means something else; it belies the content of what it is they're putting forth. It's never what it seems. So when they say smart growth and it gives the appearance or the sense that somehow they're creating some environmentally good ideas or sound ideas, it isn't. It's like the Tenant Protection Act, which suggests the protections are for tenants, but the protections are really for the landlords. You've got to watch out for these Tories. You probably have already noticed that in the last six years, but, please, when you hear some of these ideas that mean something, try to remember that it probably means the opposite.

We say to the government, yes, the redevelopment of brownfields is a good idea; no, it's not a good idea to dump and download more responsibilities on to the municipality. Why? Because you have broken them, as a result of which they are broke, there is no money, as a result of which they are talking about new ideas to raise more money so they can make their cities livable, sustainable, which means finding more user fees in order to raise the money the cities need to become sustainable, to remain healthy to the extent that they can.

Yes, we support the redevelopment of brownfields, of course. But we're saying that we're going to need this province to kick in some bucks. We're going to need this province, which has gutted the Ministry of the Environment by sending 1,000 people out of that ministry, to come back into the field, to hire some people, so that if you're going to talk about these sites and having some directors oversee some of these development and site plans, that they have the resources to say, "Yes, this site plan is good. This site plan is bad." There is nobody left in the ministry to do that. So we need, good citizens, the province to help us to redevelop these sites, without which this idea is not much of a good one.

The Acting Speaker: It is now time for questions and comments.

Mr Chudleigh: Brownfield redevelopment is certainly a far overdue initiative in Ontario. As the previous speaker, the member for Trinity-Spadina, mentioned, it is something that is conceptually good, and I think we can all agree that brownfield redevelopment is a good thing for Ontario. Of course the speaker is always interesting to listen to, but listening to him you would think that this initiative is draconian when it comes to the way it's being implemented.

He talked about the American cities. The American cities are a wonderful example to Canada, where they have decayed centres in their cities from brownfields that were never redeveloped. To redevelop those through this initiative would go a long way to preventing the degradation of the Ontario cities in the same fashion that American cities have fallen.

Certainly in my own riding in the town of Milton there is a site on Main Street, which is a brownfield, that through regulation is going to be very difficult to renovate. But with this legislation it will become much easier to renovate that and preserve the downtown section of the town.

Listening to the member, he talked about—his term—"downloading" on to the municipalities. You would think the municipalities were dead broke after the last eight or nine or 10 years. In my community—

Mr Bradley: They are broke.

Mr Chudleigh: The member for St Catharines said, "They are broke." Over the last five or six years there have been no tax increases at all in the region of Halton or in the town of Milton or in the town of Halton Hills. How fat were they eight years ago?

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further comments or questions?

Mr Bradley: I enjoyed the remarks of the member for Trinity-Spadina and I particularly want to focus in on a comment he made about many Canadian communities compared to major US cities. One of the things you notice is that in many large US cities nobody lives downtown. I was telling an American author about downtown Toronto and that if you look at downtown Toronto you see a lot of residential development taking place. Unfortunately, we're not seeing it in the lower-income area where we need it, but we are nevertheless seeing some

development taking place downtown, where people actually live in this city. If you take a place like Cleveland, which has made a major effort in the US to improve its downtown, and indeed there are restaurants and bars, hotels and convention centres and so on, there are still very few people living right in the downtown area. It evacuates after a certain period of time in early evening.

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What I think brownfield redevelopment can do in some of the cases is, it can encourage some high-density residential development in a downtown area. If we're going to help reinvigorate our downtowns, one of the things we want is for people to live down there, to be adjacent to the services and retail that's there to make downtown a viable place. I hope this will happen. The member for Trinity-Spadina was wise in raising that issue, that we should always be encouraging people to live in a downtown area to make it vital, to make it alive, to encourage further development to take place that will be good for the economy of that community.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I would just like to add a couple of comments to this debate because I agree with the idea that we have to find ways by which we can ensure that we continue to have a vibrant downtown core, and this legislation certainly speaks to that issue.

The member who just spoke talked about—and so did the member from Trinity-Spadina—the difference between places like Toronto and its American counterparts. That's been one of the hallmarks of Toronto. I want to add emphasis to the fact that this legislation is designed to make sure that we can have continued commercial, industrial or residential activity in places which today are abandoned and seen as high risk. When you look at the developments that have taken place in the last 25 years in the whole 905 area, it has demonstrated the need for this kind of legislation and the fact that we must continue to find ways to provide the kind of incentives that are set out in this legislation to encourage people to make those investments.

People who are outside the major urban core sometimes forget that there are those sites in small-town and rural Ontario that also need this kind of legislation to allow for that kind of investment to take place. I think it's a most important piece of legislation to continue that economic viability.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions or comments?

Mr Parsons: As I mentioned earlier, I still think this bill is a bit of a teaser. We know the issue in the large urban areas. We hear there have been no tax increases. I would invite members to check the tax increases in a lot of rural municipalities and there have in fact been tax increases. There are also municipalities that have had no tax increases. There have been reductions in service to accommodate that.

Mr Bradley: Or user fees.

Mr Parsons: Or user fees. Most municipalities are now charging for all kinds of services, even for children's services. We're seeing swimming pools closed. The charade that there have been no tax increases is not

true in most of Ontario. They may just come in different forms.

Interjection.

Mr Parsons: Yes, 864 user fees we're now hearing have been implemented since 1995.

But not every municipality is in the situation with brownfields that they want to restore, but they've got the rest of the community healthy. There are municipalities, there are small towns and villages in Ontario where there was industry and the industry is gone. We see the amalgamation craze and just-in-time manufacturing in the Metro Toronto area. We have municipalities that have lost virtually all of their manufacturing ability. The fields are there, but there is not the tax base existing for that municipality to take and restore them to make them viable.

Granted, there may not be another industry and there may not be a need for housing, but the chemicals are still in that land and all too often that land abuts rivers or streams and the chemicals that are in there, due to the law of gravity—I know this government would repeal the law of gravity if they could, but it's still in effect and gravity continues to cause these chemicals to leach down into the watercourse and into the river.

This bill doesn't even begin to approach the need of municipalities that may not want the land for development, but want safe drinking water and land that's safe for their children to play on.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina now has two minutes to respond.

Mr Marchese: I thank some of the members for some of their comments. I would say in response to the member for Halton, I didn't say this bill was draconian. I never used the word once. I didn't say that. I just said that if we're going to go through with this initiative, we're going to need help. Cities are going to need help to be able to redevelop these sites. That's what I said. I didn't say it was draconian. Perhaps you are misusing the term or perhaps you misheard what I said. I don't know.

Yes, this initiative would help to prevent some of the disasters we've seen in the US. That's what I was saying. I agree the city of Toronto and many other cities in Ontario are so radically different from the US because of the foresight of some of the work by many of our city councillors in many parts of Ontario to have made cities livable and, dare I say, they did it in spite of provincial governments. But this is the first time in our history where cities are fighting governments to maintain the livability of their cities. The member from Halton is saying municipalities are not dead. He must be the only one sleepwalking through the disaster because every mayor in Ontario and in Canada is saying, "We need help. Provinces have to help the cities in order to make cities stay alive, otherwise they're going to be killed by these provincial governments who are downloading and doing so little for our cities."

Yes, people want to live in the cities. Yes, we need space for them and these brownfields are the places to do it. We're saying to you, "We need provincial money to

redevelop them in a way that we will have the people," but you have so little credibility, you see. This is the same government that got rid of the Planning Act changes made by the NDP that required municipalities to plan for compact communities that could accommodate transit. This is the same government that's building a highway in the GTA that would put a stake through the heart of the Oak Ridges moraine. You've got no credibility left.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Tascona: I'm very pleased to join in the debate on Bill 56, which is entitled the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001, which forms part of the government's Smart Growth strategy to promote and manage growth, to sustain a strong economy, strong communities and a clean, healthy environment. I'm going to comment on the Smart Growth because there was a conference held today in the city of Barrie with respect to the Smart Growth initiative, which I'm going to speak about shortly.

But on the brownfields statute, redeveloping brownfields encourages smarter patterns of growth because it cleans up contaminated lands, makes more efficient use of existing infrastructure like roads, sewers and schools and provides an alternative to developing on greenfields and farmlands. The proposed legislation is the result of two years of consultations and discussions. It incorporates recommendations made by a panel of brownfield experts appointed by the province in September 2000. It addresses the key challenges to the brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, environmental liability, planning processes and financing.

Smart Growth, which is an initiative of the municipal affairs ministry, deals with a number of issues. I'll just use my riding as an example. Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford is made up of Bradford-West Gwillimbury, which is essentially a rural community, the town of Innisfil, which is in essence a rural community, and the city of Barrie, which has developed into the regional centre for Simcoe county but is in essence an urban community. What you have, on one hand, because of the tremendous growth that is happening out there, is urban growth from the city of Barrie and the surrounding areas, and I won't just limit it to the areas in my riding. There's the township of Springwater, there's the town of Oro-Medonte and other areas, the town of Essa, for example, which are essentially agricultural areas, rural areas if you wish.

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So you have the challenge that you're facing in terms of the transportation arteries which you have going through those areas, the environmental concerns, which I'm going to comment on, and the economic aspirations of the area, obviously to have employment in the area. But it's obvious that people do reside, for example, in the city of Barrie and there is extensive commuting, whether it's to Orillia to the OPP, to Honda down in New Tecumseh, or down to the GTA, and there are also those transportation pressures which I spoke of earlier.

There was some interesting information provided at this Smart Growth conference—basically the source is Statistics Canada—on the demographics of the area and the growth, which is going to be tremendous. The population projection for the city of Barrie in 1996 was 79,200, and for 2021 it's projected to almost double at 155,600 people. The population of the county of Simcoe in 1996 was 339,900 people. It is projected to grow by the year 2021 to 571,800 people. Representatives from the district of Muskoka were also there today. In 1996 the population was 52,000, and it is projected to grow by the year 2021 to 72,600. So those are significant increases in terms of percentage. They certainly may not be as significant as in other areas south of this area, but the population impact will be significant on the area.

Also, the age distribution they were looking at showed that it's going to change drastically by the year 2021. The focus and the highest percentage of the population will be in the 50-and-above category, which is somewhat different than right now, where it's obviously at the lower end.

But what they were indicating was that population growth wasn't necessarily going to be coming from births, but from population coming to the province from out of the province, within the country and also from out of the country.

On the economy, in terms of this area, it's very interesting. The participation rate in 1996 in terms of employment was 66%. The March 2001 unadjusted unemployment rate in this area was 5.3%, which is below the provincial average. It's obvious because you're looking at an area that has tremendous growth in construction—and residential construction, I may add. The major employers in the area are Honda Canada, Casino Rama and the Royal Victoria Hospital. There have been significant recent investments in employment through Casino Rama, Rosten Investments, Bemis Manufacturing, and also Hydro One locating their operating centre in this area, and those are thousands of jobs.

Before I get to the agricultural area, which is very important to look at, the distribution of the population growth in the area is as follows: the city of Barrie is 30.3% of the population, Simcoe county is 61.6% and the district of Muskoka is 8.2%. So you have a very large population from one major urban centre dominating this particular area.

In the labour force, the biggest employers are in manufacturing and related to the automobile sector, and in retail.

Agriculture, which I alluded to earlier, is a very important area. It came up at this conference, and it's important because of the brownfields approach in the statute, which is to try to focus development away from developing on greenfields and on farmland.

Agriculturally, the statistics on the percentage of number of farms, there was an increase in the number of farms from 1991, which was 2,900, to 1996, which was over 3,000. In my area, there is very diverse farming. We have the Holland Marsh, which is vegetable and fruit

growers, and also crop farmers in the area and livestock. One area I want to comment on when you deal with infrastructure, which is a part of this issue in terms of air quality and in terms of transportation and gridlock, is the Holland Marsh, which has an access—

The Acting Speaker: Take your seat, please. I would say to the member for Trinity-Spadina, most folks listened very patiently to your remarks. If you would show the same courtesy, and also to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Sorry for the interruption. Please continue.

Mr Tascona: Thank you, Speaker; it was well taken.

I will say this: there's a road that connects these farming communities on to Highway 400 and there's an interchange. I guess as you develop—and this is kind of interesting—a community like Bradford-West Gwillimbury, which is fortunate enough to have GO Transit, I may add, you have the new population that is moving into the urban area, the downtown of Bradford-West Gwillimbury, using that road that was designed strictly for the farmers to get on to Highway 400 and at the end of the day to get off of Highway 400 to go back to their homes. That's a tremendous challenge, and the MTO is looking at that as part of their Highway 400 planning study.

I've said for the record, and I want to repeat it here today, I don't believe it's good planning to—they were looking at closing off that ramp, the interchange, to the 400 from that road. I think that would be bad policy. I don't support that. I want that road to remain as it is and I don't want that interchange to be disconnected off of Highway 400. But I would say, because of the urban pressures and people who want to use a road to get on to Highway 400, maybe at Concession 5 they may want to put a road to connect to Highway 400 to balance what is essentially an agricultural area being overridden by urban growth and people trying to get to Highway 400. Leave it as it was intended to be many, many years ago.

Other aspects of what we're dealing with in terms of brownfield strategy, because the essence of that—I know the member from Toronto is laughing over there, but really Toronto is where you find brownfields. That's where you find them. We don't have them up in my area, but they have them here in Toronto. They have a major league challenge in terms of offering residential housing for people within the city of Toronto who work here or want to work here and not coming up to my area, for example—they can hopefully provide the affordable housing they need within the city of Toronto—and building on the greenfields, building on the agricultural areas. He's not laughing now, because it's a serious issue. But the bottom line is, that's very important. This is an opportunity I see in terms of developing a better community, a better Ontario.

Another area that is characteristic of my area and which is important for transportation is the amount of commuting that occurs, and the type of commuting. What basically came out of this is that you don't see in my area—because we don't have GO Transit. We're not blessed like the member from Toronto and others who

have GO Transit; we don't have that. That was taken away by his government, the NDP government, in 1992, probably one of the most short-sighted and foolish decisions I've ever seen in my life, but it was taken.

So the bottom line here is, here we are in the year 2001. We have an expanding area, a tremendous amount of commuting. The commuting is done by car, by single people driving their cars, and we don't have the commuter setup that we were hoping to get through GO Transit. So that's what our focus is. We're studying that problem. We've hired a consultant through this advisory committee which I chair. We've maintained the line that was saved by Ontario, along with the city of Barrie, from being torn up, according to the federal Liberal government policy of the day in terms of railways, which was short-sighted. I'm pleased to say the Minister of Transportation, David Collenette, is now looking more focused on the benefits of public transportation through his marching orders, if you wish, to Via Rail.

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So we have this issue with GO Transit. We're trying to bring GO Transit back to the city of Barrie. We're not as fortunate as Oakville. I'll give you an example. Oakville and Oshawa have about 20 trains a day going out of those communities. That's a tremendous amount of usage. We would like to get one train, maybe two. Bradford-West Gwillimbury has two trains a day going out of there. I could tell you it would be used the same way in the city of Barrie, except for that short-sighted decision made by the NDP government back in 1992.

There's another aspect of Highway 400, which I talked about earlier, in terms of the expansion there. That's part of the problem and the short-sightedness of the previous governments of the day—the Liberal government from 1985 to 1990 and the NDP government from 1990 to 1995—in terms of dealing with this issue. This is a major issue in Toronto. It just didn't happen overnight in terms of brownfields and the opportunity for residential development down here, and affordable housing. Quite frankly, that's one of the reasons people come into my area: for affordable housing. They can't afford the housing in this area. Toronto is just a very expensive community to live in.

I think the brownfields strategy would allow, perhaps, the development to take place in terms of making Toronto a better community than it already is. So my point of view on transportation, and there's a major problem with transportation in the city of Toronto, obviously, in terms of gridlock—ask any member who drives here—in terms of the number of people who drive through Toronto, and the air quality that causes. But obviously the politicians of the city of Toronto and the members from the NDP government of the day didn't have the guts to take on that issue. It's unfortunate that they didn't have the disposition to really attack the problem. They still don't.

What I'm faced with up in my riding is looking at, "Oh, Highway 400; yes, it should be increased to eight, to 10 to maybe 12 lanes." Utter nonsense. That's not the

type of community we want. You need 12 lanes to go all the way up to Barrie? For what? We're 100,000 people—12 lanes: can you imagine that happening down in Toronto? If anyone had the common sense to extend the Allen Expressway to the heart of the city, it would be a major upheaval.

I want to give my constituents the confidence that that's not something I support. I would never support something that would be what I would call poor planning in terms of a 12-lane highway on Highway 400 through the city of Barrie, very poor planning. It would be planning as bad as that of the NDP government in 1992, ripping GO Transit out of the heart of the city of Barrie, and the opportunity.

Mr Marchese: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you check for a quorum, if you don't mind?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Is a quorum present?

Acting Clerk at the Table (Mr Doug Arnott): A quorum is not present.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Acting Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

Mr Tascona: The NDP government ripped out of the heart of the city of Barrie in 1992 GO Transit, the most outrageous decision when I was on council. I was on council in 1992 in the city of Barrie.

But I'm going to talk a little bit more about the Smart Growth, because there was such a great conference in the city of Barrie today. One of the other things we were dealing with was the environment. The environment is very important to my area and the district of Muskoka. The major natural features of my area are the Niagara Escarpment, the Oro and Oak Ridges moraine, the Georgian Bay shoreline, Muskoka Lakes and Lake Simcoe. That is a tremendously important area to the people who bound on Lake Simcoe. Those are important considerations in terms of dealing with Smart Growth, and that's why the brownfields strategy is a part of that, because there's only so much urban growth that can be sustained near those waterways.

The member from York North and I have been working very hard with respect to Lake Simcoe and, in terms of the provincial government, they've made significant contributions, obviously, toward protecting that valued water area. It's important. It's not something that—

Interjection.

Mr Tascona: The member from Toronto continues to laugh about the brownfields. This is important in terms of protecting our greenfields and our farmland—agricultural areas, as you put it. As I said before, my area is an urban-rural-agricultural area and a case study in terms of where smart growth has to be applied.

One other area where we don't have the benefits of the urban areas is in higher education. We're fortunate that we have Georgian College. The province has contributed

significantly to Georgian College, and it serves many areas: the district of Muskoka, Simcoe county, it's over in Dufferin county. Certainly we hope to see its enrolment expand, perhaps double. I know they're doing tremendous work there in terms of—I was there a couple of weeks ago—the first residences that they're going to have on that campus, privately built.

Higher education is something that in my area has really, sorely, not been able to attain the spaces that are needed. I think the policy of our government, in terms of granting degree powers, is a tremendous improvement in terms of providing higher education in my area. But it all goes together. If you don't have an educated labour force, if you don't have a qualified labour force, you can't attract those businesses up there, and that's part of the Smart Growth strategy in terms of the pressures that you have to have. If we had more people working up in the city of Barrie, we'd have fewer people on the highway. It's just common sense.

Those pressures, as I said before—urban growth, the agricultural areas, the environment, the economic growth that you wish and transportation—are all present.

I'm very pleased to have spoken on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Obviously the member feels very strongly about his area, and he spoke about it in a very passionate sort of way. But what I cannot understand: he talked about GO Transit and transit in general, and just by pure coincidence I happen to have a sheet here which deals with the budgets of those areas and what this government has done to transit. Look at it. In 1996, the province spent \$760 million in total on transit. What did we spend last year or this year? \$100 million. In the year 2000, we only spent \$38 million in assistance to GO Transit; much less than in 1996.

The member talks about Smart Growth. I went to one of those conferences as well, which was a great PR exercise by the minister. What I can't understand is, where was he when the various ministries were gutted of their land use planning staff within the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment? He was right here. He's been here for the last five or six years. He saw those ministries being gutted, and all these land use officers were let go. Where was he at that point in time? Where was he in 1996 when the Ontario Planning Act was totally changed and revamped whereby it's no longer necessary for official plans and zoning bylaws to be consistent with provincial policies, but they simply have to have regard to provincial policies?

He knows there is a significant difference there whereby basically local municipalities can do whatever they want without having due regard to and being consistent with provincial policies. He knows there's a big difference there. So I say to the member, your heart's in the right place but you were here when all the ministries that effected what you were talking about were gutted.

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Mr Marchese: I tried using all the faculties at my disposal to understand what it is that he was saying about brownfields. I think he mentioned the word twice, but I wanted to learn from him about this issue of course. I made my views known; I wanted to see what views he had on this matter. I'm afraid I didn't learn much from that except to suggest to him and to his government that you've got so little credibility on this issue. I know it hurts but, for the good people of Ontario, this is the same government that got rid of the Planning Act changes made by the NDP that required municipalities to plan for compact communities that would accommodate transit.

Hon Mr Runciman: That's credibility for you—12%.

Mr Marchese: Bob Runciman, you killed that bill, the very bill that speaks to smart communities, if you're going to use that word. You killed it. He talks about concerns for protecting his farmland and yet he killed that Planning Act bill the New Democrats introduced and also they want to add a new highway in the northern GTA which will put a stake in the heart of the Oak Ridges moraine. They call that Smart Growth. What a puerile attempt to disguise the truth. It makes no sense in terms of what they are saying versus what they are doing. The realities clash.

It's like Shakespeare says, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair." So when they speak of Smart Growth it's not the smart growth you good citizens are talking about; it's something else. It belies the truth. You see, foul is fair, and fair is foul. Shakespeare was right 400 years ago. You've got to remember that as you listen to these guys blah, blah, blah around these issues.

Mr Tilson: The issues raised by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford are not new issues. It's been a concern that existed through the NDP reign. It existed through the Liberal reign. That was the environmental issue of where individuals, corporations, developers, municipalities, whoever, found things under the ground that was about to be developed. You people did nothing about this. You did absolutely nothing. You were asked to do something and you did nothing.

Mr Marchese: You should know better. You were here, I think.

Mr Tilson: I was here and I watched how you did absolutely nothing. You did nothing to improve these polluted lands. This legislation is designed to do that. You can talk about downloading, you can talk about whatever terminology you want. The fact of the matter is, when you were in office, when the Liberals were in office, this issue was never dealt with, it was never once dealt with by your governments.

It was raised in this House. I raised it. I asked, "What are you going to do about the liabilities that are being raised as a result of people purchasing land and finding pollutants under the land that cost astronomical amounts to repair?" You did nothing, and you did nothing. This legislation is going to make it a lot easier for people to clean up these lands and to recycle brownfields. It's going to make it easier to take advantage of the brownfield

opportunities. It will make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and preserve our parks and farmlands. That's what it's going to do. That's what we were asking you to do. You didn't do it, and we're going to do it.

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I can recall the early 1980s and I don't think the Liberals happened to be in power at that time. I was on the municipal council and we used to run into those issues, so you're not off scot-free, sir.

Mr Tilson: You were there, John. You just didn't know you were there.

Mr Cleary: That's OK. There are a few things you don't know. Anyway, I know that the ministry has been gutted and it makes it very difficult. We've got many of these sites in our community and there are dilapidated buildings on them and they can't be developed. I just hope that the government has plans, and not only the will to do it; there have got to be some dollars to go along with it.

While I'm up here, I want to talk about the infrastructure in my community. The municipalities seem to have a hard time getting partners to help them with this infrastructure. If we don't get the infrastructure fixed, namely roads and bridges, there is not much use in developing these brownfield sites.

I know there are many eyesores. Municipalities have struggled to do the best to their ability. In my community we've had 30-some plants that downsized and closed. Some of that land is still available. Some of it is going into recreation facilities and they are struggling with the other parts of it to see the best use possible for future generations.

I hope the government is serious. As I said earlier, we need some dollars to go along with it. I think all parties are willing to work together because this is something that has got to happen and someone has to have the political will to do it. I am pleased to have been able to comment on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mr Tascona: I am very pleased to respond to the comments made by the members for Kingston and the Islands, Trinity-Spadina, Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh.

I'll comment on the member for Kingston and the Islands. He is a former mayor of Kingston. I'm really surprised that he would endorse NDP policy and the laws of the NDP government. He knows as well as I do—I'm a former councillor—that the Planning Act had to be changed, and the way we do business. Municipalities wanted to deal with their own official plans and zoning bylaws. "Having regard to" means they have to have regard to the provincial policies that are in place and which have been improved on since the NDP government left office and, I should say, the Liberal government.

Obviously the member for Trinity-Spadina was acting tonight on only one faculty and we don't know which one that was. But the bottom line is, when he talks about credibility—come on. The NDP government was a

financial disaster and all they were about was broken promises. That's all they were.

The member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey said it all in terms of they took no action—the Liberal government and the NDP government of the day, from 1985 to 1995—with respect to the brownfields. They knowingly and intentionally put our agricultural areas and our greenfield areas at risk.

I think the member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh basically has got it wrong. The ministries have been streamlined for efficiencies to better serve the public. The Ministry of the Environment's efforts have been to focus on protecting our environment. Enforcement efforts have been focused on what should be done to deal with the environment. We have the toughest enforcement laws in North America with respect to the Ministry of the Environment. This bill that we're dealing with is a part of protecting our environment. You just don't get it.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

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Mr Gerretsen: With respect to that last comment, let me say this: we sure do get it and the people of Ontario get it as well. They know that you're all about optics, all about photo opportunities, all about saying the right thing, but you're not following through on it.

There is absolutely nothing in the Smart Growth document that anybody could possibly disagree with. The language is beautiful. It talks about sustaining a strong economy, building strong communities and promoting a healthy environment. Everybody agrees with that. Over the last four to five years, you have done everything in your power to destroy this. Let me just tell you how you have done that.

First of all, you have gutted the Ministry of the Environment. You have cut its budget by some 56%. You are talking about having tough environmental laws on the books; that may or may not be so. There just aren't any officers around any more to effectively enforce the laws that are on the books. That's the problem. Take a look at the number of prosecutions that have taken place under the environmental rules and regulations and laws of this province and you will see a dramatic decrease. The government would have you believe that all of a sudden the polluters stopped polluting. I think that the average Ontarian, the working Ontarian, will say, "If we've got 56% less money being spent in that budget and 50% fewer enforcement officers of our various environmental rules and regulations, there will be fewer charges laid and fewer prosecutions will succeed." That's what's happening.

As I mentioned before, there have been some major changes made to the Planning Act. It's kind of interesting that the same arguments that were used for giving municipalities more power, which is what the member would have you believe by the changes in the Planning Act, are now being used against municipalities in giving yourself more power in dealing with what's in this bill. You can't have it both ways. You are the people who

basically made the fundamental change and choice in the Planning Act by saying that official plans and zoning bylaws no longer had to be consistent with provincial policies and guidelines but could simply be given regard to. Maybe to the average Ontarian that doesn't mean very much, but to the people who are involved in the day-to-day implementation of the planning policies of the province it means an awful lot. The developers know it, that they can pretty well come along with any plan whether or not it adheres to provincial guidelines and policies, which in a lot of cases have become a lot weaker than used to be the case. They can't deny that.

The government knows quite well that a lot of the cutbacks in the various ministries have taken place exactly with the kind of personnel that the various ministries had, whether it was the Ministry of Agriculture, natural resources, municipal affairs, the environment, that were involved land use and long-range planning processes. Those are the people who are gone and that's why those ministries are suffering. Now, the government has the nerve to basically say, "We've got a Smart Growth policy that we'd like to implement in the province of Ontario that's going to promote a healthy environment, build a stronger community and sustain a strong economy," when we all know—when was it?—just a year or two ago we had worse air quality in this province than just about anywhere else in North America when environmental organizations rated Ontario second from the bottom when you take all the provinces and all the states in the United States into consideration from an environmental protection viewpoint.

Yes, there are some good ideas in this bill, I'll grant you that, and, yes, maybe some other government in the past should have implemented that, but that's not the issue. It seems to me that about 90% of the time in this House we seem to be spending on, "Who do we blame? Why didn't you guys do something 15 years ago, or you 10, or you five, or you could have done this." The average person out there, the person who is looking toward the future and the development of this great province, isn't interested in that. People don't want to hear about blame politics; they want to see what you are prepared to enact to actually build better and stronger communities and a healthier environment in this province. Certainly a \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut that has been implemented by this government isn't going to do it, when just an extra little bit of resources into many different areas, from education to health care to the environment, could have made a substantial difference.

The main problem with Bill 56 is that you and I know that in order to implement the worthwhile and laudatory goals of this bill, it can only be done if there are enough resources devoted to it so that what you're talking about in this bill will actually happen, and it's not going to happen.

Even AMO, which has reluctantly given its support to the bill, because I guess they figure that half a loaf is better than none, is saying over and over and over again

in its report that the only way it's going to work is if it's properly resourced.

I took the opportunity earlier today to get off the AMO Web site, which is the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, their policy report, which talks about promoting municipal leadership in brownfields redevelopment. You know, throughout the report, on just about every page, it talks about the fact that the only way this is going to work, once we have a framework established whereby the brownfields in our municipalities can actually be dealt with, is if the province puts resources into it. As we know, developers or owners of properties may very well walk away from it if they're going to realize that in order to redevelop that property and get the environmental aspects dealt with it's going to cost more than the property is actually worth. Municipalities won't have the financial wherewithal to deal with that either. So the only way it's going to work is if you put some resources into it.

AMO says, for example, on page 4 of their report, and I quote directly from the report that they did:

"More provincial resources should be committed to identify and prosecute parties that are directly responsible for site contamination. While securing such prosecutions is a lengthy and uncertain process, it would benefit from improved provincial enforcement of rules respecting soil or other on-site contamination."

That's what AMO is saying. It's the same thing with the actual redevelopment of the properties.

They also point out, "Municipal exposure to environmental liability poses one of the most formidable barriers to brownfields redevelopment."

I invite the members of this assembly and other people who are interested to go to the AMO Web site and get a copy of the report and see what the municipal voice of this province is really saying as to what should happen and not the feel-good terminology that's used in Bill 56 and not lived up to by the kind of resources that are required in order to make it happen.

I know that things can happen, no matter who is in power. We have a building in Kingston, the OHIP building, which was built back in the early 1980s. I'm sure some of the members who were here at that time remember it well. I certainly remember it well because I happened to be mayor of the city at the time. It was an absolutely welcome addition to our downtown and it started a redevelopment mode in a particular area. But do you know what we have found lately? The building may have been built on contaminated property. There have been all sorts of problems with the employees who work there in certain parts of the building. The incidence of cancer is much higher. There have been studies done by both management and labour, and together, not to everyone's satisfaction, mind you, which clearly indicate that there's something wrong there.

It would be very easy for me to blame the government back some 20 years ago, the Bill Davis government, and say it was their fault. I suppose in those days they did what they knew or what they thought was the best way in dealing with that situation. But the point still is that on a

daily basis people are at certain kinds of risk. I think it is incumbent upon the government to protect its employees who work in a building like that, and there are over 750 people who work there, that they take whatever measure necessary to absolutely ensure that the people who work for all of us are in the safest and healthiest work environment. I'll tell you, there's some grave concern about that by many of the people who work there and by the local OPSEU unit. At times they get co-operation from management and at times they don't. In the meantime, the statistics are startling when you look at the number of people who have been adversely affected by that. Obviously, what you hope legislation like this will do is that those kinds of situations that may have developed in the Kingston area, in the OHIP building some 20 years ago, will not happen elsewhere in the province. That's why you want to make sure the soils that are being built upon in this province, on sites that at one time may have been contaminated, are as clean as possible. But in order to do that, you need the resources to do it with.

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There's another interesting situation in Kingston as well, and that is that we need a new pipe to our sewage treatment plant, a pipe that goes under the Cataraqui River system to a plant that is now in the city of Kingston—it used to be in the township of Pittsburgh prior to the amalgamation—some five or six miles from what was then the city proper. That pipe was built, I would say, probably about 60 or 70 years ago, and there are some concerns about it. The pipe has to be replaced because it goes to the main sewage treatment facility in our community, and that's a major cost to the municipality.

It made an OSTAR application some time ago. I've forgotten exactly the costs that are involved, but I believe the total cost of the project may be somewhere around \$20 million. I could be wrong on the amount but I'm certainly not understating it. It may be more than that—some \$20 million. In order to get it going, they made an OSTAR application. So far they haven't heard. I just implore the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture to take a close look at that and to approve that project. I think it's an extremely worthwhile project.

The point I'm trying to make is this: when you look at the amount of money that has actually been allocated to the OSTAR program this year, we're talking about \$50 million, whereas last year some \$240 million out of \$600 million was allocated. So whatever has happened, the amount of money that's available for these kinds of projects has been substantially reduced this year. There may be an explanation for it. It may very well be that all of last year's money that was set aside in the budget wasn't totally allocated and therefore some of it can be allocated this year, together with the new \$50 million that you have there. But the point is this: last year you allocated some \$600 million toward the OSTAR program and this year it's closer to \$50 million, which obviously

is an awful lot less. If there's an explanation for that, I'm waiting to hear it.

Mr Maves: They spent \$600 million last year.

Mr Gerretsen: He says they spent \$600 million last year. That remains to be seen. But what we absolutely have to realize is that local municipalities simply do not have the financial resources that are required to get involved in a lot of these major projects when we're dealing with the environmental issues. They simply don't have the economic wherewithal.

I, for example, have been saying for years—and I know there are some people perhaps within my own caucus who don't agree with that—that I think the only way we're ever going to deal with the waste management issue is for the province to take the lead and get anywhere from six to 10 engineered sites around the province that it will run as waste management facilities. After we do everything else with reducing and recycling, there's always going to be some garbage left. The notion that each municipality should basically look after its own garbage I think is simply no longer viable.

At one time not too long ago there were over 50 studies being done across the province where municipalities were looking for landfill sites or methods of dealing with the waste management situation. I know that the only one we ever seem to hear about is the situation here in Toronto, but there are many other municipalities that are involved in similar situations, large and small. The only way to effectively deal with that is for the province to take the lead. All governments in the past, including the Liberal government, the current Conservative government, the past Conservative government and the NDP government, didn't want to touch it with a 10-foot pole: "Oh, no. Waste management is a local responsibility. All we will do on the provincial scene is to be in a watchdog capacity."

What I'm saying is that in the 21st century it's simply no longer a sustainable position to take, and there are situations which have totally changed in the last 30 or 40 years where the province has to step up to bat and say, "Yes, these are not only issues of a local interest, they are issues of a provincial interest, and we are going to take the lead." I know you're going to say, "Where do you want these located?" All I can tell you is that with the tremendous land mass that we have here in Ontario, if we compare that to many smaller land masses in many countries in Europe, they've been able to deal with it. It's being dealt with elsewhere around the globe. Why can't we start dealing with it effectively in this province? But the political will has to be there, and this is not a partisan issue. If we should ever happen to form the government, maybe the same attitude will prevail then. But I maintain that the only way we're ever going to effectively deal with the waste management issues in a modern way is for the province to take the lead. I took this position 15 years ago, that it is no longer simply a municipal problem.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): The feds could take the lead on something.

Mr Gerretsen: I look forward to what the member had to say since I couldn't make it out.

In the last couple of minutes that I have—and I meant that, you know, my concerns about the waste management situation, in a purely non-partisan way because, as I've said before, I get just as much interesting debate from the members of my own caucus on that issue who don't necessarily agree with me on that.

The main concern I have is quite simply this, and this brings us back to Walkerton and what happened there last year at this time: if anything has shaken the public confidence of the province, it's the unfortunate situation that happened there with the seven people who died. Undoubtedly, at the end of the exercise, blame will be thrown all around to local officials, to provincial officials, and there's probably a little bit to go around for everybody.

When you hear evidence to the effect that in 1996 this government was warned by its own environmental officials within the Ministry of the Environment that what was happening was going to have a major negative impact in places like Walkerton, I say to this government, surely you've learned from that. Surely it isn't enough just to come up with a nice piece of legislation. Surely you realize that the only way you're going to implement it is in making sure the proper resources are there to do it with. Your Bill 56 provides absolutely none of that.

If I've missed it, if there is some financial help here, straighten me out. I haven't found it. It's all nice language, it sets out a beautiful procedure, but I can tell you, from a local municipal perspective and from a developer's perspective, none of it is ever going to happen unless the province is actually committed to seeing these sites cleaned up by putting some resources into these projects. That's what is needed, and only then will this bill be a real success.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I want to compliment and underscore the comments of the member from Kingston and the Islands. He talks about the need to have resources behind Bill 56 and he uses his experience as the former mayor of Kingston to assist him in formulating that position. As a former councillor and alderman in the city of Hamilton I feel exactly the same way. Is this a good thing? Yes, it's better than nothing. I don't think anybody would argue with that. But without money, given the pressures that are now on all municipal governments, given the downloading, the lack of resources, the funding cuts—

Interjection.

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Mr Christopherson: I hear one of the members across the way rolling his eyes and everything. I don't know what world you live in, but if you want to come to Hamilton or, I suspect, to Kingston and talk about the damage your government has done and about the inability of municipalities to meet their core services today, never mind somehow finding the money to pump into Bill 56, you're welcome to come in. The reality is that we

will tell you that this is a positive step in the right direction—no question. But without funding, it doesn't go anywhere. The municipalities do not have the financial resources to give the effect that a lot of you are talking about. It's great words, but it's not reality.

At some point, the government is going to have to put money into municipal government and money back into the Ministry of the Environment; otherwise, all of this is smoke and mirrors and the health of the public is still at risk.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Please allow me an opportunity to participate in this debate and reply to the honourable member's comments. As a former Minister of the Environment and a former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—I seem to have a lot of “formers” in my name; we can comment on that later on, I suppose—I do want to say that this is an important piece of legislation. I had a little bit of a part in it in my previous portfolios.

The honourable member was concerned, in particular, about the resources available. It is in fact an enabling piece of legislation. It enables the municipalities to create different tax structures around parts of urban areas that can be the source of a renaissance of these urban areas that have been blighted by the former industrial activity that took place there. So there is enabling there when it comes to resources.

Part I of the act deals with the education tax part of that as well, so I think that is something the government of Ontario is allowing, because we as a government are the ones who dictate the policy when it comes to education tax, to protect the taxpayers, but in this case we think there is a way for the education tax to be part of the solution. I think it would be unfair to say that there is no provincial recognition or provincial dedication of resources in this area.

The other part of it, of course, is that when you're dealing with brownfields, you're dealing with areas of the province that already have the transportation infrastructure, already have the road infrastructure, already have the pipes, already have a lot of the investment that was, quite frankly, provincial as well as municipal, that is available so we don't have to build that all out with urban sprawl. We don't have to create it again on greenfields. We can take advantage of it in our urban areas for the betterment of society.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I want to commend the member for Kingston and the Islands. He spoke as a former mayor, he spoke as a former president of AMO, and he has the experience and the background. At the present time, what we see in this bill is another downloading to the municipalities.

Being a former mayor, when I look at it, where will the municipality be taking the money to hire the people to look after this bill, to look after the landfill site? At the present time, anyone who has sat on a council previously would definitely know that some additional expenses are going to be incurred by the municipality. As we know right now, with all this downloading that we have

experienced, we have potholes in potholes on the streets of our own municipalities.

When I look at part VII, I wonder what any municipality that takes this bill and reads it is going to do. Part VII is very clear: it will amend the Planning Act. "The amendments provide that municipalities may make grants or loans to tenants, as well as property owners...." At the present time, they are downloading the responsibility to the municipality, and in this way they are not liable to be sued in court. If you had sat on municipal council, you would know immediately—

Mr Dunlop: I sat for 20 years. I know about downloading.

Mr Lalonde: I wish you would have known a lot more about the Planning Act and also what effect a landfill site would have on the municipality.

But I would call this a crucial bill for all the municipalities and for the environmental people. I'm sure that if the environmental groups were to put a hand on this, immediately you would be getting a lot of calls, because this is unacceptable.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Simcoe North should know that if he continues, he will be gone.

The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr Maves: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the comments by the member for Kingston and the Islands. The member did speak as a former mayor and a former president of AMO, but first and foremost he spoke as a typical Liberal.

Interjection: "Spend more money."

Mr Maves: Exactly. My colleagues know exactly what I'm referring to. The member opposite questioned why some capital funding for an OSTAR program wasn't the same \$600 million that it was last year. Part of the answer to that is, it was \$600 million last year. It begs the question, is the Liberal policy—this government put \$1 billion into capital projects last year for colleges and universities to create 73,000 new spaces. Does that mean, under Liberal economics, that every year now we have to spend \$1 billion on capital projects for colleges and universities? That's silliness, but that's typical Liberal silliness.

The member went on to say that the province needs to take over garbage disposal in Ontario. That's very interesting. I didn't know that was Liberal Party policy. It's interesting to hear that. The province now needs to take over funding all of the transit in Ontario, an interesting cost upload for the province. The province needs to do whatever is necessary for some folks in Kingston, who I appreciate are having a health problem in a building, to look after the safety of those people. What are the parameters of "whatever is necessary"? What are the details? We're not sure. We should just throw whatever we can at that. The province needs to take over water and sewer works, seemed to be the message from the member opposite. The province needs to fund all the brownfield site cleanups across Ontario.

Spend, spend, spend. Money, money, money thrown at everything. It's a typical Liberal solution to every problem: just reach into the pockets of the people of this province, rip it out of their pockets, and take everything over at the provincial level.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr Gerretsen: Let me just say to the last member that when the government employs employees in its workplace, those workers have a right to work in a safe environment, whatever it costs, yes. To make sure those 750 people have a safe working environment, we should implement it. If it means taking them out of the building and putting them somewhere else in order to give them that safe environment, we should do that.

It was interesting to hear the member for Simcoe North. At least there is one government member who now acknowledges the fact that there has been downloading to local municipalities, because he quite openly used that word. The government always talks about, "It wasn't downloading. It was an equal transfer." At least we now have a member of the government—and I hope Hansard got that—who admitted there was downloading, because he said he sat on municipal council for 20 years, and he knows all about downloading, he said with a smirk. So at least there is one government member, having sat on municipal council in the last five years, who acknowledges the fact that there has been a lot of downloading.

To the Minister of Health I say, yes, you are correct. The government will put in the money, whatever is required, in order to—once a municipality gives tax assistance to a developer of brownfields etc, then the government has to agree to that so that its portion of the education taxes can be used as well. I'll grant you that, and that's a good, positive step, but it isn't enough, and you and I know that it isn't enough. If you for a moment think the tax incentives alone are going to be sufficient financial incentives for developers to clean up those properties, you're totally and absolutely wrong. It isn't enough, Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

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Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure today to rise in the House to speak to such an important piece of legislation that will encourage the revitalization of abandoned or contaminated lands known as brownfields.

I'd also like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister Hodgson, for putting forth this bill. As a leader in the Smart Growth initiative for our government, I have to commend Minister Hodgson for his effort in promoting and managing growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment in Ontario.

I can certainly tell you that in my hometown riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka there are areas that can be classified as brownfields. In fact, I think I'm safe in saying that most communities across Ontario contain such areas.

These areas can be particularly problematic from time to time, given the contamination and abandonment. The lack of liability also poses a problem, with no person wanting to assume such a task.

It is a shame that these sites have become such under-used economic losses and liabilities to our communities. The brownfields strategy will provide a practical and environmentally sound approach to brownfields redevelopment that will help us build cleaner, healthier communities. This will also permit landowners and municipalities to make the right decisions in order to make better use of these currently underserved lands in our communities.

As most of our members know, brownfields are sites on which industrial or commercial activity took place in the past but are currently abandoned or underused. These properties may or may not be contaminated. They are often located in prime locations where infrastructure and other urban services already exist. Almost all Ontario communities have brownfield sites such as decommissioned petrochemical plant locations, dry cleaning stores, gas stations, railway yards and factories. These sites are found in well-served areas, often near the downtown core or near the waterfront, as is the case in Parry Sound. Because of the characteristics of brownfields, these are prime locations for redevelopment.

In cleaning up these contaminated and unused lands, it would benefit local communities greatly as well as benefiting generations to come. In redeveloping these industrial and commercial sites, communities will be able to improve their quality of life and protect the environment, to attract new business, new development and create jobs.

Last September, our government announced the appointment of an advisory panel to provide expert advice on the environmental cleanup and rejuvenation of old industrial and commercial sites known as brownfields. The advisory panel emphasized the government's commitment to building cleaner, more prosperous communities for future generations. The result of this consultation process is the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act. If this law is passed, it would enable smarter patterns of growth by encouraging the cleanup and revitalization of abandoned or contaminated lands.

What is interesting is that the Harris government was the first to introduce a process and set of environmental standards for site cleanup in Ontario. The proposed brownfields legislation and regulations would give those standards the force of law and set out a process for cleaning up brownfields.

As most people are probably aware, one of the largest barriers for the redevelopment of brownfields is the enormous concern for environmental liability. I can understand the apprehension and lack of interest shown in these areas, given the problems these lands may represent for the future. In a lot of cases, people are reluctant to invest time and money into brownfields, despite the tremendous personal benefits from redeveloping one of these sites. This is due to their concerns over potential

liability for future environmental problems and the financial implications of this liability.

The proposed legislation sets out clear rules for limiting future environmental liability complemented by checks and balances to ensure that environmental standards are met and that the people of Ontario are protected. The proposed changes do not alter the Ministry of the Environment's powers to issue orders to address environmental emergencies or to take strong action against polluters. The ministry will continue to audit site cleanups and there will be clear, concise, articulate rules put in place to govern cleanups.

It is also important to note this proposed brownfields legislation would remove the key obstacles to cleaning up and recycling brownfields. It would require a mandatory environmental site assessment and, if required, cleanup to prescribed standards where there is a land use change from industrial-commercial to residential-parkland or to other land use changes prescribed by regulations.

The legislation would also provide clear rules for site assessment, cleanup and standards for contaminants based on proposed land use. It would also require the acceptance of a site-specific risk assessment by the Ministry of the Environment and allow for conditions to be placed on the use of the property.

The brownfields legislation would establish clear rules for environmental liability. It would provide liability protection from future environmental orders from municipalities if taking action for the purpose of a tax sale or action related to other municipal responsibilities. It would provide liability protection from future environmental orders for secured creditors, while protecting interest in a property. It would provide liability protection for a fiduciary in their own personal capacity. It would provide protection from environmental orders for any person conducting an environmental investigation while acquiring interest in a property. It would also provide liability protection from future environmental orders for owners who follow the prescribed site assessment and cleanup process. This includes filing a record of a site condition to that site registry and using a certified site cleanup professional.

This legislation would maintain the ministry's power to issue an environmental order in response to an environmental emergency. It introduces a number of quality assurance measurements, which include sign-off by certified professionals, mandatory reporting to a site registry and an auditing process to ensure compliance with the legislation and regulations. I can safely say that I feel confident that this legislation goes a long way in establishing clear and strict rules for environmental liability and the essential cleanup of brownfield sites.

The cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites can offer significant environmental, economic, social and fiscal benefits. Environmentally, the cleanup of brownfield sites will improve our soil and water quality and protect human health. Redeveloping brownfields allows communities to make more efficient use of existing

infrastructure before expanding on farmland or greenfield sites.

Economically, developing brownfields is very cost-effective. These sites can often cost little to acquire, and compared to greenfields their servicing costs are very low. In our local neighbourhoods, brownfields encourage community building and revitalization of our underused areas. As I said before, they are often located on potentially attractive waterfronts or near downtown locations, as is the case in Parry Sound. Communities are able to come together in the redevelopment of these sites in order to benefit as a whole.

Fiscally, brownfield sites that are left vacant or are perhaps contaminated generally have low assessment and therefore low taxes. The taxes may even be in arrears, which means lost revenue for municipalities and other stakeholders.

So the brownfield legislation will be a key part of our Smart Growth strategy. It links economic growth to using existing infrastructure in a way that makes sure we have a healthy environment and a good quality of life. It is apparent that cleaning up and reusing brownfields benefits our environment, our economy and our communities. My riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka contains a few brownfield sites. I believe the redevelopment of these brownfields is crucial to our community's future and the growth that would come with these opportunities.

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In speaking with the members of the business community of Parry Sound, they expressed their support for this bill, and I am sure many other communities across the province would agree. A councillor in Bracebridge I was talking with expressed a keen interest in this legislation and could see that it would be useful in the Bracebridge area. This bill would definitely go a long way in helping mayors and reeves in my riding redevelop the brownfields in our communities.

The proposed legislation would amend community improvement provisions in the Planning Act to expedite brownfields projects. The community improvement provisions of the Planning Act allow municipalities greater flexibility to provide for a broad range of community improvement activities, including brownfield remediation and redevelopment. If a municipality has community improvement policies and designated areas for community improvement in its official plan, it may issue grants or loans to encourage rehabilitation of lands and buildings in the community improvement area, including the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield properties.

It is a reality, unfortunately, that brownfields projects usually don't get off the ground because of the high costs of cleaning up the sites. The proposed legislation would encourage owners of brownfield sites to undertake site cleanup by providing them with property tax relief to assist in remediating their brownfield properties.

The rewards of cleaning up and revitalizing brownfields sites are tremendously rewarding, for the municipality, for the developer and for the community as a whole. First of all, it is good for the environment. For our

municipalities, it means increased property tax revenue. For the developer, it means economic opportunity. Most importantly, it means jobs for our communities.

The redevelopment of these brownfields can lead to new housing for our communities. It will help us meet the needs of our growing economy while protecting our natural and heritage landscapes. Also, it may even lead to a neighbourhood eyesore being replaced by a much needed and much more attractive development.

We now have the opportunity to make sure that municipalities, developers and communities have the tools to enable brownfield redevelopment to become a reality. It also enables the municipalities to reach out to the development community, in my case Parry Sound-Muskoka, and essentially help it prosper. By making brownfield redevelopment easier, the proposed legislation will enable communities to improve their quality of life, be more competitive and attract new businesses and jobs.

It has been my distinct pleasure to speak to Bill 56 today. I know there are others who would like to speak on the brownfields legislation, so I thank you and look forward to the passing of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Christopherson: I thought someone from the official opposition might want to jump in, but I guess not.

First of all, I want to commend the member on his presentation. He's fairly new to this place and it can be a bit daunting at first, so I congratulate him on getting through the whole thing and getting his point across.

But I want to again raise the issue of money, something you worship. Listen, Bill 56 says in the explanatory note to part III, "Municipal Act Amendments: Part III of the bill amends the Municipal Act. The amendments allow municipalities to pass by-laws providing for municipal tax assistance to assist with the environmental rehabilitation of properties that do not meet the standards prescribed for filing a record...."

Also, in part VII, "Planning Act Amendments: The amendments provide that municipalities may make grants"—municipalities—"or loans to tenants, as well as property owners, for the purpose of carrying out community improvement plans."

Fine. You talk partnerships. Where's your money? You're taking all the credit, standing up like you're personally out there cleaning up our brownfields. You talk about partnership, you talk about working with municipalities, you dump on all kinds of responsibilities and then don't give them enough money to do it. Then you provide enabling legislation that lets the municipalities spend money they don't have.

When this government talks partnership they better realize what they mean is somebody else pays the bill. Let me say to the government, real partnership, if you want to help municipalities, means you pony up your share.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Peel.

Mr Tilson: Mr Speaker, Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, but I appreciate your attempt.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka has stood up again and given an outstanding speech on this topic and has related the issues to his riding. He has responded to much of the criticism that has been raised from the opposition—the last speaker, our friend from Hamilton, has talked about it—the allegation of lack of money, lack of staff.

I think you've got to remember that when this government was first elected in 1995 we said that there was too much staff in the civil service. I don't know what the numbers were. I'm sure my friend—

Mr Christopherson: Like the Ministry of the Environment?

Mr Tilson: All these problems that exist with polluted lands existed with those of thousands and thousands of civil servants you had, whom you and the Liberals hired.

Mr Parsons: Walkerton.

Mr Christopherson: Walkerton didn't happen on our watch.

Mr Tilson: Walkerton existed with all the staff that you hired. It didn't solve the problems. I think the good thing about this particular piece of legislation is it is dealing with that issue without the requirement of the vast amount of staff that the opposition want to hire.

That's all they want to do, is to hire staff. That's the solution. That's the solution to the environmental problems in this province, according to our friends in the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party: hire staff. That isn't what this legislation is doing.

This legislation is going to make it more certain to enable people to acquire lands, to develop lands and to deal with pollutants. That's what brownfield is all about.

Mr Christopherson: Put your money where your mouth is.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I'd say to the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey that what the members of the opposition want from this government is to put something more than nice-sounding words into a piece of legislation.

We would like to be able to support something which actually looks at taking brownfield sites and seeing them reclaimed and used productively, but we don't believe that there should be one more downloading on municipalities that have been dumped on by this government time and time again.

The member for Hamilton West has said this government loves to talk about partnerships, but the partner that has all the accountability, all the responsibility and all the financial liability has been the municipality in every partnership which this government has undertaken.

I think of two issues, and I've been here long enough to remember only too well the original David Crombie Who Does What panel report and the kind of recommendations which he made about a fair distribution of responsibility and financial responsibility for providing the services that are needed. I remember how this government simply walked away from that report. What they

wanted to have as revenue neutral was in fact financial downloading on to municipalities.

We're still dealing with the legacy of this government's failure to respond to the spirit and intent of what David Crombie was recommending then, because they were so anxious to actually dump financial cost on to municipalities in order to pay for their cut of the day. Fortunately they moved away from the long-term-care download on to municipalities, but we're still trying to figure out the ambulance situation.

I've asked time and time again—and I see the Minister of Health is in the House, he may have to answer it—when is this government ever going to come up with a reasonable template for cost-sharing of ambulance services? When are we going to know what 50% of the province's share is actually a share of? How are we going to know whether this government is carrying its fair share when they won't even put forward a template for standards for ambulance services?

In the meantime the municipalities are bearing all the responsibility and financial liability.

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Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I just wanted to congratulate the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka on a fine presentation. I wanted to acknowledge that the residents of his area are well served with his insight on this particular bill that will help towns such as Parry Sound, Bracebridge and Huntsville and other small communities throughout his riding, which is a large geographical mass.

In regard to the comments from the third party representative from Hamilton West, he talked about the partnership—

Mr Christopherson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker—

Hon Mr Hodgson: Quorum?

Mr Christopherson: No, not quorum. I think the minister has been here long enough to know that the purpose of questions and comments is to comment on the original speech, not the comments from members who are commenting on those speeches.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I was mentioning, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka referenced that the municipalities and the province are in a partnership on this proposed legislation. It was alluded that it wasn't a partnership. The partnership is that if the municipality wants to use a community improvement opportunity around brownfields, they would give a tax incremental financing option to the developer or the tenant and we would match that through the education side. That is a true partnership. It will allow municipalities the flexibility they've asked for. I don't want to oversell that, because in the United States property tax can approach zero. In Canada, and particularly Ontario, it doesn't. But when it is brought back into use there's an increased revenue stream that benefits the municipality in the whole assessment base

for the municipality. That's why we are allowing this option to be there to add an additional incentive.

In terms of the real benefit, it is around the clarification of liability and allowing the private sector and municipalities certainty around the cleanup rules and procedures to put these sites back into active production.

The Deputy Speaker: Response, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Mr Miller: I'd like to thank the members who commented. To the member for Hamilton West, thanks for the praise. To the members for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, thank you for your comments.

I think the brownfields program, Bill 56, is a very creative solution to the problem of brownfields. It is innovative, using tax release, using grants and loans available from the municipality to recover the cost of upgrading and recovering the brownfields land. This is a very practical program. It is very important for the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka, particularly on the Parry Sound waterfront where there are brownfields located. It is exciting legislation for many of the communities across Ontario.

It is creative in the financial aspect of it as well. Of course, the NDP solution to this problem, as pointed out by the member for Hamilton West, is to throw lots of money at the problem. That's their answer for most problems that we have. We have the reality of trying to deal with the real world. This is a creative solution to try to bring about some real cleanup of brownfields. The Liberal suggestion is also to throw money at the problem, but not quite as much as the NDP. Their solutions are generally the same thing: throw money at the problem.

This legislation provides the tools to stimulate the redevelopment of brownfields. As the member for Brampton West-Mississauga stated, it is enabling legislation. It enables us to find a solution to the problem. Finally, the government is doing something to clean up these contaminated lands.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Parsons: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 56. It is a bill that has so much potential and yet falls so short. Actually, it is a little bit different in that it doesn't have a cute title, but I assume somebody was a little asleep at the switch. The title purports to be doing something that needs to be done.

This government talks about money on almost every issue. When we ask about home care programs the answer always comes in terms of dollars—not in terms of citizens served, not in terms of programs, but in terms of dollars. When we talk about education the answer is dollars. There's so much to be done here. Let's talk, first of all, about dollars, just as this government likes to. The critical issue is: where will the money come to clean up the brownfields? Obviously, they like to look to the private sector. There is nothing wrong with that. In fact I support and encourage that. But if we look at the track record of this government working with private industry, we can look at the SuperBuild fund that's announced and

reannounced. If you look at SuperBuild, it calls for partnerships with private industry. But when you look at the SuperBuild money that has been announced and is being spent—the partnerships are with municipalities, universities and colleges—they are in fact spending other public money along with it. There aren't private partnerships taking place to any great extent in the SuperBuild fund, so to expect that we will see private industry come forward on this is rather doubtful.

Municipalities are struggling in rural Ontario. We have a cookie-cutter approach by this government, "If it works in this municipality, it will work everywhere in Ontario." We are a huge province and truly unique in each and every area. Some of our municipalities are struggling, and I'll talk about one specifically in a few minutes. But the province is doing the same as it did with ambulances. With ambulance service they've raised the standards but passed all the costs down to the municipalities for these increased standards. We're seeing increased standards for these brownfields that are going to be ducked by this provincial government in terms of financial responsibility.

This is a wonderful initiative to deal with—brownfields—but I would suggest there are far bigger issues to be dealt with. The bill says, "An Act to encourage the revitalization of contaminated land." I would like to see a bill that says, "an act to encourage the cleanup, the remediation of contaminated land."

I live in a rural area. My water comes out of a well in the ground. I accept that that water in my well may have come a mile or two or it may have come 500 miles to reach it. Much of rural Ontario is on wells. I'm taking a guess that we have all through Ontario hundreds of closed dump sites that continue to leak their waste products down into the ground. I see the need for this government to address the cleanup of them to give us clean drinking water. Instead, I hear that one of the problems facing Ontario was that it had too many environmental people; I've also heard we have too many nurses, that that's the problem with health care; that the problem with our schools is that we have too many teachers. Anything that costs money and delivers a service is viewed as an enemy, when in fact the key is that it provides a service to us.

This government is viewing this as a keystone in their platform of Smart Growth. But if we look at their past performance on Smart Growth, this government has worked toward dumps; this government has worked toward getting rid of support for mass transit that created the congestion and the gridlock on our highways. This government has not practised smart growth; it has only used that catchphrase because it makes an excellent backdrop.

I think each of us in this Legislature needs to sit and think about, "How will Bill 56 impact in my riding?" In my riding I have a delightful little town called Deseronto, located on the Bay of Quinte. It's extremely scenic with great fishing. I would encourage each and every one of you to visit and spend some time. It is a delightful spot.

But it started essentially as a one-industry town. It was a very major lumber town 100 years ago. Now they are in a situation where they have virtually no industry but they do have a closed site that they are having to assume the cost of themselves, the cost of somewhere between \$150,000 and \$300,000 being absorbed by the local taxpayers, with no provincial government support. That being added on the tax bill does not help Deseronto in any way to attract industry. For many of the members in the House, particularly those from the 905 area, I would suggest you have trouble relating to a municipality that has no significant industrial base. Deseronto has some, but a very small percentage compared to much of Ontario.

Deseronto is also foisted on—and I think that's the right term—with police costs that are totally out of line for the number of residents in that town. In Deseronto, each home pays approximately \$600 toward policing costs for each \$100,000 assessment on a house. This government, with great fanfare, capped policing costs at \$90 per household where OPP services had been assumed by the municipal services. In the case of Deseronto, the municipal services were taken over and assumed by the OPP, so we're seeing massive cleanup costs coupled with massive policing costs. Surely this government supports safe streets and safe towns.

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Taxpayers there are not in a position to fund the cleanup that this bill would allow, so the bill becomes meaningless when the right is there for a town to do it but they don't have the financial means. And whether that brownfield is in the municipality I live in or in the next municipality, I know it affects the groundwater, and the groundwater could show up potentially anywhere. So there is an obligation and in fact a need on the part of this government to assume responsibility for cleaning up these sites. When a municipality that is not able to afford it doesn't do it, the effect of that contaminated ground is to make life very difficult or even potentially unsafe in another municipality.

I'm certainly not inferring that Deseronto's situation is making the groundwater unsafe, but I would suggest we need to have one standard of cleanliness everywhere across the province for our groundwater. Unless the province assumes some financial liability for it, that does not happen.

In the proposal put forward, there is the option for municipalities to give an exemption to firms, as far as taxes go, if they're prepared to purchase and remediate a property. But in many cases these brownfield sites were very extensive properties—maybe a manufacturing plant—and the firm that wants to locate on that may not need all of that property. They may not even want to assume the responsibility for all of that property. They may want only a portion of it this time and control and development of it in future years. This bill doesn't provide for them to be able to remediate a part. It doesn't allow for the unique situations but, again, deals with a very simplistic approach to everything.

If we want to know what this government's responsibility is and how it will administer this, we need to look at the past to learn for the future. Governments tend to move in straight lines, so if you want to know where they're going, you need to simply look where they've been. The way they have treated the environment in the past—50% funding cuts in the Ministry of the Environment, and they have been on the attack against all the services these local municipalities have—this government has not been a friend of the environment. Indeed, when New York state and Michigan state complain about the pollution coming from Ontario, we know we've probably reached rock-bottom, because it isn't that many years ago when we were complaining about the states putting pollution into us.

I think this government has absolutely hit rock-bottom. It is a government that is thriving on smoke and mirrors, and simply passing this bill will give the impression that they have addressed the environmental problems that exist along our rivers and along our streams, when in fact it is doomed to fail because there is no mechanism provided to make this act actually happen. It looks good on paper, but there is no funding that would exist to enable these fields to actually be cleaned up.

Environmental groups have supported the bill, certainly, because they have believed that it would happen. But they need to take a close look at the reaction of municipalities and the tax increases they are now having to impose, saying, "Where will the extra money come from to make the bill happen?" It is perhaps somewhat misleading to environmental groups to think that the problem has now been resolved. We need to have the provincial government act like a government: take control and ensure that all across Ontario our brownfields are going to be restored to useful, taxpaying, safe use.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Tilson: I sense that the member is going to support the legislation, but it remains to be seen. He did offer some criticism.

The fact of the matter is that this legislation does provide certainty. In the past there was no certainty as to how one was going to develop contaminated lands, and the lands ended up just sitting there with problems with soil and problems with water. No one was prepared to take on the cleanup, because of the uncertainty that existed.

I say to the member, what this legislation and the regulations are going to do is to allow the cleanups of brownfields, because that simply doesn't exist with certainty. Now individuals and companies and municipalities will be able to proceed with these cleanups with it being quite clear as to what the regulations are for the improvement of these lands, which will indeed improve the soil, will improve human health, will improve water quality—that, tied in with the fact that there will be economic development on these lands because of the certainty that exists.

The member has been critical of the legislation, but I think if he studied it he would realize that the legislation

removes the obstacles to the cleanup of brownfields and the recycling of those areas. This has not existed before. So it makes it easier to take advantage of the brownfield opportunities. This legislation will certainly make the use of existing infrastructure more efficient and preserve our parks and our farmlands.

Mrs McLeod: I'm very pleased to comment on the contribution of my colleague to this debate. I do want to note that he began by mentioning the SuperBuild fund, picking up on the theme of partnerships and recognizing the fact that under the SuperBuild fund there has been a flurry of announcements about the value of the SuperBuild fund, but in fact virtually no private-public partnerships to result in any building. It leads to his natural concern that in this brownfield legislation we are going to again have a series of announcements and good-sounding intentions but no actual cleanup of brownfield sites, or, in fact there is to be any cleanup, it will remain a municipal responsibility.

I can't help but add that not only are there no public-private partnership agreements under the SuperBuild fund; there's virtually nothing happening under the SuperBuild fund other than the thousands and thousands and thousands of pages of paper that various small community organizations have been encouraged to fill in, because they've all been given tentative approval of their projects and been told to submit detailed plans. The government now has these thousands and thousands and thousands of pages of proposals with the good intent of community organizations working their hearts out, and they have absolutely no process with which to begin to decide who's going to get the funding. But that may be considered to be a topic for another day.

I think this legislation is part and parcel of what we see from this government: a whole flurry of announcements and reannouncements, and nothing ever gets out the door.

I do need to correct my colleague on one thing he said. I hope you'll forgive me. My colleague mentioned the fact that one of the downloaded areas was ambulance services, and I think he said the government increased standards for ambulances but the municipalities had picked up the cost. I think it's important to recognize that the government has not increased standards. They are paying 50% of the cost of the standard that was in place when the municipalities assumed ambulance services. Any municipality that is providing a higher standard of ambulance service now is doing it at 100% municipal cost, because this government has not been able to come up to the bar with a new standard for ambulance services.

Mr Christopherson: I want to commend the member from Prince Edward-Hastings on his remarks, and in particular on bringing to our attention the fact that this is not just a large urban area issue, but that there are problems in many of the rural areas. Again, he emphasized the fact that there isn't any more money from the government.

I just want to say, in support of what the member has said, that in Hamilton, for instance, probably the best

example of contaminated land is Plastimet. At the end of the day, it finally is getting cleaned up, but not before we went through a whole lot of hoops and had to put enormous political pressure on the government in order to get that funding. It still cost the city of Hamilton and the former regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth a ton of their own money. We still haven't had, by the way, a public inquiry to determine exactly why that happened and to ensure that it doesn't happen to anybody else's community.

All throughout the north end, particularly in wards 2 and 3 in Hamilton—and I want to commend Councillor Andrea Horwath in ward 2, who has taken a lead in pushing for this government and the federal government to join in real partnership with municipalities to deal with the issue of brownfields. It needs to be said that this bill still provides—I understand that when we're forfeiting revenue that's not happening anyway because the land's not being used, we're talking about money they don't really have. But make no mistake: part VII talks about the fact that municipalities may make grants or loans. Don't think for a moment there isn't going to be enormous pressure on municipal councils, particularly in communities like the city of Hamilton, to put that money on the line. You're not going to be there, and it means the city will have to take money away from what? Public health? Public transit? Which one of those do you want to see gutted?

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mr Parsons: I express my thanks to the members for Dufferin-Peel, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and Hamilton West for their comments. I didn't mean to tease you, to the member for Dufferin-Peel. I will not support a bill that only has potential. The bill has to deliver before I can support it. This bill doesn't deliver anywhere near as much as it purports to.

Interestingly, this bill will help to remediate land that has profit potential. It does nothing to remediate land that someone cannot make a dollar on. That's consistent with this government. We should expect that. But there is lots and lots of property in Ontario that could be labelled as brownfield that doesn't have immediate economic benefit to someone to develop. There may not be a need for land at that time; it may not be in the right location for the growth at that time. So it's going to be passed by, and whatever is in there—an old coal oil plant or a former gas station—is going to continue to leak down into the ground until someone can make a buck by cleaning that site up.

I don't think that should be the intent of our legislation. The intent should be to clean up the land. We have knowingly or unwillingly put all kinds of things into our ground over the past 100 years. It is time that we started to remove it, and it is time that we not look just at the profit.

Environment and health: there would be some merit in actually having them as one ministry. I suggest they are so closely interwoven that the one has a profound effect on the other. But nowhere do people who are ill have a

cash register in their heart; nowhere are people who are suffering from the pollution interested in the dollars. Our citizens expect this province to be safe and our groundwater to be safe, and this bill simply doesn't achieve that.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. It being past 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2133.

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