



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**
Second Session, 37th Parliament

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

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 1 October 2001

Lundi 1^{er} octobre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 1 October 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1^{er} octobre 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I rise in the House today to recognize the 10th anniversary of Women's History Month. We celebrate women in October because women were recognized as persons under Canadian law in October 1929.

This year's theme recognizes women in their role as volunteers. Seventy-five per cent of women participate in formal volunteer activity. It is these volunteer activities in schools, hospitals, nursing homes and community centres that enrich the communities of Ontario.

Great strides have been made by women in achieving a better gender balance, but there is still more work to be done. Regardless of a woman's skills, knowledge and ability, the after-tax income of women is still a shocking 63% of that of men. Not surprisingly, poverty is still a major issue for women, especially for single mothers and senior citizens.

The Harris government has failed in its policies to recognize that women, while also working outside the home, are the primary caregivers to their children and elderly relatives. Women still perform the lion's share of the work of the home. Studies have shown that this trend is continuing, with young girls still completing more chores than their brothers.

This government should do more to ensure that government policies do not have a negative gender bias. Many of this government's initiatives, which include cuts to health care, education and social services, have a direct impact on the lives of women in the province. These cuts tip the gender imbalance and erode the quality of life of women and families in Ontario.

Let us all take the time to recognize the contributions of women this month, and of all volunteers in this province. However, let us not lose sight of the fact that there's still more work to be done to bring full equality to the women in this province.

ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): I had the pleasure yesterday afternoon to attend the celebration of the

groundbreaking ceremony of the new Islamic education and community centre in my beautiful riding of Thornhill. The children of the Al Sadiq Islamic private school kicked off the celebration with the singing of O Canada and performed Arabic poetry and songs of peace. The expression of happiness in the faces of the children and the many families who belong to the Shia Muslim community was a joy to behold. Many youth speakers expressed their enthusiasm and that this day for them was like a dream come true.

The event was also attended by the Honourable Hilary Weston, who took part in the official groundbreaking with Brother Rajani, the president of the Ishna Asheri Jammaat of Toronto. It was a happy day for the Shia Muslim community, and many members of different faiths also attended to show their support.

This centre will open next to the Yashiva, a Jewish theology college, a sign of the great diversity and understanding that exist in our province of Ontario and in Thornhill.

It was truly a pleasure to be part of a very special day in the Shia Muslim community. Not only was it the groundbreaking but also a celebration of the anniversary of their Imam Ali.

I wish the community all the success in the next phase of goal in completing the centre.

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DETENTION CENTRE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On Friday, September 28, inmates at the Barton Street jail in Hamilton rioted after being caught in the act of drug smuggling. We would have had a potentially explosive situation here, had it not been for the great work of the guards and the city of Hamilton police to quell this.

I've warned this government and I've warned this minister that there is a powder keg ready to explode at the Hamilton detention centre. We have understaffing, we have a problem with security, we have a problem with the fact that this government has blindly cut all programs and support to inmates in this facility, which holds people who are in there for break and enter, to people who are in there on murder charges. We have a dangerous mix.

I ask this government today to undertake a full security audit of the Hamilton detention facility to ensure the staffing level is there to meet the needs, to ensure that the guards lives are not in danger because of cuts by this

government, to ensure safety precautions are in place and to ensure that some of the barbaric program cuts made by this government, which make it a very explosive, tension-filled, dangerous situation, are reviewed.

We cannot allow a situation to continue where you have overcrowding in a jail, where you put guards' lives at risk because you are totally obsessed with continuing to cut costs in our facilities. You talk the talk, but you do not protect the guards and the communities that host these jails. Minister, I don't want to be standing here again in a much more dangerous situation which may occur in the future if you don't act. You've been warned. This is one situation that could have been avoided. I ask today that you take the necessary steps to ensure this will not become a more tragic, more difficult situation at that facility in the future.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I'm pleased to rise in the Legislature today to proclaim that this is Ontario Agriculture Week, 2001. This morning, I officially launched the fourth annual Ontario Agriculture Week here in beautiful downtown Toronto with the help of my colleague, Brian Coburn, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Bill Mailloux, vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture; Bob Bedggood, president of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario; and leaders of many of Ontario's commodity groups as well as farmers.

I'd like to thank the many members from all parties who joined us this morning. I trust you enjoyed the Ontario-grown and Ontario-produced feast.

Agriculture Week is an opportunity to recognize Ontario's farmers and the importance of our agri-food industry.

I was born and raised on a farm. The hard work and dedication of my parents when raising our family was truly an example of what makes the farmers of Ontario great. The strength of our province depends upon farmers, and I'm proud to be the representative of some of Ontario's best.

It's important to remember that agriculture injects \$25 billion annually into the provincial economy and employs more than 640,000 people. I'd like to thank the farmers in my riding of Perth-Middlesex and the thousands of other farmers across the province for their contribution to the quality of life of our citizens. This week, take a moment to salute our agricultural communities and farm families. Invite Ontario home for dinner.

ONTARIO FARM INCOME DISASTER PROGRAM

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): As we kick off Agriculture Week, unfortunately I have to point out once again the disaster that is the Ontario farm income disaster program. It is more than a \$200-million disaster. I repeatedly warned this ministry of the mis-

management of our largest farm program. The last minister didn't listen, and I trust the current minister will.

In a time of economic downturn when the government should be proactive, millions of dollars are owed to our farmers. Together with an accountant from Delhi, my office has been meeting with government officials in Guelph to straighten out dozens of files. The results are earth-shattering.

As of last Friday, 16 farms in Elgin, Norfolk and Brant counties are owed more than a million dollars. A cash cropper in Wilsonville was told he would get nothing; now he's receiving \$56,000. Another in Delhi gets \$53,000; Windham Centre, \$69,000. An Oakland cash cropper has \$14,000 clawed back, only to learn he's eligible for \$84,000. The list goes on and on.

Minister, with a million dollars owing to only 16 farms in three counties, consider the margin for error when calculating the 7,000 applications in the early program. The consequences are staggering. Last Friday, Ottawa extended the deadline for the 2000 program. Your ministry claims it was taken off guard. This is unacceptable. You must immediately work, Minister, to clear up this disaster: reopen the 1998 and 1999 files immediately, extend the 2000 deadline, and admit once and for all that this program is an absolute disaster.

1340

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On Friday, September 28, I joined Alexa McDonough, the leader of the federal New Democratic Party, in a meeting with leaders of Toronto's Canadian Arab community to discuss the ugly racist attacks members of their community are enduring since the horrible events of September 11. We were joined by Dr John Asfour, president of the Canadian Arab Federation, and Dr Atif Kubursi, president of the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations and 50 representatives from the Arab community. They talked eloquently about what our political leaders need to do to reaffirm our fundamental Canadian values after reading the poll that indicates that 50% of Canadians say they favour different treatment for individuals of Arab origin.

I was barely able to keep the tears from flowing as I observed the pain in the eyes of every person in that room. One man expressed shock that Canadians would allow such a question to be asked and suggested that there would have been outrage expressed by Canadians had that question been asked about blacks or Jews.

A man spoke about his 12-year-old son named Osama who has been harassed at school. He pleaded with his father to change his name to Michael or some other Canadian name. This is heartbreaking. My leader, Howard Hampton, has called on the Harris government to do more and I am calling on them today to do more: establish a special hotline that people can call if they are experiencing discrimination; institute a special OPP unit dedicated to investigate complaints swiftly; reinstitute the

anti-racist secretariat; the Minister of Education must work with the school boards to educate all students about Arab and multiculturalism; counselling for people who have been affected by this terrible racism; and financial assistance to rebuild or repair mosques and other property damaged by racist attacks.

BRAMPTON EXCELSIORS LACROSSE TEAM

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): In anticipation of the annual Brampton Sports Hall of Fame dinner tomorrow night, I bring news of another great moment in Brampton sports history. The Brampton Excelsiors are the longest-running sports franchise in Canadian history. The Excelsiors have enjoyed success as a major lacrosse team since they began in 1883 and won their first Canadian championship in 1930 when the senior Excelsiors won the Mann Cup.

The Mann Cup is one the oldest and most valuable sports trophies in Canada. The late Sir Donald Mann, builder of the Canadian Northern Railway, first donated this solid gold cup in 1910 for the annual competition for the senior amateur lacrosse championship in Canada. The Excelsiors beat the defending Mann Cup champions, the Brooklin Redmen, in the Ontario championship, bringing them to the finals to play the Coquitlam Adanacs. They were tied three games apiece in the final games. The Adanacs scored in the last minute to win the game 10 to nine, stealing the victory to win their first Mann Cup ever.

I congratulate the Adanacs on their win and also congratulate all of the Excelsiors and their head coach, Terry Sanderson, for getting the team to the championship. Go Excelsiors. Congratulations once again.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Yesterday, I attended the kickoff to Fire Prevention Week in my community of Windsor. I was pleased to join Chief Dave Fields, representatives of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, as well as most of the members of the Windsor Spitfires major junior A hockey team who have contributed their time and energy to help promote fire safety and fire prevention in our community. There were another 200 or 300 people from our community, and among the other things we recognized were the heroic efforts, not only on part of firefighters, but on the part of our community who have been recognized over the course of the last year for their efforts in saving the lives of a number of people who were caught in unfortunate circumstances.

One could not help but be reminded of the heroic efforts of firefighters in the tragedy in New York City. We were reminded yet again in our community of the daily heroics of firefighters, whether in Windsor or any part of this province, in being ready, being prepared to

help, being prepared to risk their lives, put their lives at risk, in the interest of protecting the public.

On behalf of all of the people in my community, and I know later this week and over the course of the next two weeks we'll be talking more about fire prevention and safety, I pay tribute to those firefighters who every day risk their lives for the rest of us.

NORTHUMBERLAND TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to congratulate the new Northumberland Toastmasters Club on their recent charter. Pauline Carrick was installed as president and has very capably taken on that leadership role.

Toastmasters is an organization that plays an important role in improving the quality of life for its members and the surrounding community. It affords people the opportunity to build up their self-esteem through public speaking and social engagements. They attract numerous business-oriented individuals who are required to make presentations and public announcements, as well as residents who simply wish to improve their speaking skills.

Since its start on April 17, 2001, the Northumberland Toastmasters Club has grown to 23 very enthusiastic members. On September 25, 2001, the Northumberland Toastmasters Club was chartered by the Toastmasters International.

It is important for community leaders in rural areas to establish such organizations as a means of self-improvement and community involvement. Last Tuesday at their charter I had the opportunity to speak to the Toastmasters Club in Cobourg to congratulate them on their rapid success. I received a warm welcome and enjoyed their kind hospitality.

I encourage all members of the House to visit their local Toastmasters Club and learn more about this worthwhile and very informative organization.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table the 2000-01 annual report of the Environmental Commissioner.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Point of order, the Chair of Management Board.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize the presence today in the members' gallery of Father Mark Curtis, who is known as Canada's Singing Priest. He has raised over \$11 million for charities across this country. Mark, welcome.

The Speaker: That is not a point of order, but we welcome our guest.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTH PROTECTION AND PROMOTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Mr Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require the taking of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons / Projet de loi 105, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé pour exiger le prélèvement d'échantillons de sang afin de protéger les victimes d'actes criminels, les travailleurs des services d'urgence, les bons samaritains et d'autres personnes.

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

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): The bill amends the Health Protection and Promotion Act to allow a medical officer of health to make an order requiring the taking of a blood sample from a person if the officer is of the opinion, on reasonable grounds, that the applicant for the order has come into contact with a bodily substance of the person as a result of being a victim of crime, providing emergency health care services or emergency first aid or performing a function required by regulation. The order will require a legally qualified medical practitioner or other qualified person to take the blood sample and deliver it to an analyst. It will also require the analyst to analyze the sample and to make reasonable attempts to deliver a copy of the results of the analysis to the person from whom the sample was taken and to the person who obtained the order.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i) the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, October 1, Tuesday, October 2, and Wednesday, October 3, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

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

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Gerretsen, John	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Parsons, Ernie
Baird, John R.	Gill, Raminder	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Ramsay, David
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Brown, Michael A.	Jackson, Cameron	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	Johns, Helen	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kwinter, Monte	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Stewart, R. Gary
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Crozier, Bruce	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn	Turnbull, David
Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan	Young, David

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

Nays

Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 72; the nays are 5.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): This government is fully committed to the safety, security and best quality of life for Ontario's 1.5 million senior citizens. They deserve to live in dignity, and they will.

We are entering an era in which our seniors population is expanding rapidly. Seniors are expected to outnumber children in this province as early as 15 years from now. Within the current decade, the number of seniors in Ontario will grow by an estimated 340,000. In the year 2011, when the first baby boomers turn 65, this population will start to grow even more rapidly.

We want to ensure that seniors can live free from harm, fully participate in their communities, and have

their contributions recognized and respected. We want to ensure that seniors live with dignity and independence and in their own communities as long as possible. We are promoting healthy aging and providing the information that seniors and their families need to make informed decisions.

1400

This government focuses on matters of concern to seniors, in conjunction with other provincial, territorial and federal ministers responsible for seniors. We are guided by the five principles agreed to on the part of the FPT national framework on aging. These principles promote the overall health and well-being of our seniors. They are: dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security.

This government's careful, prudent and common sense approach is reflected in our long-term-care investment plan. Over an eight-year period, we are committed to increasing our spending on long-term-care services.

In 1997-98, we spent approximately \$2.4 billion on long-term-care community and facility services. By the year 2005-06, we will have spent approximately \$3.6 billion a year. This is the single biggest investment in health care in Ontario's history and it keeps us well out in front of other provinces in per capita spending on home care services. This investment plan lets us grow our long-term-care bed supply by 20,000 beds, an increase that exceeds the growth in the 75-plus age group population over the same time period.

This government's strategy also includes a \$68.4-million multi-year investment in Ontario's strategy for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, a plan that makes Ontario a world leader in caring for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and is easing the burden that caregivers are feeling.

Elder abuse is another unfortunate reality in our society. It is a terrible reality affecting 4% to 10% of Ontario seniors. It could be physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse or neglect or a combination of all of them. Two years ago, I announced our government would develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with elder abuse and I announced a round table of experts would help us develop this comprehensive strategy, the first of its kind in Canada.

Earlier this year, I told the Legislature that we will be moving ahead on a multi-faceted strategy that will contain initiatives to address our three elder abuse principles: better coordination of local community services, training front-line staff in various professions and increasing public awareness of this growing problem.

The recent International Conference on Technology and Aging, held in Toronto from September 12 to 14 and financed by this government, provided an opportunity to raise awareness of how technology impacts the lives of our seniors. It was a model of collaboration between the public sector, the private sector and grassroots partners working together, along with seniors themselves, to identify and alleviate barriers and to make technology more senior-friendly.

It is a fact, one we can all relate to, that as we age, we often have to take more medications. For all of us, it becomes vitally important that we understand how these medications interact. That is why our government is working with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association this year to deliver more than 100 seminars on safe medication use throughout Ontario. The Ministry of Citizenship is spending \$100,000 to cover the cost to deliver these seminars, and I'm pleased to report that the response from seniors has been very positive.

The government is determined to help seniors live independently in their own communities for as long as possible. Being able to safely drive their own cars plays an important role in maintaining that independence. It is for this reason that the government of Ontario welcomed the opportunity to partner with the CAA in offering Shifting Gears, a driver refresher course for seniors.

I am particularly proud of an ongoing project that honours the living legacy of those people who have made perhaps the greatest contribution of all, our war veterans. Phase 3 of the Dominion Institute's Memory Project, to which this government is providing \$800,000, will assist over 1,000 veterans to bring living history lessons to thousands of students across Ontario. Bringing veterans into the classroom with their dynamic, heroic stories will help Ontario's young people gain a better understanding of and respect for the seniors who have given so much for our benefit and that of future generations.

I am very pleased to announce that today is the International Day of Older Persons, as designated by the United Nations, the 11th anniversary of this important date. As such, it is fitting that today we reflect on and honour the contributions of seniors around the world and the contribution of Ontario's 1.5 million seniors.

Much of what we enjoy in Ontario today is due to the lifetime of hard work and sacrifices made by these seniors, seniors who fought in past wars for the freedoms we so cherish. Seniors have built our roads, taught in our schools, led the development of our communities and our province, and they have paved the way for the wonderful prosperity we all enjoy today. Whether they were born in Canada or moved here from another country, seniors of all cultures and backgrounds have enriched Ontario with their vital and valuable contributions.

Let us also not forget that seniors continue to play an integral role in the growth of our province. As taxpayers, as members of boards and commissions, as volunteers and as community leaders, they are an example to all of us of what can be achieved. Their contributions are enormous, and they deserve our acknowledgement, our total appreciation and our deepest respect.

Today gives us a marvellous opportunity to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions that seniors have made and continue to make to the quality of life in our great province.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): It is indeed a privilege and an honour today to participate in the celebration of the International Day of Older Persons. On behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and my

Liberal colleagues, I want to acknowledge our debt to older persons in this province.

Ontario must be grateful to those who have gone before us, those who have pioneered, those who have built, and those who have entrenched in Ontario our values and our institutions.

Ontarians should be grateful to our elders who built the farms in our farming communities.

Ontarians should be grateful to those who have built our businesses and our business communities.

Ontarians should be grateful to those who have built and nurtured our schools and built our education community.

Ontarians should be grateful to those who fought for our freedoms and our values in two world wars and countless other peacekeeping opportunities.

Ontarians should be grateful to those who have worked and who have laboured to build this great province. Ontarians should be grateful to those who have survived depressions and recessions and have gone on to build a greater Ontario.

Ontarians should be grateful to our parents and grandparents for building the strong families that are the fundamental building blocks of this great province.

We should be grateful that in the International Year of the Volunteer, our older persons continue to be the backbone of volunteerism in this province. Older persons are the driving force across a myriad of volunteer organizations. From cancer societies to hospital auxiliaries, from Scout troops to Meals on Wheels, from amateur theatre to places of worship, our volunteerism is supported strongly by those seniors who work so hard volunteering in our various community organizations. Seniors are the core and the backbone of volunteerism in Ontario.

We need to be grateful to older persons, and we also need to demonstrate that we are grateful to our senior citizens. We need to provide health and community services so that our seniors can stay in their own homes. The attack on community services and long-term care by this government is unconscionable. I and my colleagues have read into the record thousands upon thousands of names on petitions decrying the attack on senior citizens and other vulnerable persons in this society who are having their home care services taken away from them or diminished. The government does not acknowledge that a large part of their CCAC budget is now devoted to acute care because they cut our hospital budgets, they closed our emergency rooms, and what was designated for long-term care is now being used as acute care in our communities. The government fails to make that differentiation.

If you come to my constituency or any of the constituencies across this province, you will find that there are continual calls to that constituency office asking that we, as members, do something about providing the care they were getting. In one part of my constituency, for example, two thirds of the nursing visits have been cancelled. The rhetoric does not indicate that this

government is grateful for the contributions seniors have provided.

The second great volume of calls to my office and other members' offices relates to the drug formulary. Medications are being delisted for seniors, for older persons who need that kind of care, by this government in an increasing attack on those to whom we should be grateful.

If you are going to be grateful to seniors, and I think that is what we're all about in Ontario, we have to not just chatter about it, spin doctor about it; we have to do something about it. All the rhetoric, all the chatter and all the platitudes will not replace concrete service to the people we should be grateful to.

1410

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It's a pleasure, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, to pay tribute to Ontario's seniors today, the International Day of Older Persons, and it is fitting that in a very public way we salute the enormous contribution they have made to Ontario life. Through many years of work and commitment, they have built the public institutions like hospitals, like schools, like colleges and universities, which are so important to the quality of life in Ontario. We salute these seniors, and we urge them to continue to do the important work they do in our communities, providing expertise, providing knowledge, providing support to so many agencies, boards and commissions right across our communities.

But it would be remiss on my part—indeed, I think I would be negligent—if I didn't spend some time today pointing out how recent and not-so-recent decisions by this government really undermine the quality of life of seniors in our province.

I want to begin with the question of housing. Housing is so important to seniors, because too many of them have a meagre pension to live on, and housing costs are a critical issue. What has this government done? Well, those many seniors who used to benefit from our not-for-profit housing program have been denied not-for-profit housing units because this government cancelled the program when they were elected. This government's friends in the private sector are not building decent, safe, affordable housing; they're only interested in building condominiums. So we have thousands of seniors who need decent, safe and affordable housing and cannot get it because of the decisions of this government.

This was the government that took away rent controls so that so many seniors now are trapped in their current apartments because they can't afford to move somewhere else or, if they are forced to move somewhere else, they are spending huge portions of their incomes trying to pay for rent. It's no wonder that more seniors than ever before are now at food banks in the province of Ontario trying to make ends meet.

This is also a government that downloaded housing on to municipalities, and we know municipalities don't have the capital needed to renovate those units, and there's a great fear those units will be sold off. This government

should reinstitute a not-for-profit housing program, bring in real rent controls and stop the downloading of housing on to municipalities.

This is a government that has recently delisted audiology services. How many seniors in our communities cannot afford to pay for these services? I heard the Minister of Health last week say, "There's no problem here; just get them to go to their family doctor and get a referral to an ear, nose and throat specialist and that cost will be covered." Maybe the Minister of Health doesn't know that in northern Ontario right now we already need one ENT specialist in Sault Ste Marie and we need three in Thunder Bay, and we have 32 communities in northern Ontario that need 117 family doctors. People can't find a family doctor to get a referral to a specialist; and if they could, the specialist isn't there anyway. We need more of them in their communities.

This is a government that is so busy trying to cut health services on the backs of seniors that they are putting our seniors at risk: those who need hearing evaluations and those who need hearing aid evaluations. If the government wanted to do something for seniors today, they would reverse the delisting of audiology services.

Another decision by this government: this government has not only frozen the budgets of CCACs; they have in fact cut budgets. CCACs that had deficits last year had those deficits covered. Now they're expected to operate this year at the approved level they received from the ministry last year. So there are cuts all around.

CCACs, like my own, are having to implement programs where seniors are losing their home care, their homemaking services. People discharged from hospital are going to wait a long time before they ever get service, and the list goes on and on. In my community alone, we have a deficit of \$1.8 million that our CCAC has to cover.

What this government has also done is refuse to provide the equity funding this government promised to many communities in 1998. That's what's happening in my community. This minister, Minister Cam Jackson, wrote to me in August 1998, and said, "Starting in 2000-01, and in each of the next five years, the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC will receive additional funding based on our equity formula." Minister, they didn't get money in 2000-01, and they didn't get any money this year either, despite your promise. It's no wonder our CCAC cannot fund the home care needs of people in our community.

If you wanted to do something for seniors in long-term-care facilities, you would reinstitute the minimum 2.5 hours of nursing care that your government cut in 1996.

Finally, Minister, if you really wanted to do something, especially since you promised you would do this in 1995—a specific promise made by your Premier—you would bring forward an Ontarians with Disabilities Act to truly protect disabled seniors in the province of Ontario.

JOHN LANE

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): Mr Speaker, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to say a few words about the passing of a former member of the Legislature, John Lane.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: When I came here in 1977, after winning my first election, I first met John Lane, who had been here in the Legislature, elected as the member for Algoma-Manitoulin since 1971. John was a member here until 1987, when the boundaries were shifted and he decided not to run again. I don't believe John ever ran in an election he didn't win for the people in his northern community.

One of the memories I have about John is that he always seemed to be working on a problem for a constituent, be it a small town, a small municipality or some business in his riding. John was known for his diligence in taking care of his constituency problems.

Bill Davis, who, as you know, was a former Premier of our province, at one of the caucus meetings a long time ago singled out John and Ron McNeil as the two members in the government caucus who most frequently wrote to him about problems in their constituencies. As you know, Ron was here until 1990, having served for about 30 years.

As we have progressed in the Legislature and through a number of elections, this place has become much more volatile in its membership. I would say that perhaps John Lane was one of those individuals who could have, and did to some degree, overcome that volatility and maintained his status as an MPP in spite of the fact that his party's fortunes perhaps weren't as good in some elections as in others—I refer to 1975, when the government went from a majority to a significant minority, and again in 1985, when this party lost some favour with the electorate.

John was known in his community for seriously taking on legitimate requests of his constituents and doing it in a style and manner which commanded attention from government ministers and from people who listened to him.

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John was a quiet man in many ways. I don't know how often he spoke in this Legislature. But when John did believe in something, he did not hesitate to speak up among his colleagues in caucus or let a minister know that in fact he was displeased, and that often crossed party lines.

John Lane's hallmark was that he could work with almost anybody in order to overcome an obstacle when he needed some money in his riding to build a bridge or a highway or a school or whatever it might be.

John was very much a proponent of northern Ontario. He was, I would say, one of the most ardent supporters of the creation of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and became the first parliamentary assistant to that portfolio.

I visited Gore Bay on a couple of occasions. Gore Bay is not really a very large metropolis. Mike Brown, who perhaps will be saying a few words about John, may be able—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): It's bigger than Manotick.

Hon Mr Sterling: I don't think it's bigger than Manotick, with respect.

At any rate, John really felt at home up north. When you visited with him, you could see the command and the respect he had when people came to talk to him.

What I would say mostly about this man, who in spite of really not having great health when he was here and particularly after he left here, was that he continued to represent, with really a lot of energy, the interests of his constituents. He had integrity, he was of the old-school political stripe, but he sure got the job done. I know his constituents, who of course didn't have as much contact with him in recent years when he had failing health, will remember the tremendous contribution he made to his community. John did it with the utmost integrity, honesty and straightforwardness.

We all could take a lesson from the life of John Lane in the representation of our constituents.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): It's indeed a privilege to speak for Ontario Liberals with regard to my friend John Gordon Lane and his passing this past summer on August 9.

John was born on Barrie Island. Just to help out my friend across the way, Gore Bay is sort of a suburb of Barrie Island. Barrie Island is a municipality. It's an actual island just off the edge of Manitoulin, connected by a causeway. I say that because the Lane family, of which John was an important part, came from Barrie Island. His brother Larry became the mayor of Gore Bay after John. There was a subsequent mayor or two in there, but his brother became the mayor of Gore Bay. His son Ron, who we all know is the sheriff of the great district of Manitoulin, resides in Gore Bay. So in many ways, many Manitouliners would see Gore Bay as the suburb of Barrie Island.

John was a farmer on Barrie Island. He worked on Barrie Island for quite a number of years until he became associated with Co-operators Insurance. He later became the district manager for Co-operators Insurance. During all this time, though, he had a strong involvement in community affairs. John was involved in virtually everything that was necessary to make a small community go. He was involved in the Rotary Club. He was involved in the founding of the Manitoulin Livestock Co-op. He was particularly proud of being involved at the Flower of Hope school, which he and Renie Noble took a great leadership role in.

So John was a very well-known figure in his community. He was involved on Barrie Island council. Later he was involved on the town council of Gore Bay. He was then the mayor of Gore Bay. He contested the 1971 general election for the Progressive Conservative Party against some other names that people around here

might know: Roger Taylor, the late mayor of Elliot Lake, and Austin Hunt, the present reeve of my home community, the township of Billings and Allen East. John was the victor and went on to win, I think, five general elections.

John retired in 1987 and I succeeded him in that election. I didn't beat him; I succeeded him. He chose not to run. I believe he was 71 at the time of his retirement and certainly had provided great service to the people of the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, which at the time included communities like Elliot Lake, Killarney, Espanola, Spanish and all the communities on the island of Manitoulin.

John is remembered, as my friend across the way says, as somebody you could go to. If there was a problem, a legitimate problem, John would do his best to have it fixed. When you went to John Lane, you knew he did his best to do that.

In my time on Gore Bay city council—city council? town council; the member for Nickel Belt is laughing about that—I can remember various initiatives of the community, not just the town council; for example, when the golf course was being built in Gore Bay. We'd made the appropriate Wintario applications. Somehow or other, even though we had met all the criteria—I was kind of in charge of the funding—we were being frustrated by the government not sending their cheque in a reasonable time frame. I can remember John on one occasion actually going over to finance himself and walking the cheque back from finance so that we could have that and the community could continue.

He had a strong interest in northern affairs. He was one of the members who believed that northern affairs was a necessity and was instrumental in the foundation of that. I think John always saw himself as somebody who understood that northern Ontario needed the strong representation of a strong Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

John was a friend of mine. I knew John. I guess I came to Manitoulin to live about three years after he was elected, and at a number of social events, both when he was the member and after, everyone, not just me, would consider John Lane to be their friend and somebody who would do his utmost, regardless of what political stripe you might be, to do whatever he could to make the community a better place. For example, I was just thinking about this the other day. At one event I was at, John said, "You know, Mike, I've just been out to British Columbia and I visited with Stan Farquhar." He took the time to visit with his predecessor in British Columbia, Stan Farquhar, who was, by the way, a Liberal. He visited with Stan and Mamie and reported on Stan's health and was the greatest of friends. I think the wonderful thing about that part of the constituency is that people honour somebody who steps above partisan politics and looks after the interests of the people he serves. John was certainly one of those people.

I want to give our condolences to wife, Leila; his daughter, Sharon; his son, Ron; his stepdaughter, Linda,

and her husband, Max Trick; his stepson Craig McDougall and his stepson Bob, and all the grandchildren who are involved in that great family. I want to express our sympathies to them. We have lost a great friend and the community of Ontario has suffered a great loss in the loss of John Lane.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I appreciate the opportunity on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to remember John Lane.

I wish that I could be in a position to recount some personal stories about John Lane, but he was retiring in 1987 at the same time that I was elected. It is true that he was a sitting member in this Legislature when I was a legislative page at the age of 14, but that's too far back for me to remember now too. Frankly, as I recall, the night sittings at that time were pretty raucous and pretty loud and I don't really remember some specific interventions by that particular member from that time, so I had to resort to calling a former member who was here with John Lane, and he gave me some information to share with you.

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My father was here the whole time that John Lane was here, which was some 16 years. He sat almost directly across from John Lane, and were we here under different circumstances, I would actually be giving my condolences to John Lane for having to sit across from Elies for those many years. I think that would have been trying indeed. But he did say a couple of things.

Firstly, John Lane could be a very fierce and vocal defender of government policy. On those occasions, though, when he believed the government was wrong, he was sensitive and sensible enough to lobby for some change.

When my father was Comsoc critic, there were some very heated exchanges in this Legislature about the adequacy—or inadequacy, obviously, from the point of view of my dad—about the level of that benefit. John Lane, however, on many occasions in this House intervened and said that the benefit level was in fact adequate. However, when a family member who was blind found that it was not so easy to live on Comsoc's disability benefit, John Lane told my father that there was some truth with respect to what he had said, and he proceeded from that point on to lobby internally to try and get that benefit level raised, obviously not only for his family member but for other people in Ontario who were or who became disabled. My father very much appreciated that about him.

Secondly, he was an advocate for his constituents and he would take on government ministries when necessary if he thought his own cabinet was wrong. He was also very clever to engage opposition politicians in his fight so that they could do the upfront work in question period to raise these issues on his behalf.

There was a particular incident that involved a number of high school students from Killarney whose parents came to see John Lane because at that time they were travelling at least 50 miles, one way, from Killarney to

Sudbury to go to high school. The parents proposed that the students should go to high school in Espanola, which would have been a one-way trip of about 14 miles. The dilemma was that in order to do that, they would have to access Killarney Provincial Park—there were some very serious restrictions about development in the park—and a causeway would also have to be built to provide a link to Espanola.

So John Lane came to see my father. They talked about the students, they talked about how difficult it would be to travel that far, and they decided that my father would do the upfront work, asking questions in the Legislature of the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of the Environment, and the two of them together would also go lobby the same ministers for change, which they did. It was unfortunate, for a number of reasons which I won't go into, that the causeway link was in fact never built. I won't attribute that to either of the two who were involved in that debate, but I do want to point out that in this case, the kids came first. John was very concerned about that, wanted that road built despite concerns that were going to come from the environmentalists, and really did try to make that happen.

John also realized that all politics are local and he was very successful over the years in getting things in his riding that would assure his election win. He was particularly adept at getting blacktop for most of the roads in Manitoulin, side roads included. In fact, he was so adept at achieving this that my father got to calling him Four-Lane John, and he used to kid him that there was so much blacktop on the island that the island was in danger of sinking. But not only did my father kid him; John Lane recognized how important that was, because in more than one election campaign his signs read "Vote 4 Lane."

He also very much understood the north, and previous speakers have talked about the contribution he made when the bill dealing with the creation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs was debated. It is true that he was very influential during the course of that debate, in a public way and behind the scenes, and, with other opposition members, made sure that that important ministry was created. He recognized, as did other members from northern Ontario, that there are differences in the north, that there are special economic and social concerns that have to be dealt with. It was very important to him that a ministry specifically concerned with the needs of northern Ontario be created, and it was. I must say that during the time in our government I was a beneficiary of the passage of that bill, and so I appreciated that.

Finally, John Lane dedicated some 45 years of his life to representing northerners at various levels of government. He was elected in an incredible number of elections, 34 in total, which I think must be a record somewhere. I think that speaks volumes about the level of his commitment to public life, to his riding, to his community and to the north in general. I also think it speaks a great deal about the man himself that his

constituents, over that many elections, would continue to elect him to represent them.

In closing, I would like to extend my condolences to the family, and I would like to thank them for sharing John Lane with the people of Ontario for so many, many years. I think we will remember his valuable contribution as an MPP in the Legislature today, but it is true that his constituents in his former riding will benefit from all of the work that he did for many, many years to come.

The Speaker: I thank all of the members for their kind comments, and I will ensure copies of today's Hansard are sent to the Lane family.

CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for St Catharines has given the required time for a point of privilege.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I wrote to you about the point of privilege pursuant to standing order 21(c), and I wished at that time to serve notice that I intend to move a point of privilege this afternoon regarding the Environmental Commissioner.

It will be my submission that the Ministry of the Environment has perpetrated a contempt of this Legislature by impeding and obstructing an officer of this House; namely, the Environmental Commissioner.

What is it exactly to be in contempt of Parliament? Let me quickly cite two references from the 22nd edition of Erskine May.

Quoting from page 108 of Erskine May on contempt, "Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence."

On page 125 of Erskine May, 22nd edition, under the subtitle "Obstructing Officers of Either House," I read, "It is a contempt to obstruct or molest those employed by or entrusted with the execution of the orders of either House while in the execution of their duty."

Further, as indicated, "Both Houses will treat as contempts, not only acts directly tending to obstruct their officers in the execution of their duty, but also any conduct which may tend to deter them from doing their duty...."

In the recently published House of Commons Procedure and Practice by Marleau and Montpetit, it is similarly affirmed that it is such a contempt of Parliament to stand in the way of an officer of Parliament who is doing his or her duty. Let me cite one reference from Marleau and Montpetit on page 67. This refers to the ruling of M^{me} Sauvé, who was Speaker in 1980, when she wrote, "While our privileges are defined, contempt of the House has no limits. When new ways are found to interfere with our proceedings, so too will the House, in

appropriate cases, be able to find that a contempt of the House has occurred."

Finally, section 46 of our own Legislative Assembly Act sets out the jurisdiction of this House to inquire into and punish, as breaches of privilege or as contempt, a number of matters, including, "Assault upon or interference with an officer of the assembly while in the execution of his or her duty."

The case of privilege that I rise on stems from the report tabled in the House today by the Environmental Commissioner, who is an officer of this Legislature. It is the mandate of the Environmental Commissioner to review how provincial ministries carry out the requirements of the Environmental Bill of Rights and to report to the Legislative Assembly annually.

In his annual report, called Having Regard, the Environmental Commissioner's Annual Report 2000-01, the commissioner states the following:

"In February 2000, MOE proposed further amendments to O.Reg. 347 to strengthen the rules for characterizing wastes as hazardous by adopting the lists and tests in the US rules. The changes, finalized in October 2000, will improve environmental protection, because they will keep more potentially hazardous wastes out of non-hazardous waste landfills. But the proposed amendments did not strengthen Ontario's rules for handling and disposal of hazardous wastes. Many stakeholders commenting on the proposals advised the ministry that the changes were a positive step, but unless they are accompanied by the tougher US standards for disposal, the large volume of hazardous waste flowing into Ontario from the US would continue unabated."

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The commissioner goes on to say that the Ministry of the Environment continued to tell the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario "during 2000 that it was reviewing the need for land disposal restrictions. In November 2000, however, the ministry announced that 'the province has now fulfilled its six-point action plan' and in a February 2001 report to the ECO, MOE made it clear there would be no further ongoing review."

The commissioner goes on, "The ECO concludes that there is still a major need for improvements in the policies regarding hazardous waste. The Safety-Kleen landfill remains a magnet for US wastes. Given capacity pressures, lack of alternative disposal options, public concerns and recent environmental problems, the ministry should undertake a more comprehensive review. Many of the issues raised in recent EBR applications remain unaddressed. For example the ministry doesn't have adequate data about or regulation of the significant amounts of hazardous waste disposed of on-site, or discharged into sewers."

Finally, the Environmental Commissioner says, "The ECO believes MOE should address these problems. The ministry should examine why US imports of hazardous waste are rising, and should consider adopting the US rules such as land disposal restrictions and extended liability. The ministry should also put more effort into

pollution prevention, to reduce the generation of hazardous waste in Ontario. Finally, the ministry should be more open and forthcoming about the status of its policy reviews. MOE gave the impression with its six-point action plan that the ministry was going to overhaul its hazardous waste management regime. Instead, MOE undertook only limited measures and misled applicants and the ECO about the scope of its review. Actions such as these undermine public confidence in the ministry. In order to restore public confidence, MOE should carry out a broader and more transparent review of its overall approach to hazardous waste management.”

Now, the Environmental Commissioner’s report focused in part on the environment ministry’s misleading of the Environmental Commissioner, as seen in the following statement: “Finally, the ministry should be more open and forthcoming about the status of its policy reviews. MOE gave the impression,” as I had mentioned, with the six-point plan that it was doing so.

I find the very fact that an officer of this House, a person selected by this Parliament and sworn to faithfully discharge his duties to this House, has taken the extraordinary step of advising us that the authority of his office was, to quote from the commissioner’s own report, “misled ... about the scope of [the ministry’s] review” and that actions such as these undermine public confidence in the ministry, shows the Ministry of the Environment has committed contempt against this Legislature, as well as the people of Ontario.

To mislead the Environmental Commissioner regarding protecting the safety of the people of Ontario cannot be a more serious misappropriation of the powers of Parliament on the part of the government. I submit these matters to you, Mr Speaker, for your urgent and serious consideration and trust that you agree with me that this deception is a prima facie case of contempt.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I listened very carefully to the honourable member’s alleging that there has been some sort of obstruction. We have been, as you know, Mr Speaker, down the road before with the opposition, where they make these allegations. They make great, grand claims, and investigation subsequently proves them not to be matters of contempt of the Legislature.

Clearly, there would appear to be a disagreement between the commissioner and ministry officials about the scope of a review, the scope of analysis, the scope of work. Is it comprehensive enough? Is it what the commissioner thought was going to happen? There clearly would appear to be disagreements between them. One of the reasons we have a commissioner is to make recommendations to the government, which are examined and put into place. Disagreements around the scope are not new, but that’s hardly, I would submit, a case of obstructing the commissioner from doing his job.

Clearly, he had access, he had information. He has made a judgment on that. He has made recommendations which the Minister of the Environment will take very, very seriously. So I hardly think that that constitutes

anything like obstructing an officer of this Legislature from doing what they are charged to do.

The Speaker: I thank the member for his submission and the government House leader. I will reserve my ruling and will read thoroughly what the member said. I will also have an opportunity to read what the Environmental Commissioner said. I have not had an opportunity to do that, but I will do so and report back to this House.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, in this Legislature and on the road, you’ve been telling us that public education is in great shape, your reforms are working and things are getting better day in and day out.

It turns out that you’re saying something entirely different to your caucus. I have a copy of your confidential briefing, called the back-to-school plan, a presentation to caucus by the Minister of Education. In this you acknowledge, quite rightly, that you have created a mess in public education. You admit that you are underfunding our schools; you admit that schools are literally falling apart; you admit that you are giving boards less for busing today than you did in 1991; you admit that there aren’t enough textbooks in our schools and you admit that public satisfaction has plummeted to 37%.

Minister, you are being honest with your caucus when it comes to the state of public education. Why won’t you stand up now and be honest with the Ontario public?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): With all due respect to the honourable member, I thought his research department was better than the Toronto Star, who go out and get something they claim to be a secret document and then say it’s evidence of some great secret strategy.

This government has been very up front about the need to change how past governments funded school construction and school capital. Of course, there’s a problem there. That’s why months ago we went out to the school boards and said, “Give us the data so we can fix the problem because past governments didn’t.”

Are there problems with student learning? You bet there are problems with student learning. That’s why this government said we had to change the curriculum and we had to test: because we knew that our kids weren’t getting what they needed.

You didn’t think testing was necessary. We said it was. We said it would show the problems. We’re putting in place strategies to fix it. In June, I announced the early reading strategy to fix the grade 3 test. Where have the opposition and the Toronto Star been?

Mr McGuinty: Do you want to know where I’ve been, Minister? I’ve been with Ontario parents, Ontario

students, Ontario teachers and our public school boards all along. That's where I've been.

Let me read some more from your confidential caucus presentation. It says, "Parents see there is a lack of textbooks and classroom supplies in Ontario schools." It says one third of students failed the grade 10 literacy test last year; low test results anticipated for grade 9; minimal improvement in grade 3 testing.

Finally, do you know what it says? In terms of the plan to address the plight that our children find themselves in when it comes to public education—I guess maybe this is the more important point here—it says the minister asked in the final page of her presentation, "Is the policy, is the vision, still valid?"

Let me tell you, Minister, you've had six long and painful years and this has been your legacy: crowded classrooms, demoralized teachers, and students who aren't performing up to par. We've got crumbling schools and we've got a shortage of textbooks. When are you going to finally admit your reforms aren't working and you're selling our kids short?

Hon Mrs Ecker: This really defies belief. We went out and said we were going to do a grade 10 literacy test because we knew that the kids in our high schools didn't have the literacy skills they needed.

The opposition said that wasn't necessary. They said everything was just hunky-dory. We knew that wasn't true. That's why we improved the curriculum, that's why we put that test in place for grade 10, so we could fix the problem, so we would have actual accurate data.

We have the data. It proved we were right in the changes we are making. We're putting in place more resources for remediation and extra help for students on the grade 10 literacy test. That's what a government committed to improving public education does: they go out and measure, find the problems you guys didn't fix when you were in government and then put in place the strategies to fix them. We have been very open about that. We had public notices about that. We told parents where we were coming from on this, because we believe in being open with them, contrary to the opposition.

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Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, you can muster as much bluster as you choose, but the fact of the matter is that you have been on the job over there for six long years. Any problems connected with public education in Ontario today rightfully belong to you. That's the state of public education.

Do you know what you say your plan is in this confidential presentation to your caucus? Under "Political Objective," it says, "Turn down the noise on labour and financial issues."

Do you know what I'm asking you to do now, Minister? I'm asking you to ignore your political concerns for your government's ailing political fortunes and do the right thing for our children. Instead of focusing on spin, I'm asking you to turn on the substance. I want you to invest in public education. I want you to support our students, I want you to support

their teachers and I want you to support public education by expressing your unreserved commitment to it. That's what's lacking in public education today. You've got the data. We've got the tests. The only thing that is missing in public education is this government's commitment to it.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Let's be very clear: the data, the standards this member is now using are standards that party disagreed with. They said you didn't need to change the curriculum, you didn't need to set higher standards, you didn't need to have accountability frameworks. We know you did.

He makes great fun of the phrase, "Turn down the noise on labour issues." Do you know what? That phrase is what parents said to us. That's why we introduced back-to-work legislation in Hamilton. Did they support it when parents said, "Turn down the noise"? No, they didn't. They played politics. They told parents they would help solve the issue, and then they reneged here in the House. When we brought forward legislation that would say there would be three-year agreements to have more labour peace, because parents said, "Please make that happen," did they support that? No, they didn't. So really this great self-righteous indignation the honourable member has is a laugh.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This question is to the Minister of the Environment. Today, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario filed his annual report with this Legislature. I've only been here 11 years now, but it contains some of the most stinging, damning indictments and language I have ever seen in a report submitted to this Legislature.

Let me tell you about one of the things it says. On the matter of the Oak Ridges moraine, the commissioner says as follows: "The ministers also suggested that municipalities and voters are responsible for protecting the moraine through local planning decisions. This statement is deceptive and factually incorrect."

On the matter of hazardous waste management in Ontario, the commissioner makes this finding: "MOE gave the impression with its six-point action plan that the ministry was going to overhaul its hazardous waste management regime. Instead, MOE undertook only limited measures and misled applicants and the " Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

Minister, how could the people of Ontario trust you if we have a stinging indictment like this, talking about misleading and putting forward crassly incorrect statements?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): To the Leader of the Opposition, if you had the opportunity today to listen to the commissioner as he gave his report, he did indicate on the issue of the Oak Ridges moraine that obviously he was pleased with the consultation that was taking place at the present time and that he was looking forward to some very positive

outcomes. As you would know yourself, it took tremendous courage for the Minister of Municipal Affairs to embark on the review of the moraine and allow everyone in this province the opportunity for input.

On the issue of hazardous waste, I would remind the member opposite that this government has moved forward with the overhaul of the hazardous waste regulations and framework like no other government before them. We now have the toughest hazardous waste regulations in the history of this province, and we are—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr McGuinty: I'm just reading the report filed by the Environmental Commissioner. On the Oak Ridges moraine he uses words like "deceptive and factually incorrect." On the matter of hazardous waste management, he talks about "misleading the applicants" and the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario himself.

Then, Madam Minister, on the matter of provincially significant natural heritage areas, protected lands, the Environmental Commissioner says, and I quote from page 137, "The public was seriously misled" because of an unannounced change in the planning process. "As a result of the ministries' failure to provide interim protection, almost 600 mining claims were staked in the proposed protected areas."

In this report so far I've found one reference to "factually incorrect," two references to "misleading" and one reference to "deceiving." How can Ontarians trust a government that is found by our Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, an impartial, objective officer of this Legislature—how can we trust you, Madam Minister, to protect our environment when the Environmental Commissioner uses words like "misleading" and "deceiving"?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Let me tell the Leader of the Opposition opposite that we very much welcome the report that has been provided. We take all these recommendations very seriously. Our government has taken tremendous steps in this last year in order to strengthen environmental protection in the province.

As the member opposite full well knows, the report that we have before us today is a report that encompasses what happened in 2000 and 2001 until the end of March. Also, if you take a look at the data regarding hazardous waste, that data actually was compiled during the period of 1994 to 1998. So if you take a look at what the government's done on the Oak Ridges moraine, on what we've done to move forward in the way of improving air quality in the province, whether it's the electricity sector, the transportation sector or the industrial—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, I'm not sure you appreciate exactly how serious the findings are that have been made by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. He's using language, Madam Minister, that if I weren't quoting, I'm sure the Speaker would call me as being out of order. He says that you're factually incorrect, that you are misleading and that you are deceiving

the Ontario public. I'm quoting the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. That is what he is saying.

Madam Minister, if you look up "deceiving" in the Oxford Modern English Dictionary, what it says is that to deceive is to make a person believe what is false; it is to mislead purposely. That's what the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario is saying.

Again I ask you, Madam Minister, how can you expect Ontarians to look to you as the champion of our environment, as somebody who's standing on guard for not only this generation but for generations yet to come? How can we have any faith in you whatsoever if our Environmental Commissioner is charging you with misleading and deceiving?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Obviously the leader opposite is choosing to quote from this book as he sees fit. Maybe we want to take a look at where it says:

"Staff at the prescribed ministries are generally co-operative in providing information when it is requested...."

"The ECO makes monthly requests for information to the Ministry of the Environment's EBR office through the manager, which saves time for staff at both ends. In 2000/2001, the EBRO staff have been consistently cooperative, and responses to ECO requests were thorough and informative."

He also goes on to say, "In this reporting year...the ECO is pleased to report that MBS and the Ontario Realty Corp staff made significant efforts to improve their co-operation with the ECO and have submitted a comprehensive EBR report for 2000/2001."

To the leader opposite, you can take a look at this report and you can see in here that there is an individual who has been charged—

1500

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up. New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, today the Environment Commissioner had to admit that he cannot assure Ontario citizens that the air quality in our province is going to improve at the same time that the Ontario Medical Association tell us that thousands of Ontario residents are dying due to air pollution.

The Environment Commissioner is forced to admit that he can't see that it's going to improve, but he says it could improve, it would improve if your government required that coal-burning generating stations like Nanticoke and all the others in addition to Lakeview stopped burning coal. In the interests of cleaner air, Minister, will you order them to do that?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I find it very interesting in listening to either the Leader of the Opposition or the leader the third party how they very selectively take quotes from the Environmental Commissioner's report, how they very selectively take information from his press conference this morning. If you want to be totally accurate, the Environmental Commissioner also made reference today, this morning, to the fact that part of the impact on air quality this year was the weather.

However, having said that, we all know everybody in this government knows that we must take steps to improve air quality in the province. We also know that 50% of air pollution comes—

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr Hampton: Some of us were surprised when we heard Ronald Reagan blame air pollution on the birds. Now we have the Minister of the Environment in Ontario saying it's the weather. Minister, it's not the weather. The fact of the matter is you have a ministry that isn't doing the job of protecting Ontario's environment for the people and that's what the Environmental Commissioner is trying to tell us and tell you.

He also acknowledges in his report that you still don't have enough enforcement officers out there to do the job. He's forced to admit that for all of Ontario you have only 30 inspectors. He tells us, over and over again, that your government cut the enforcement officers, your government cut the testing labs, your government cut the number of inspectors. He tells us that there's not a good enough job being done.

Minister, would you admit now that protecting the environment is more important than tax cuts for your well-off friends and commit to the people of Ontario to restore the enforcement officers, to restore the government testing labs so you can begin to do the job of protecting the environment?

Hon Mrs Witmer: It's unfortunate that the leader of the third party continues to misquote, in many ways, the information that has been provided by the Environmental Commissioner.

Let's talk about air quality and let's talk about enforcement staff. We have hired more than 130 new enforcement and investigative-related staff since the year 2000. Remember, that report goes until the end of March 2001.

Let's also remember that ministry investigators have laid 23% more charges in the first six months of 2001. The number of charges laid in 2000 increased by 48%. The orders issued increased by 312% from 1999 to 2000. The tickets issued increased from 183 in 1999—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up. Final supplementary. Order. The minister's time is up.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Minister, talk about selective quotations. You're not telling us the numbers for the years before that.

I want to ask you about the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Environmental Commissioner's report points out that a safe drinking water act would give Ontarians a clear statutory right to clean and safe drinking water. He also says such a bill would give our citizens the right to sue a violator of the drinking water standards simply for violating those standards and it would address the causes of drinking water contamination. Your new regulations don't cover any of these, but you do have a chance to remedy that. On October 11, Bill 3, my Safe Drinking Water Act, will come up for second reading in this House again. My question, Minister is this: will you ensure that your members support the safe drinking water bill this

time or will you do what they did the last time—support the bill and kill it by not allowing it to go to committee?

Hon Mrs Witmer: If we take a look at the drinking water protection regulation in this province, we will see that there's a quote from the Quebec government stating, "Following the example of the United States and Ontario, the new Quebec regulation requires owners of distribution systems to perform minimal treatment of water which comes in whole or part from a source affected directly by service water."

Again, if we take a look at the report from the Sierra Legal Defence Fund in January, 2001, they gave us a mark of B, the highest in the country. Ken Ogilvie of the environmental watchdog Pollution Probe called the new law, "A good piece of work, because it transforms what were guidelines into legally binding standards."

I can assure you that the new act that we have in place is a very important step as we move forward to ensure people's health and safety.

EDUCATION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, I know it's hard for you to admit that your education policies are failing. It was M. Snobelen, I remind you, who manufactured a crisis in our schools while denying it all along. Now, by your own secret admission to your colleagues, you acknowledge that our public schools are crumbling. Won't you, mon amie, tell us publicly what you are felling privately and admit that your education policies are a bust?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): It's hardly a case of anything being secret. We've been talking publicly about the problems, that past governments had let the capital construction, the school stock, fall into disarray. That's why months ago we started a survey; we publicly talked about the need for that data so we could help schools to fix the aging school stock. We've been public about that. We've been public about the need for doing a literacy test and when we do it, we announce the results publicly. We ask parents what their views are on these matters. We publicly state what the problems are. We've gone out and put in place strategies to try and fix the problems. This government is the only government in this House in my lifetime that had the courage to actually go out and do that research, to take that data, to put it out publicly to prove that we needed to do a better job with our education system. That's hardly a secret strategy.

Mr Marchese: Minister, you've confessed through this confidential government document to the erosion of quality in our public system. Public confidence is floundering for obvious reasons that you state in the document. Public schools are crumbling under you—not under us, but under you. The textbooks are in short supply and people know it. You know it. And people are tired of you beating up on teachers.

I remind you that your government collects from one single taxpayer and these taxes go to one money pot. So I say to you, when are you going to stand up for public education and, quite frankly, for yourself and tell the Minister of Finance that the \$300 million he wants to give to the private schools are needed in our public system and they're needed desperately? When are you going to stand up for yourself, if no one else?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I am very pleased, and this is a red-letter day, that the NDP finally recognizes that there's only one taxpayer. I think that's an important thing. We understand that. That's why we stopped the incredible increases in education property taxes that were such a problem for senior citizens and those on fixed incomes. We changed the way we fund education. We've increased the amount of money for public education. It used to be \$12.9 billion when the opposition party was in power. It is now \$13.8 billion, an increase greater than the growth of enrolment. We put in over \$360 million in net new money just this year alone.

Should we make more investments in public education? You bet we should. We recognize that. That's why economic prosperity is so important to us, so we can have the revenue and keep investing in public education and health care instead of letting it deteriorate, instead of letting it be at risk like that party did when they were in government.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. A point of privilege from the member for Windsor-Sinclair.

Just before you stand up, I hope the point of privilege relates to question period. I will listen very carefully. If it does not, I will refer you to the Speaker's ruling of April 21, 1993, which says points of privilege should be raised after, instead of inside, question period. So if it relates to question period, I will hear your point of privilege, but I will be very quick. Could you get very distinctly to why we should be doing it during question period. Otherwise I would ask the member to do it after question period. Does it relate to question period?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Mr Speaker, I'll defer that.

1510

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Acting Premier. We have just learned that a media advisory was put out by the Office of the Premier, advising Ontarians that the Premier will be outlining measures the provincial government plans to take following the events of September 11, 2001, in the United States. He's going to provide us with this information by way of a video news release at 4:30 pm today. I understand that one of the measures the Premier is announcing is an accelerated plan of tax cuts.

Minister, you will know, as someone who has actually been present in the Legislature recently, that we put forward a number of positive proposals with respect to strengthening our economy post-September 11. We've

asked for an economic summit. We put forward a proposal to protect our exports to the United States. We've asked for an updated fiscal and economic outlook.

Do you not think that in the circumstances the appropriate thing to do would be for the Premier to be here to put that plan forward so we might debate it in this Legislature?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): It's very important, certainly for our government and our leader, to express to the Ontario public and the Canadian public as a whole how important the future of this province is. I must say to the Leader of the Opposition, though, that I think he's going to have to stay tuned, along with the rest of the public, later on to hear.

But since he raised it, I'd like to mention that what we have here is a Premier who is going to indicate, from my perspective and many people's, a great indication of his leadership. What's been sadly lacking today in Canadian politics is leadership for this country. I believe that over the last few weeks I've had many members of the public come up and say to me, "Thank goodness we have Mike Harris there to lead us in Ontario, because he is someone who will show real leadership for this province."

Mr McGuinty: Minister, obviously I don't share your confidence in the Premier. We have a matter of the utmost urgency before us. Our economy was in a serious downturn prior to September 11. September 11 was a cataclysmic event in our economy. You know just how heavily dependent we are on the American economy. You know how important it is for us to get it right when it comes to the strategy we're going to put in place to arrest this downward turn and make sure we're protecting jobs and retirement savings for our families. That's ultimately what this is all about.

We think the most important thing you could begin by doing is introducing a fiscal and economic update in this House. So I ask you, how can the Premier go on Ontario-wide TV with a cassette announcing a fiscal strategy when he should be in this Legislature giving us all the opportunity to debate the best approach to making sure we have a strong economy?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I must say I'm a little astonished. I think we've indicated and shown through our government over a period of years that we've certainly taken a very conservative approach to the finances of this province. As a result of our measures, we've been able to balance the budget. We've been introducing tax cuts for the people of this province. We've reduced red tape. That certainly has had a very positive result, so I think taking the conservative approach is very important.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition, though, what he said back on March 1, 1998, CKCO TV. He said, "I think people understand that when we"—being the Liberals—"make promises, generally that calls for a tax hike." Well, you know what? You're out of sync with the rest of the world right now. I think we've positioned the province to be in the best position in this entire country to deal with any type of unforeseen circumstance.

TOURISM

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Hamilton East, come to order, please.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. Sorry for the interruption.

Mr Miller: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Tourism is a significant industry in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka.

I listened with interest to your statement in the Legislature last week about your ministry's response immediately following the events of September 11. I also know that you called a summit of tourism leaders last Friday, which includes Grace Cerniuk from Resorts Ontario as well as representatives of other tourism organizations.

Minister, could you inform the House what the outcome of that meeting was and what you are doing to help tourism recover across our province?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): I appreciate the ongoing interest of the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka in the tourism industry.

As he mentioned, we had a summit of industry leaders on Friday—more than 20 from district marketing organizations as well as from industry associations—to talk about how tourism has been directly impacted by the events of September 11.

I had the pleasure of travelling to 101 different events this summer across this province, impressed by the quality of the people in the industry, the quality of our attractions, and reinforced in the meeting on Friday as well, the resiliency of the tourism industry. In fact, very optimistic around the table that despite difficult times, we will bounce back and get people moving again in the province.

We heard in that meeting support for our actions to date: reassuring travellers to continue, the extending of hours of operation in our centres and our 1-800 line, and getting weekly bulletins of information out to tourism stakeholders on both sides of the border. Very good support and advice on further execution of our plan to gather information to adjust our marketing strategy and to continue to get folks to travel across this—

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr Miller: I know tourism operators in my riding want to get the message out that they're open for business, and certainly the last couple of years have been boom years in Parry Sound-Muskoka, thanks in large part to the policies of this government.

We want people to come to our area and see the gorgeous fall colours, stay at our hotels and resorts, eat in our restaurants and shop in our shops.

We have heard repeatedly from the Premier and from leaders in New York that it is important to carry on with our lives in the wake of this terrible attack.

In addition to what you have already announced, what other plans have you to assist the tourism industry in Ontario?

Hon Mr Hudak: As mentioned, we heard strong support from the industry for our plan and executing that plan, and we will execute on the advice from tourism operators to buy ads to get our message out that the borders have returned to pre-September 11 traffic patterns and folks can continue to cross the border and enjoy Ontario's attractions.

We're going to move ahead aggressively with our fall and winter campaigns. We're going to extend them in fact into the Quebec and British Columbia markets. We're going to formalize and build on past success and partnerships for our winter campaign with areas like Niagara, Ottawa, Tourism Toronto and Resorts Ontario.

A further meeting of our marketing experts tomorrow, another summit on October 9 to finalize and launch that marketing strategy to let folks know across this province, those contemplating travelling to the province of Ontario that we have great things to offer, great quality attractions, great quality people. Despite difficult times, we will bounce back; we'll get people moving again, visiting our attractions, spending money in our hotels, our restaurants and our attractions.

1520

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Acting Premier about the raid by the RCMP on the Premier's office. There have been a couple of raids there to try to get documents that they were withholding.

I have to ask the minister this: when I asked the Premier previously, I got the condescending and arrogant answer to it. When I asked Mr Flaherty, the deputy premier of the day, he simply dismissed these charges that you were not forthcoming with all the documents.

And yet we find out from an affidavit to obtain a search warrant that we have access to now that in fact you refused to provide all of the documents that were necessary for the Walkerton inquiry, that you refused to provide any information about Guy Giorno, who is the most powerful person in that government, and that you refused to key in such things as water and agriculture when asked to find information that would be relevant to the RCMP.

Why is it that you are withholding documents from the Walkerton inquiry, and why did you force the RCMP to conduct a raid to get those documents?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I refer that to the Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I am happy to address the query raised by the member opposite, but I would encourage him to use some good judgment, some discretion and some reasonableness.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We have co-operated fully from day one. In fact, a million documents have been produced to date. Every deadline set by the commission has been met. In fact, the government has managed to get documents to the commission well in advance of most of the deadlines.

I will say this to you: there was no raid, as the member opposite describes it. What there was was a friendly search warrant, consensual. That was done on numerous occasions and is done on numerous occasions by royal commissions and commissions of that sort. It is the procedure that was accepted by all to be the best, and there was full co-operation by the government.

Mr Bradley: The Attorney General's answers on this are about as weak as they are on Ipperwash, where you provided selected information to members of this House at that time.

But the Walkerton inquiry asked for specific information about the Premier's office and Guy Giorno. It says, "Police analysis of his hard drive was severely restricted under the search conditions to which he had agreed and took place in a government lawyer's office. RCMP technical experts described the review as stressful. They were also denied access to the main mail servers in the Premier's office during the June 13 visit. On different occasions, inquiry lawyers expressed serious concern about delays in turning over documents and warned that Harris could be recalled to the witness stand."

I ask the Attorney General, you know darned well that Guy Giorno is the most powerful person in the Premier's office, yet you withheld documents that are part of Guy Giorno's paraphernalia. Why is it that you withheld those documents, and why did you force the RCMP to raid?

Hon Mr Young: I'm happy to address the member opposite. I guess this is his attempt at fiction. Obviously he pays no attention to anything said by anyone in authority, to anything said by anyone on this side of the Legislature, so let's read to him—because he won't read it for himself—what commission counsel Paul Cavalluzzo has to say.

He stated very clearly in writing that the Premier's staff has co-operated fully. His words are as follows: "It wasn't a raid in any sense." I'll repeat it because my friend opposite seems to have a hearing impairment. "It wasn't a raid in any sense. It's just that in the natural course of the inquiry, that's how we obtain documents. The date was set. It was agreed to. We in fact and the Premier's office had provided a number of dates, any of which would have been acceptable to us, for the visit. Full co-operation was provided on that occasion, as has been the case from day one."

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Solicitor General. We have all been saddened by the numerous incidents of youth violence, too many of which result in death. It is my understanding that reaching at-

risk youth early is often a key to preventing a life of crime.

Minister, can you tell us about the most recent initiative this government has undertaken to combat youth violence?

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): Clearly, every citizen in Ontario has a right to feel safe and be safe in their home and in their community. That's why we've taken steps as a government to support enforcement and prevention initiatives reducing violence among young people.

On September 18, I announced an initiative which is a \$2-million grant for the youth crime and violence initiative to enhance community safety. The funding is divided into two areas, one for enforcement grants and the other half for prevention grants. The enforcement grants are aimed at police services and the prevention grants are aimed to help community groups to help with partnerships to prevent crime before it begins.

Mrs Munro: I know that the youth crime and violence initiative is only one of the many programs and initiatives our government has put in place. Minister, would you tell this house of some of the other ways this government is trying to put an end to youth crime and violence?

Hon Mr Turnbull: The youth crime and violence initiative is just the latest in a series of announcements that we've made. Since 1997, we have in fact flowed \$1.7 million in funding for Partners Against Crime community grants to 62 community-specific projects. We've put 1,000 new front-line police officers on the streets in Ontario through the community policing program, and also we've provided recently a \$200,000 grant to the association of Crime Stoppers for an after-hours hotline. Additionally, just a few weeks ago, I attended at the OSPCA to make a \$50,000 grant to the society for the youth animal pilot project, which puts at-risk youth together with animals so that they train them. This is a very effective program at getting at prevention.

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): The question is for the Acting Premier. The Premier told the people of Ontario that your government would fully co-operate with the Walkerton Inquiry. Now we find that didn't happen. In fact, court documents show a running battle between the Walkerton Inquiry to get files from the Premier's office and your government's attempt to exclude those files. That running battle led to an unprecedented search of the Premier's office by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Acting Premier, can you explain to the people of Ontario why the Royal Canadian Mounted Police felt it necessary to conduct a court-approved search of the Premier's office?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'll refer to the Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I will repeat for the member opposite the fact that this government has co-operated from day one. We have produced in excess of a million documents. I will tell you in addition that we will do whatever it takes to get to the bottom of this, because the issue is a very serious one and we are committed to ensuring that we determine exactly what happened.

In order to do that we have co-operated at every step of the way. We met every deadline, as I indicated earlier. The RCMP office and the visit that occurred should be put in perspective. What happened was that the commission asked for the assistance of a particular RCMP officer, an individual who had expertise in the retrieval of information. That individual was used in many different respects in many different places. On this occasion, he asked for an opportunity to review some records that were in the Premier's office. We agreed.

Mr Hampton: Well, Premier, since the Attorney General didn't provide an explanation, I will provide one. The fact of the matter is that most of the documents you handed over to the inquiry were completely irrelevant. The fact of the matter is—and documents before the commission show this—the RCMP had to get a search warrant because the Premier's office tried to exclude any electronic file that dealt with water, cutbacks, or agriculture.

In the midst of the worst polluted-water disaster in Ontario—seven people killed, more than 2,000 people rendered seriously ill—the Premier's office tried to exclude electronic files that dealt with water, that dealt with cutbacks, or dealt with agriculture. How, Attorney General, does the Premier's office justify trying to exclude those files from the inquiry?

1530

Hon Mr Young: This is an interesting forum we have here. Every other day in this forum people scream for public inquiries. The opposition have asked for no less than 162. When there is a public inquiry and it is underway, what we see demonstrated by the opposition is that they have no idea how a public inquiry works. One aspect of a public inquiry that is frequently utilized in order to get production in a timely manner is a friendly or consensual search warrant. It has been used in the past in inquiries and it has been used in this inquiry, and the government has co-operated fully in the production of those documents through that source.

The RCMP made a complete copy of the hard disk and it was provided to them at a time and place that they requested. The RCMP was given unrestricted access to the data that they requested—the officer was—and the RCMP decided how to conduct their investigation, what key words to put in. The Premier's office co-operated fully. That is the way that commissions work.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. I read the

report with interest, particularly the section on Safety-Kleen. The commissioner reviewed how your ministry responded to that application made by myself and another resident to review the certificate of approval.

We provided to the ministry strong evidence supporting our concerns about the landfill, the incinerator, and its impact on the environment and human health. In spite of all that evidence that we presented to your ministry, the response to us was that the certificate of approval for that landfill and incinerator was adequate.

What concerns me most is that your ministry, according to the commissioner's report, responded to that application with inaccuracy and, as he states, misleading and without factual information. Again, I indicated, by the report, you consistently seem to cover up the problems and leave the responsibility to the company.

I can read from the report. The question is—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): I'm very pleased to state in response to the question that has been asked that we are continuing to move forward with our overhaul of the waste management regime. We believe there is a need to continually strengthen and improve the management of hazardous waste. As the member opposite knows, there has not been substantial change to the regulations or the framework since 1985.

In response to the question that you're asking, we have introduced some very strong amendments that will strengthen our framework. It now looks like our framework for the hazardous waste system is the toughest we've seen in the history of this province. It does make it much more comprehensive and much more in line with what's happening in the United States, and we will continue with that overhaul to protect not only the residents in the Sarnia area—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up. Supplementary.

Ms Di Cocco: Minister, you haven't, though. The point is that you have not taken that evidence and you have not strengthened. You appear to be. The report says, "In press releases and statements, the ministry gave the impression that the 'action plan' included reviewing and strengthening existing Cs of A for hazardous waste facilities to match US...."—appeared to—you didn't do it, you just do the public relations spin.

This is a serious problem. It's the largest hazardous waste landfill in Canada. You have not done due diligence, in my view, in protecting public health and public safety, and this report corroborates that. You have a responsibility, not Safety-Kleen. Who's in whose pocket here? You seem to be protecting the interests of Safety-Kleen and not the interests of the public.

Minister, it is my constituents and it is that part of southwestern Ontario that is going to have huge environmental impacts. When are you going to change the rules so that we—

The Speaker: The member's time is up. Minister.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think some of those comments were probably somewhat unfortunate. The member may want to reconsider.

However, having said what has been said, I think it's important to also take a look at what the commissioner has said about the regulatory environment for hazardous waste management.

As I indicated before, the whole regime has been relatively unchanged since 1985. We recognize there is a problem, and we are doing a comprehensive overhaul. In fact, I am very pleased to indicate that we are going to be moving forward. We are right now considering a plan that would include the pre-treatment of hazardous waste before disposal. We want—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

New question.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Minister, I want to jump off on that same point, because I know that in that environmental report hazardous waste imports have risen dramatically. Maybe you could flesh out, are hazardous waste imports currently rising in the province, or what's the status? I want to understand this instead of taking a cheap shot like somebody across the floor.

Hon Mrs Witmer: In response to the member, I think it's very important that everyone clearly understand there's a lot of misleading information being communicated today. First of all, the figures about increases in hazardous waste contained in the Environmental Commissioner's report refer to the period from 1994 to 1998.

I want to share with this House the fact that Environment Canada released data in August this year, and it indicates that between 1999 and 2000 the imports of hazardous waste into Canada decreased by 30%; however, in the province of Ontario they decreased by 35%. I believe this is very important information, because we do see a trend and it's going downward. It's contrary to what was happening between 1994 and 1998.

Mr Spina: Minister, I'm happy that this trend is reversing, and particularly in Ontario as opposed to the rest of the country. What initiatives are we taking as a government with respect to hazardous waste? Where are we going on this issue?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I have mentioned in some of my responses today, we are in the course of a complete overhaul of managing hazardous waste in the province of Ontario. This past summer we announced proposed new reporting rules and new fees for the hazardous waste industry, which will ensure that industry pays, and they will be required to register their hazardous waste. More importantly, we have a new framework that is the toughest in Ontario's history, which came into effect on March 31.

I am also pleased to indicate today that we will be moving forward in order to ensure that we put in place a plan to pre-treat hazardous waste before disposal. That is already required in the United States today, and we are considering such a plan.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): A question to the Minister of Community and Social Services: I want to tell you about a constituent of mine, who I will call Sue, whose story exposes a major gap in services for children in this province.

Sue is a 15-year-old girl confined to a wheelchair. She suffers from cerebral palsy with spastic quadriplegia and compromised vision, but she has average cognitive abilities. She currently lives with her grandmother, who cannot continue to care for her because of the very demanding and constant physical and emotional needs she has. As a result, Sue is spending long periods of time in bed, as her grandmother cannot physically cope. Because her basic needs are so severely compromised, Sue is depressed and suicidal.

All our community service supports in Timiskaming have been exhausted, and yet not one ministry of your government will step up and help Sue. Why do you persist in allowing disadvantaged people such as Sue to fall through the cracks of your government bureaucracy?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I am always pleased to work with members on all sides of the House, to work with challenges that come up in our ridings in our capacity as members of the Legislature. I can tell the member opposite that we've made providing supports not just to children but to adults, for people with disabilities, a priority. We've expanded supports in the community, whether it's in-home respite care or out-of-home respite care, by \$17 million, resulting from the 1999 budget. We've increased the support for people with developmental disabilities by an unprecedented amount over five years, starting in this year's budget. We're putting more supports into our children's aid societies. We're spending a considerable amount supporting disabled children with special needs. I'm always pleased to work with the member opposite. If he wants to provide me with the details, I'd be happy to work with him on this issue, as I would with any member.

1540

Mr Ramsay: Minister, I'll do that. What we have here is a deficiency in the policy. You need to look at that so others like Sue can be helped.

At a case conference two weeks ago, all in attendance agreed that Sue requires a residential placement that would not only provide her with basic needs for two years but would also provide the physical therapy, emotional support and life skills training that would allow her to develop to her full potential. This placement would give her the skills to live independently in assisted housing and allow her the dignity to become a productive citizen.

Minister, it is imperative that your ministry step up to the plate and take the lead responsibility to put together a multi-ministry package that would address the needs of children such as Sue. The severely disabled who are not

mentally challenged also need a champion. Will you assure me today that Sue will have the resources she requires that will improve the quality of her life and perhaps give her a reason to dream about a bright and fulfilling future?

Hon Mr Baird: I can assure the member opposite that I'd be pleased to work with him on the issue and do all we can. It is a challenge, in this type of environment, to do all we'd like to do. We constantly work to expand services and take steps forward, whether it's providing residential supports, whether it's providing in-home or out-of-home support, in a variety of ministries, whether it's through our education system, through our health system or through a range of social service agencies.

In this year's budget alone we gave a major increase to children's treatment centres around the province, recognizing that providing supports to profoundly disabled children is something that's incredibly important. We do that in a range of areas, whether it's through our children's aid societies or through our developmental disability system. We do that through a range of community supports. It's a constant challenge. We take steps forward each and every year. I'm happy to continue to work with all members, including the member opposite if he wants to bring the specific details to my attention.

ITER FUSION PROJECT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. On May 7, 2001, you reaffirmed this Legislature's commitment to the ITER fusion project in my riding of Durham. As you know, there is considerable interest in this project throughout Durham, naturally because the Darlington generating station is an important part of their proposal. In fact, it has been selected as Canada's site for Canada's siting group. The community council of ITER, which includes Gary Polonsky, Adrian Foster, Ron Collis and Victoria Greene, and many other members of the local business community are closely following up this opportunity. It's my understanding that ITER could mean an estimated 68,000 person-years of direct and indirect employment, along with an injection of some \$5.2 billion into the Ontario economy.

Minister, for the purposes of the members of this House, could you—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up. Minister.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): It's an important question. The ITER group is meeting in Toronto this week. ITER stands for international thermonuclear experimental reactor. It would be the biggest breakthrough in the history of energy in the world. The idea is to use fusion power to generate electricity. The Ontario government has committed \$10 million a year for 30 years to this project. Unfortunately, the federal government hasn't committed any money.

We're in a worldwide competition. Our main competitors right now are Japan and France. The ITER group, with an Ontario representative, presented Canada's bid in Moscow just a few months ago. Clarington is one of the potential sites because of its proximity to Darlington. We're very hopeful that we'll win the bid, but we do need help from the federal government.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that very informative response, Minister. I know the members of my riding would be pleased with the support I've received from you, and our province committing \$10 million per year over 30 years is an important commitment. I wasn't surprised at all that the federal government simply isn't up to the job and doesn't recognize this investment in our future.

Minister, could you perhaps tell me, or report for the members of the House, any progress that may be being made. Is there a bid coming forward from other countries; if so, what countries? What role, particularly, does the province have in this negotiation process, as it is an international process?

Hon Mr Wilson: As I said, the province has committed money to the project. It would be a 30-year science experiment, which would be very exciting. Some 250 of the world's greatest scientists would have to come to Ontario, would probably move to Ontario. It would be the biggest reversal of the brain drain that we could ever imagine or that any country could ever imagine. Ontario's role is to support the bid financially. We've also supported the administrative side of the bid in order to keep the team together so that they can present Canada's case. We've supported that.

I will give some credit to the federal government. They've given a bit of money for that purpose. But the federal government seems very shy, for some reason, to not support this huge leap in science. Again, we call upon them to help reverse the brain drain and bring this very important international project to Canada, and particularly to Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Thanks very much. I'll watch the clock, I say to the opposition House leader. It was 1:01, I looked at the clock; and I'll look at the clock, not you.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Well, we will too.

The Speaker: Let me say this very clearly. I sometimes give leeway to people in situations like this. Your own member went over. Your own member on the last question went over by a good 10 or 15 seconds. Would the House leader of the opposition like me to cut her off? I could have done that very easily. I try to help both sides out as best I can, and it works out even all around, including sometimes when the leader of the official opposition goes over. I try to help every side on this.

There is going to be a question, and I decide who gets the questions. The member for Nickel Belt, I believe it was.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services regarding ODSP application forms. A constituent of ours, Patrick Murphy, doesn't have a family doctor, so he can't get the health status report form of the ODSP package completed. We've intervened at the ODSP adjudication unit to request that a nurse practitioner be permitted to fill out the form, and we have been told that the chief medical review officer at the unit agrees with this. However, when we asked to have this confirmed in writing, we were told that the health status report form already says that it can be completed by a nurse practitioner; indeed it does not. It clearly says that the document can only be completed by a physician.

Minister, will you make an official decision as soon as possible to allow nurse practitioners to complete these forms so that Patrick Murphy and many other disabled Ontarians who don't have a family doctor are not barred from applying for ODSP?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Yes.

PETITIONS

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's entitled Listen, Our Hearing is Important.

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments over vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

This petition is signed by thousands of people, and I'll give it to Anthony to bring to the table.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances, carcinogens;

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens;

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances at work; and

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

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

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for a diagnosis or a treatment of cancer; and

"That the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

I have added my signature as well.

1550

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 1,072 people of the approximately 23,000 who have signed this petition so far.

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

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

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

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

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

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the November 2000 announcement of massive privatization of Ministry of Transportation services will have a significant detrimental affect on citizen road safety, confidentiality of citizens’ information and on the economy of Ontario; and

“Whereas the employees of the Ministry of Transportation are recognized in writing by the provincial government to have provided excellent service on the government’s behalf; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario is taking away the livelihood and decreasing the standard of living of thousands of employees and families by its actions both directly and indirectly through spinoff effects; and

“Whereas citizens of Ontario are entitled to safe roads, consistency in driver testing, and competent inspection of trucks, school buses and vehicles carrying dangerous goods; and

“Whereas communities continue to need to retain decent-paying jobs if they are to maintain viability and vibrancy; and

“Whereas we taxpayers have entrusted the provincial government with the maintenance of public safety with an apolitical and efficient public service, a service free of profiteering and protected from conflicts of interests; and

“Whereas privatization is an abdication of such public trust;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to place a moratorium on any further privatization and to restore and promote public service as being of significant value in our society.”

I affix my name to this petition.

OHIP SERVICES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I am proud to present further petitions forwarded to me by Gwen Lee, a seniors activist in Hamilton. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Harris government’s decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

“Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

“Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

“Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, electrotherapy, magnetotherapy and biofeedback; and

“Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

“Whereas delisting these services will have a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially

seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers; and

“Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services.”

I add my name to those of Gwen Lee and others, not just from Hamilton but from other communities across Ontario.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition which is signed by 1,002. It reads as follow:

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

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

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

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

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

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Mike Harris government promised to institute patient-based budgeting for health care services in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution; and

“Whereas community care access centres now face a collective shortfall of \$175 million due to a funding freeze by this provincial government; and

“Whereas due to this funding shortfall, CCACs have cut back on home care services affecting many sick and elderly Ontarians; and

“Whereas these cuts in services are mostly in homemaking services, forcing Ontarians into more expensive long-term-care facilities or back into hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately institute real patient-based budgeting for health care services, including home care, so as to ensure that working families in Ontario can access the health care services they need.”

I’m pleased to add my signature to this petition.

OHIP SERVICES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have here a petition from a number of people from the area, and it reads as follows:

“Petition to the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas the Harris government’s decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

“Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

“Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

“Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, electrotherapy, magnetotherapy...and biofeedback; and

“Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

“Whereas delisting these services will have a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers,” many of whom live in my riding;

“Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services.”

I sign the petition.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 972 people:

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

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

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

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

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

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): The doctor shortage crisis in Thunder Bay is one that concerns everybody in our community, the number one priority. Over 40,000 people are without a family physician. We have a petition here signed by 40,000 people.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Our community is facing an immediate, critical situation in accessing physician services and in providing hospital care to the people of northwestern Ontario.

While recruitment and retention of physicians has been a concern for many years, it is now reaching crisis proportions. Training more physicians in northern Ontario is certainly the best response to this problem in the longer term. We are, however, in urgent need of support for immediate short-term solutions that will allow our community both to retain our current physicians and recruit new family doctors and specialists in seriously understaffed areas.

“Therefore we, as residents of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, urge you to respond to our community’s and our region’s critical and immediate needs. For us, this is truly a matter of life and death.”

There’s a town hall meeting in Thunder Bay tomorrow night sponsored by Thunder Bay Television to discuss this urgent issue. I hope all people in Thunder Bay will turn out. I’m proud to sign this petition.

PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have further petitions from the Hamilton second level lodging home residents’ task force. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas individuals who are tenants or residents in facilities such as care homes, nursing homes or domiciliary hostels under certain acts are provided with a personal needs allowance to meet incidental costs other than those provided by the facility; and

“Whereas the personal needs allowance has been fixed by the Ontario government at a rate of \$112 for nearly a decade and has not kept pace with cost-of-living increases, and furthermore is inadequate to meet incidental costs such as clothing, hygiene products and other personal essentials;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately review and amend provincial legislation to increase the personal needs allowance from \$112 a month to \$160 a month for individuals living in care homes, nursing homes or other domiciliary hostels.”

On behalf of those residents and my caucus colleagues, I add my name to this list of petitioners.

1600

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 1,040 people.

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

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

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

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

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

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Listen: Our hearing is important.

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists of patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I sign my name to this petition and hand it over to Owen.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR ROAD USERS ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES À LA CLIENTÈLE OFFERTS AUX USAGERS DE LA ROUTE

Mr Turnbull, on behalf of Mr Clark, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to permit the Minister of Transportation to delegate to persons in the private sector powers and duties and responsibilities to deliver services relating to road user programs / *Projet de loi 65, Loi permettant au ministre des Transports de déléguer à des personnes du secteur privé des pouvoirs, des fonctions et des responsabilités pour fournir des services liés aux programmes à l'intention des usagers de la route.*

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): I will be sharing my time with the member for York North and the member for Oak Ridges.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek your advice with

respect to this point of order. I know during question period there was some discussion with respect to the House leader of the opposition standing on a point of privilege after question period. Your direction to him was that it would be best taken up after question period rather than during question period. The House leader said, "Yes, that's great. I'll do it after question period."

I don't want to be a stick-in-the-mud, but I'm here for the point of privilege. Do I expect this then to be at any time, or am I compelled to be here until he deems that he's got a point of privilege?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member. I also am here under those circumstances. I don't know what the point of privilege would be. It may be relating to something which, quite frankly, might not have even happened yet.

The member for Hamilton East on a little bit of advice to all of us.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Just on the same point of order, my understanding from the House leader is that it will not be raised today. It may be raised at a time in the future, the same point.

The Speaker: I can sometimes guess what these things are about. I bet you this time I would bet the farm I know what it is, but since it hasn't happened, we will wait.

Sorry for the interruption. The Solicitor General.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I'm pleased to speak for my colleague the Minister of Transportation, Brad Clark, today. Unfortunately, Minister Clark is unable to be here due to illness.

Our government believes that, for the most part, the proper role of the government is to manage public services rather than deliver them directly. In our 1999 Blueprint document and again in this year's speech from the throne, we promised to explore alternate approaches to service delivery. Alternate service delivery of public services is an important part of the government's commitment to accountability. We have also pledged to provide high-quality services to Ontario taxpayers while ensuring they receive value for their money.

Through alternate service delivery, we can ensure that services received by taxpayers are modern, safe, efficient and cost-effective.

In this province there are currently more than eight million licensed drivers out of a population of 11.5 million. Growth in population is estimated at an additional two million by 2015. There are currently more than nine million registered vehicles in the province. These numbers continue to grow every year.

A large part of that growth is due to the overwhelming economic success in this province. It demonstrates that this government has put the right economic building blocks in place by focusing on sound financial management, a competitive economy, jobs and growth. As our population continues to grow, we will find increased demand for enhanced driver services.

The Ministry of Transportation is responding to an established need. For these reasons, I'm very pleased

today to rise on behalf of Minister Clark and introduce for second reading the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. This bill is designed to improve customer service to the public by permitting the Minister of Transportation to transfer the delivery of road user services and programs to other providers. At the same time, the proposed legislation will still mandate the minister to protect the public interest.

The government would monitor new service providers to ensure they comply with existing and future legislation. As well, it would rigorously audit the performance of all new service providers to ensure the public is receiving services that are safe, efficient, effective, consistent and fair.

The bill includes important provisions to protect the privacy of individuals and safeguard the confidentiality of their personal information.

Under the proposed legislation, alternate service providers would be required to abide by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act with respect to their actions on behalf of MTO. Additionally, alternate service providers would be mandated to create the position of privacy officer. The privacy officer would be responsible for securing all customer records related to the delegated business.

I'm very pleased to advise members of the House that this legislation has been positively reviewed by Ontario's own Information and Privacy Commissioner. I want to stress that as we transfer the delivery of services to other providers, road safety in this province will not be compromised. Indeed, the safety of all road users remains a high priority for this government and for the Ministry of Transportation.

In terms of road safety, I'm pleased to inform the House that Ontario now has the first place in Canada, and in fact is second in North America only to Massachusetts. Even though there are more vehicles and licensed drivers on our roads than ever before, Ontario has the best record in Canada, with the fewest number of fatalities per 10,000 licensed drivers.

The priority this government has placed on road safety in the past several years has contributed to this important achievement. We have implemented new road user safety programs, including an immediate 90-day suspension for drivers who have been drinking, impoundment of any vehicle being driven by a person who is suspended under the Criminal Code for driving-related convictions, impoundment of critically defective commercial vehicles and higher fines and sanctions for a wide range of offences. And we're seeing positive results.

Our fatality rate in 1999 dropped to 1.1 per 10,000 licensed drivers, making the 11th consecutive year of improvement. It goes without saying, however, that even one fatality is one too many.

Clearly, road safety is a priority that is being addressed through a commitment by MTO to the highest standards possible in developing and delivering effective programs.

1610

Part of delivering effective programs is providing quality customer service. The ministry has already made some significant customer service improvements that will address the growing population of Ontario drivers.

Last year, for instance, in my previous role as Minister of Transportation, I introduced several measures designed to effectively address customer service issues at provincial driver examination centres. Under those new measures, MTO hired more than 300 driver examination staff on a temporary basis. The ministry also opened temporary driver testing facilities and expanded the hours of operation at several provincial testing centres. As a result, MTO was able to offer more road tests and we reduced the average waiting time province-wide for driver examinations.

But it was also clear that we needed to do more. That is why the transfer of driver examination services to a new service provider is being considered as the first major initiative under this bill.

It is clear that alternative service delivery of driver examination would bring innovation and greater flexibility in the way the services are delivered. Under a new service provider, MTO is committed to reducing the wait time for road tests to six weeks or less across Ontario.

As the honourable members know, this government has already taken a number of measures to address the growing service pressures around driver examinations. In particular, we have sought to reduce the long waiting times faced by people in some parts of the province when booking their driver exams. We have made clear progress in this regard, but we also believe there is further room for improving service delivery. By transferring the ministry's driver examination business to another service provider, MTO will build on customer service improvements that have already been achieved and offer enhanced service to the public in the future.

I mentioned earlier the support my cabinet colleague received from Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner. We're proud of this support. Similar support was received from other parties interested in protecting the public interest and improving customer service for new drivers.

Canada Safety Council President Emile Thérien has said, "Privatizing driver testing makes a lot of sense. It will improve safety by providing testing when it is needed. Driver testing is a government function that can and should be privatized in the interests of safety."

Similarly, the Insurance Bureau of Canada has given praise to this proposal. Mark Yakabuski, the bureau's Ontario vice-president says, "Allowing alternative service delivery for driver examinations will solidify the enormous success that Ontario's graduated licensing program has already achieved in its few short years of existence. We hope that other jurisdictions will emulate Ontario's leadership in this important area."

The Ministry of Transportation has done its homework and has studied how driver exam services have been

improved by the private sector elsewhere. Jurisdictions like Alberta and Michigan report high customer satisfaction. MTO learned from these other jurisdictions' successes and from their failures. As a result, we can be confident that a made-in-Ontario solution for the delivery of driver exams would reflect the best of all experiences.

Although the transfer would affect many MTO staff, we can also be confident that a new service provider would need and want to take advantage of the considerable skills and professionalism of our existing staff. A new provider of driver examination services would need a flexible, multi-skilled workforce, people who can perform in a high-demand environment with new and changing relationships. Job offers, as required under the collective agreements of those affected staff, will be a mandatory part of any contract with the service provider, and many MTO driver examination staff will find new job opportunities with the new employer.

As the Minister of Transportation advised the House when he introduced the bill for first reading, the proposed legislation has been written to address a number of important issues. For example, as part of the driver examination model, provisions would be in place to ensure that driver testing in Ontario continues to be fair and objective. As well, checks and balances would be in place to ensure that drivers who receive a licence from the province continue to be required to meet Ontario's high standards for driving skills as well as knowledge of the rules of the road.

Clearly, under the new service provider, the benefits to our driver examination programs would be wide-ranging. For instance, the new system would provide support to, and enhance, Ontario's graduated licensing system.

As a member of the opposition, I fought hard for the introduction of a graduated licensing system to enhance road safety, especially for our young drivers. In itself, the graduated licensing system has been an unparalleled success story since it was introduced seven years ago. Studies show that the number of collisions involving novice drivers has dropped by 31%. The number of injuries and fatalities involving novice drivers has gone down by 24%.

A new service provider would help this program continue to build on its successful track record. To ensure that driver testing in Ontario is delivered consistently in all parts of the province, the ministry would seek a single service provider to deliver driver testing services province-wide. Taxpayers would know exactly who is responsible for providing the services and who is accountable for their timeliness, cost and quality.

Under this new service delivery model, MTO would continue to play a vital role in the licensing of drivers on the province's roads. The ministry would establish the standards and curriculum for driver licensing. It would also train the service provider's trainers, and MTO would ensure the service provider's compliance with all of its legal and contractual obligations.

As the service manager, the ministry would continue to develop policy, legislation and regulations on driver

examination services, just as it does today. Moreover, the government would continue to set regulated fees, including the fees charged for driver testing. Under the new service delivery model, the service provider could elect to offer new, value-added services to the public and would have the right to determine what fee it would charge for those services. However, those services would require final approval by the Ministry of Transportation before they could be implemented.

As I said earlier, alternative service delivery is all about serving customers better and finding more flexible and innovative ways to deliver the services; it's about dealing with growing demand in ways that are smarter and more effective.

The Ministry of Transportation will continue to be responsible for establishing quality standards throughout Ontario's transportation sector and for ensuring that every driver who receives a licence is qualified to hold one.

Our government remains committed to examining the province's assets and the services it provides to the public, and if there's a better way to deliver those services, rest assured that we intend to pursue it. This bill will get us closer to that goal, and I therefore submit it for second reading and ask for the full support of the House.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon to support second reading of the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. The proposed legislation is designed to allow some Ministry of Transportation services to be delivered by another service provider. If passed, the bill would lead to important improvements in the way customer services are delivered to the public across Ontario.

As members know, driver examinations and a range of related services are currently provided by the Ministry of Transportation. Indeed, this has been the case for the better part of the century. Since those days, Ontario has undergone a great many changes. We have changed from a mainly rural and agricultural province to a more sophisticated and highly urbanized society including the largest city in Canada. Our economic base has shifted from mainly resource extraction and heavy manufacturing to auto and auto parts production, as well as continuing growth in financial and other knowledge-based services. Our population has increased to the point where the people of Ontario represent more than one third of all Canadians. Our diverse social makeup has made us one of the most multicultural jurisdictions in the world.

1620

Working conditions, housing, health care and education have all improved significantly for the vast majority of people. We have also become a wired society, one of the world's leaders in high-tech products and services. We built the world's first fully electronic toll highway. We erected the world's tallest freestanding structure. And we have some of the busiest highways in North America.

We continue to address our future transportation needs through leading-edge initiatives like Smart Growth and SuperBuild. Smart Growth is part of this government's planning process for the future. It prepares Ontario for growth in the next 20 years. This province's made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy is a vision for land use, transportation and infrastructure decisions. It's part of the Harris government's 21-step action plan to move us into this new century. Smart Growth is all about ensuring a strong economy, strong communities and a healthy environment. It strikes the right balance in planning initiatives to ensure a competitive edge in supporting the efficient use of existing and new infrastructure and in fostering focused growth.

The Ministry of Transportation's role in Smart Growth is to provide the most effective transportation services that minimize environmental impact. This will ensure continued economic investment, a better quality of life and new job creation.

Through this government's five-year, \$20-billion SuperBuild initiative, the Ministry of Transportation is helping to facilitate the largest infrastructure building program in Ontario's history. The ministry's role with SuperBuild is founded on three pillars: (1) preserving Ontario's \$27-billion investment in highway infrastructure by making strategic investments, (2) running an efficient, well-coordinated and seamless transportation system that uses intelligent technology and all transportation modes and (3) building for the future through new public-private partnerships that can deliver new infrastructure faster and more cost-effectively than traditional approaches. They leverage capital funding. They create jobs in this province.

Ontarians enjoy a quality of life and a range of services that are second to none. Through its commitment to forward-looking initiatives like Smart Growth and SuperBuild, our government has again made this province the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Despite these considerable advantages and the many benefits Ontario has reaped from growth and change over the years, there are still those who raise concerns about positive changes designed to make our excellent standard for customer service even better. This bill addresses those concerns.

First, I'd like to emphasize that, if passed, this bill would enhance efficiencies and build on the long-term effectiveness of customer service delivery in this province. Secondly, I'd like to discuss the changing history of Ontario's driver licensing system.

As most of us are aware, Ontario's system for licensing drivers has changed a great deal over the years. In our grandparents' day, cars were still relatively new. In fact, when automobiles first started to appear in Ontario more than 90 years ago, comparatively few people could afford to own one. With few cars and drivers on the road, Ontario saw no need to license drivers. By our parents' day, car ownership had grown by leaps and bounds. The automobile created a whole new

lifestyle, a new era of personal mobility. It also made life in the suburbs possible.

Ontario responded by building more roads. We had more vehicles on those roads, and for safety reasons we began to license both automobiles and their drivers. In our own youth, whether in the 1950s, the 1960s or the 1970s, getting a driver's licence became a rite of passage for most young people, and for many of us, getting that licence seemed comparatively easy. We read over the driver's handbook a few times, wrote a short multiple-choice test and received a beginner's permit, which we called the 90-day licence, or later on, the 365-day.

Within that first period, new drivers were expected to practise their driving skills at all times of the year, during the day and at night and in all kinds of weather and driving conditions. The only restriction or requirement was that you had to have an experienced licensed driver beside you when you were at the wheel. Many people booked their formal driving test on the same day they received their beginner's licence. In those days you could qualify for your beginner's licence on one day and try your driving test on the next, as long as you could secure a testing appointment.

Even 30 or 40 years ago traffic congestion was still relatively uncommon. For people in our generation, the toughest part of getting a licence, the skill that everyone practised the most, was parallel parking. I certainly remember doing that. If you could manoeuvre the vehicle successfully, point it in the right direction, make it stop and go and perform a parallel park without knocking over the orange cone, you got your permanent licence and minutes later you could be out on the 401 driving by yourself.

Today, of course, our standards have changed significantly. With graduated licensing, Ontario's novice drivers now undergo a much more rigorous two-step licensing process, which includes two road tests. As we know, this new approach to licensing drivers is saving lives. But while our licensing requirements have changed a great deal over the years, our driver examination services have not kept pace with the times. There are more than eight million licensed drivers in this province, and thousands more receive new licences each year.

The demand for driver testing services in Ontario will continue to grow as our population increases, thanks to successful economic growth in this province. The Ministry of Transportation has already made some significant customer service improvements to address the growing population of drivers in this province. In 1999, members will recall that the previous Minister of Transportation, the Honourable David Turnbull, brought in a package of measures to address the customer service problems at provincial driver examination centres. In this initiative, the ministry hired more than 300 driver examination staff on a temporary basis. It also opened temporary driver testing facilities and expanded the hours of operation at a number of provincial testing centres. As a result of this initiative, more road tests were offered and

the average waiting time across the province for driver examinations was reduced.

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This new bill supports the Ministry of Transportation intention to find a new service provider for driver examination services. With the passage of this proposed legislation and the eventual move to a new service provider, the province will be able to build on this significant customer service improvement in driver examination services that have already been made.

As members will know, Ontario is committed to the highest level of customer service possible in all facets of its operations. By engaging the private sector in the delivery of driver examination services, the government will continue to maintain, even exceed, those high standards for excellence in customer service.

The key, of course, is to find the right service provider for the job. To ensure that the right organization is selected to undertake this important task, the ministry has established an open, competitive process. Before earning the right to deliver driver examination services in Ontario, a successful bidder would be required to prove its capability in a number of areas. It is a process that would demand that all candidates for this role meet a very specific, predetermined set of criteria. If this bill passes, only pre-screened, qualified candidates will be able to proceed to the next level in which they will be able to bid for the right to deliver ministry services. If a successful candidate is chosen, the ministry will then develop a detailed service delivery contract with the winning bidder.

As I have suggested, great care is being taken to ensure that the selection process can have only one possible outcome, which is safe, effective, high-quality service delivery. I believe that the people of Ontario simply cannot lose with this process, because the whole point of the exercise is to provide them with better service. If the selection process results in a new provider of driver examination services, the service delivery contract with the ministry would contain measurable objectives and clear milestones for customer service improvements. The goal is to improve customer service. The people of Ontario will be the beneficiaries.

From my perspective, the real importance of this bill is simply that it will bring more efficient and cost-effective services to the people of Ontario. As members and elected representatives of the people, I believe we all have an obligation to support measures that will result in better service to the public. Under this bill, the ministry would continue to set the standard for improved customer service and it would give the private sector an opportunity to use its flexibility and innovation to deliver key driver examination services to the public.

We believe that the ministry's staff, resources and expertise should be used to manage services rather than deliver them directly. That is the whole purpose of the bill we have before us for second reading.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we don't have a quorum.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: Quorum is now present.

Mrs Munro: If I could just go back, the importance of this bill is that it would continue to set the standard for improved customer service and it would give the private sector an opportunity to use its flexibility and innovation to deliver key driver examination services to the public. We believe that the ministry's staff, resources and expertise should be used to manage services rather than deliver them directly, and that is the whole purpose of the bill we have before us for second reading today.

With the passage of this legislation, new service providers would work closely with the ministry to deliver top-level driver examination and other driver services across the province. The Ministry of Transportation would continue to manage and supervise the delivery of these services and would ensure that new service providers adhered to a performance management system that maintains this commitment to excellence. In this way, the public would see better, more cost-effective services and the ministry would be able to focus on its proper role of service management. I believe all members of the House should join me in supporting this bill.

Like so many other changes we have seen over the years, this proposed legislation is designed to build on the steady progress we have made to keep Ontario strong and growing. This bill would improve customer service across the province by enhancing the services that we offer to people. On behalf of those people I represent here, I invite other members to pledge their support for the proposed legislation.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I rise today in support of the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. I'm glad so many of our colleagues are here today and all the people in the galleries who are here today to observe this debate. It's an indication of how important a piece of legislation this really is to the people here and people across the province.

As members know, this bill would permit the Ministry of Transportation to transfer the delivery of some road user programs and services to new service providers. Our reputation in this province in terms of service delivery, particularly in the area of transportation, is second to none. I'm sure all members here will agree with that.

1640

However, even excellent service can be improved on, and that's what this is really all about today. The proposed legislation is designed to allow some Ministry of Transportation services, as I indicated, to be delivered by other service providers, namely the private sector. But let the members of this House be assured that through the transfer of services the government would continue to protect the privacy of all Ontarians. I know that this has been an area of concern expressed by some members opposite and by some members of the public, but I'm

sure a careful reading of this legislation will reassure everyone that the minister, his staff and all those who have been involved in the development of this legislation have addressed that issue.

The bill includes important provisions to protect the privacy of individuals, as I said, and to safeguard the confidentiality of their personal information. The Ministry of Transportation, by its very nature, deals with important information that relates to citizens of this province. So for that reason, we want to be sure, and have assured through this legislation, that all of that information will be protected.

Under the proposed legislation, alternative service providers would be required, therefore, to abide by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act with respect to all of their actions on behalf of the ministry. Additionally, alternative service providers would be mandated to create the position of privacy officer. The privacy officer would therefore be responsible for securing all customer records related to the delegated business.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): They'll be in charge of selling names.

Mr Klees: A member opposite, sarcastically I'm sure, made reference or suggested that in fact this person delegated would make a profit in selling names on this registry. Let me assure the member opposite that this is precisely the kind of safeguard we're putting in place to ensure that doesn't happen.

Additionally, we're committed to ensuring that road safety would not be compromised under this legislation either. We would continue to—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Prince Edward-Hastings knows that heckling is out of order, particularly when one is not in one's own seat.

I'm sorry, the member for Oak Ridges.

Mr Klees: I'm sure the member for Prince Edward-Hastings will have his opportunity to insert his wisdom into this debate, and I appreciate, Speaker, that you have rightfully chastised him for attempting to interrupt my words of wisdom on this subject.

We would continue to safeguard the public interest, as I indicated, through this legislation by regularly monitoring and auditing new service providers to ensure that they comply with all legislative and contractual obligations.

I would like to put to rest as well any concerns that this proposed legislation might undermine the safety of roads. The fact is that if we read this proposed bill from beginning to end, as I'm sure every member in this House has done, as well as most of the onlookers today in the galleries and the media who are so carefully scrutinizing this debate today, upon careful reading of this legislation they would have observed it is obvious that through the proposed legislation road safety would not be compromised. On the contrary, the bill would support and enhance the delivery of Ontario's graduated licensing program. As members know, this program in

itself has been a tremendous success story since its introduction six years ago.

Speaker, I know you know, but there may still be some question in the minds of some of the public, that under graduated licensing, novice drivers obtain a licence that requires them to obey a comprehensive set of driving restrictions related to alcohol, night driving and travelling on Ontario's busiest highways. These restrictions are designed to provide new drivers with valuable experience that they need during a period when statistics show that they are the most vulnerable, and understandably so. It's a new experience for them. It is not evident to a lot of people just how great a responsibility it is to get behind the wheel of a car with a powerful engine and travel at speeds when, without the necessary experience under controlled circumstances, often the reaction under unpredictable circumstances can be devastating. So, under graduated licensing all novice drivers must complete a two-step licensing process and take two road tests before becoming fully licensed.

The graduated licensing system promotes safe driving. It promotes safe driving habits among beginning drivers in the belief that those habits, once they are learned, will in fact last a lifetime. In my observance of some drivers, I'm not so sure that's necessarily the case, and there may be a call for some drivers—not anyone in this House, of course—who have been driving for some time to benefit from some upgrading. Sometimes the rules of the road are missed, and quite frankly I think we should be doing more in this province to ensure that our drivers understand fully the responsibility that they have whenever they get behind the wheel of a car.

Studies show that the total number of collisions involving novice drivers has dropped by 31% since the introduction of this graduated licensing system. In those collisions, the number of injuries and fatalities involving novice drivers has gone down by some 24%. That particularly is significant, and I want to commend all of those individuals who were involved in the implementation of this important aspect of our licensing system.

With graduated licensing, Ontario is on the way toward achieving its goal of having the safest roads in North America. We are already at number one in Canada, and we are number two across North America, second only to Massachusetts. This government will continue to strive to improve that safety record.

Mr Bisson: It was done by the NDP government. Come on.

Mr Klees: We have some carping from across the way, Speaker. I'm sure you probably didn't hear it or you would have rebuked the honourable member. I think what he wants is to insert himself into the debate. He, rightfully so, wants to take credit for the one good thing the NDP government did while in office; the one. But it does not cause us to forget the havoc that they wreaked on this province over a period of five years of irresponsible government, taxing and spending and driving business from this province. However, I give to

the member that they did one good thing while they were here, and for any role that they had in the implementation of this graduated licensing system, I take my hat off to him and all of his colleagues.

The issuing of chauffeurs' licences in 1909 grew to include a competency test in 1913. That's how far back the licensing system in this province goes. I'm sure the NDP probably want to take credit for that as well. By 1927, an operator's licence was introduced in Ontario. I'm sure the member from Essex south remembers those days. With 25 examiners employed to test applications, in that first year almost 450,000 operator licences were issued in this province, at a cost of one dollar each. How times have changed. Every step of the way over the past 80-plus years, the transportation ministry of this province has worked to improve its customer service capabilities.

Today, we have more than eight million drivers in this province and more than nine million registered vehicles, yet the need to continue the tradition of customer service and customer service excellence in this province is greater than ever. It is a tradition that was established long ago by the Ministry of Transportation in this province. It's one that we want to continue to support and uphold. No doubt, the volume that we're dealing with today is largely responsible for some of the pressures on the system. I'm sure that other members in the House equally had calls over the last number of months regarding the waiting time for young people to get into line to have their tests—and not just young people, but often immigrants from other countries as well. So it forced the government to take a look and reassess what we could do to make this customer service more efficient.

1650

First and foremost, the ministry's role as we move to this new way of doing business must be as a manager, not as a deliverer of services. There are those, perhaps, who would challenge that in order for a government service to be delivered at all, it must be delivered by government. We don't share that view. In fact, we believe that as long as government maintains the role of managing how that service is to be delivered, often others can do the actual service delivery more efficiently and more effectively, and we have many examples of that. We believe that ultimately transferring some services and programs to other service providers will vastly improve customer service.

The demand for driver testing services in Ontario will continue to grow as our population increases. Thanks to the economic growth in this province, we have that kind of pressure on all government services, whether it relates to licensing or many other areas of government services.

The Minister of Transportation has already made some significant customer service improvements to address this population growth pressure that we have. In 1999, members will recall that my colleague the Honourable David Turnbull, the previous Minister of Transportation, brought in a package of measures to address the customer services problems at provincial driver examination

centres. I know the member for St Catharines will stand in his place and commend the previous minister for the good work that he did in resolving some of those issues.

Under this initiative, the ministry hired more than 300 driver examination staff on a temporary basis. It also opened temporary driver testing facilities and expanded the hours of operation of provincial offices. As a result of this initiative, more road tests were offered and the average waiting time across the province was significantly reduced.

This new bill would enhance our commitment to improve customer service. It supports MTO's intention to find a new service provider for driver examination services. With the passage of this legislation and the eventual move to a new service provider, the province would be able to build on significant customer service improvements in driver examination services that have already been made to this point.

Under the government's proposed initiative, the new service provider would be responsible for things like vision testing. It would also be responsible for examining candidates on their knowledge of the rules of the road. It would take driver licence photos, would book appointments for road tests and would be responsible for carrying out those road tests needed to obtain Ontario's class G1, G2, commercial and motorcycle licences. All told, it would be able to apply the private sector's unique ability and approach to delivery of services with creativity, flexibility and innovation, the same tenets that have made Ontario this country's economic powerhouse. We simply want to draw on the resources, the talent and the initiative that the private sector has and allow them to apply some of that technology, some of that expertise, to delivering government services.

Ontario is committed to the highest level of customer service in all facets of its operation. This initiative that we're discussing today inherent in this bill builds on that commitment. By engaging the private sector in the delivery of driver examination services, the government would continue to maintain, even exceed, the high standards for excellence in customer service that we have come to expect in Ontario. If we can increase the effectiveness of Ontario's driver testing process today, the public would benefit immediately through enhanced efficiency in the delivery of our customer service.

The key, of course, is to find the right service provider. To ensure that the right organization is selected, we have undertaken to initiate a very open process through which competition would be encouraged. A successful bidder would be required to prove its capability in a number of areas before earning the right to deliver examination services in Ontario. It is a process that would demand that all candidates for this role meet a very specific, predetermined set of criteria. When a successful candidate is chosen, the ministry would then develop a very specific service delivery contract, and all of the service then would be delivered under the terms of that contract.

I believe the people of Ontario simply cannot lose with this process, because the whole point of the exercise is to ensure that people in Ontario get better service. I don't think there's anyone in this place who would argue with that. In fact, I fully expect that everyone in this place would stand unanimously and express their support for this legislation.

If the selection process results in a new provider of driver examination services, the service delivery contract with the ministry would contain very measurable objectives, clear milestones for customer service improvements. I think customer service is something that we all deserve, we all expect, and, quite frankly, we often do not get, at least not to the same degree that we have been used to in the past.

We believe that government ministries should set provincial standards and work to see that they are met. It's that accountability that we will ensure stands behind this legislation.

We also believe the government's primary business is to manage services effectively, as I said, rather than necessarily to be on the front lines delivering those services. With the passage of this bill, the Ministry of Transportation would continue to play a key role in licensing drivers right across this province. It would set all of the licensing policies, it would set all of the fees, and it would set all of the standards under which this service delivery contract would function. It would focus its efforts on seeing that those standards are met. It would be very carefully scrutinized, and every member in this place can rest assured that the standards of service will not be compromised, that this initiative will indeed be in the public interest.

The goal here, as I said, is to improve customer service. The people of Ontario—

Interjection.

Mr Klees: To the member for Hamilton East, I'm sure that probably a good portion of this bill has come forward because your constituents have called for it. They've been demanding better and more efficient services, so they will look forward to you standing in your place and supporting this legislation.

Others have already spoken to the bill's benefits with respect to enhancing government accountability, but from my perspective the real importance of this bill is simply that it will bring better, more efficient and cost-effective services to the people of Ontario. As members and elected representatives of the people, I believe we all have an obligation to support measures that will result in better service to the public, not only in the area of transportation but in many other areas. We'll have an opportunity over the course of the next number of months to talk about how we can bring similar service delivery changes to other areas of our public service, to other areas in our province.

1700

The Minister of Transportation has been working hard toward the goal of improving customer service right across this province. This work strongly supports this

government's goal of achieving more efficient government and improving government service through alternative service delivery. It underscores the government's role as a manager, not necessarily as a deliverer of that service.

In this day and age, customer service has become a highly specialized field. Companies that are good at it generally do very well, and those that are not very good at it are often doomed to fail. In managing services that are delivered to the public, the ministry plays an important strategic role in Ontario's transportation sector, a role that embraces all transportation models and the dimensions of provincial policy, planning and management.

In terms of Ontario's policies, fees and standards, the proposed act makes it crystal clear that MTO would continue to effectively manage the delivery of these services.

This government made a commitment in its 1999 Blueprint, and in the most recent speech from the throne it was reiterated, that government must be more accountable to provincial taxpayers. One important part of that commitment is to ensure that services are delivered in a safe, efficient and high-quality manner. To fulfill that commitment in the throne speech and in the Blueprint, we are determined to explore new and innovative ways of improving customer service. Wherever it is practical, wherever it is safe and wherever it is cost-effective, we will do so, and we will do so with the co-operation of the private sector. We will provide the necessary oversight that is the role of government and the responsibility of government, and we will do so in the interests of the people we serve.

This bill represents an important step on the way to achieving those objectives. I therefore ask that all members join me today in support of second reading of the bill. I know the great gathering of members in this place today—all of the people who are observing us in the galleries today, who have come here to watch the proceedings, to observe the debate on this important matter, will probably want to stand in their place to applaud, but of course that would be out of order and so they wouldn't do that. But I do invite all of our colleagues to stand in their place, support this legislation, and give the people of Ontario efficient, effective, responsible public service.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I am pleased to rise on the occasion of this debate on Bill 65.

I want to read from an Ontario Ministry of Transportation news release dated just within the last few days. "Queen's Park, September 28: The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is replacing workstations and computer equipment at all driver and vehicle licence issuing offices and driver examination centres across the province between October 2001 and January 2002."

Isn't it ironic that we're discussing a privatization bill as the government is replacing equipment within their

own offices, to then turn around and privatize the whole of the licence-issuing offices?

Interjections.

Mr Hoy: Then, as my colleagues were stating some kind of sell-off, how can the government be so bold as to start to replace workstations and computer equipment on this very date as we debate the privatization of the very sector they're talking about?

Oh, of course. Let's spend lots of money in the run-up to the privatization. Let's spend it now so that when our friends come in they have the best of everything, at the taxpayers' expense. That's what I believe this is. The taxpayers are going to pay for this, and the friends of Mike Harris are going to benefit in the wildest of ways.

We know the Provincial Auditor has questioned this government in the past on their privatization. He said that privatization has not saved any money and "may ultimately result in significant increases in the cost of highway maintenance." Here we have them setting it up. They're setting it up for their friends.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Labour isn't in his seat.

Mr Bisson: It always amazes me when the government gets up and introduces their new measures that are supposedly going to be saving us some money. Let's look at what actually happened.

People in Ontario have had to wait long periods of time in order to get driver exams. For what reason? The simple reason is that the government, back in 1995 upon taking office, reduced the staff of the Ministry of Transportation significantly, including at those offices, thus resulting in long lineups of people having to wait in order to get their driver exams.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. We're not going to do this. We don't need these conversations across the floor when a member is trying to speak. We have one particular minister out of his seat. The member for Timmins-James Bay deserves to have the floor without this chorus of—I think I'll leave it there.

Mr Bisson: As I said, in 1995 the government moved to reduce the amount of staff at MTO, including the driver examiner offices. They reduced the staff significantly, and as a result we ended up having long lineups, long delays for people to get their appointments in order to get their drivers' tests. The government says, "Look at us. We went out and hired a bunch of temporary people in order to fix the problem." Now the long-term solution they've got is to come in and privatize the service.

Pardon me if the public and a whole bunch of other people around here are sceptical about this latest scheme on the part of the province, because they're the ones who created the mess, just like John Snobelen said back in 1995 upon taking office as Minister of Education. What did he say? "I will create a crisis in education in order to create the backdrop necessary for me to go out and make

the changes I want to do that fit with the ideological beliefs of the Tory party." The Tories are the ones who created the crisis in driver examination offices. They're the ones who laid off the employees, and then they say, "Oh, well, we've got to fix the mess." It's a mess you created.

I would submit that privatization is not the answer. The answer is to allow that to happen under public control. We know, in instances where you've already privatized, that we haven't saved any money. You only have to look at the road maintenance contracts that were issued by the ministry to see that we haven't saved anything.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I want to start off by addressing the three members from our caucus who spoke: the Solicitor General—the member from Don Valley—the member from Oak Ridges and the member from York North.

I want to suggest that some of the points they brought out are particularly useful for me in my riding. I happen to live in what was the town of Listowel, and we don't have a driver examination centre there any more. People ask me about that. I think they would want me to be on my feet today in this Legislature saying that if we can make the provisions so we can have that kind of service back in Listowel at a reasonable cost, this government should be given the credit for doing that.

We have people in our town, those approaching 80, who have to have mandatory drivers' tests. I guess the closest place they would go to is Stratford. That's about 35 miles away—I'm a little old-fashioned. It's not easy to make the appointments and keep them, to drive there and do that. So if this innovative project by the Ministry of Transportation will make those kinds of services available, particularly to my friends and constituents in Listowel, I think that's a very forward move. That's why I wanted to get on my feet today to compliment those members of my caucus who were speaking in favour of this bill. I want to say I will be voting for this bill, giving it my wholehearted support, and I hope it will help improve services to drivers in Ontario.

1710

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): While pontificating about the service this government would like to provide to the residents of Ontario, I would have thought the member for Oak Ridges would speak up about the closing of the driver examination centre in Leamington, his old hometown. Whom can you depend on if you can't depend on those people who knew you best in the past? But what he's done is say, "To heck with all those elderly residents in Leamington and area who need that service, who don't want to go into the city of Windsor or the city of Chatham for their driver examination." I would have thought he would speak out in support of them. But no, they don't matter to him any more. It's not a question of service; it's a question of simply making the service so bad that you have to put it out to somebody else.

Some problems come along with that. Recently I saw, I think it was on 20/20, about the privatization of

licensing in New York state in the last year and how fraudulent it's become. All you have to do is pay off the examiner. Where's the accountability in that when you can't go to the government and ask why that's to be stopped. We've seen more recently and tragically where there has been fraudulent issuing of licences to drivers of hazardous material vehicles.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's in the States.

Mr Crozier: The Minister of Labour says that's in the States. Everything you guys compare the best to is in the States. Well, I'm saying it isn't always that great. I think that accountability is the question here, and we're not going to have it with privatization.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mrs Munro: Thank you to the members for Chatham-Kent Essex, Timmins-James Bay, Perth-Middlesex and Essex, who made comments with regard to this legislation. I think that in looking at what the members have said collectively, there is the need for better service. The hallmark of this particular piece of legislation is the fact that there is a need to provide better service for people across the province. It seems to me that the kind of situation we are addressing here today is based on the fact that we have eight million drivers today and we have more people all the time who are seeking to become drivers. So the thing is that we have to look at methods by which those services can be closer to home, and can be more flexible and innovative. That is the key this legislation represents. It's a way of finding service providers who will meet the kind of standards we are looking at.

We're also looking at providing for constituents like those of the member for Perth-Middlesex in a shorter turnaround time than is currently available. That's precisely why it is necessary for us to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Hoy: Mr Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the members for Prince Edward-Hastings, Sudbury, Windsor-St Clair and St Catharines.

I want to revert back to the moment when I had a chance to comment on comments made earlier by the government side. I just want to repeat that the Ministry of Transportation is replacing workstations and computer equipment at all driver and vehicle licence-issuing offices and driver examination centres across the province between October 2001 and January 2002. Isn't it ironic that we're discussing a privatization of this very part of the Ministry of Transportation? We're talking about it today on October 1 and it says here that, beginning October 2001, we're going to put computer equipment and replace workstations and then we're going to privatize the whole thing. This is really bold, in my view. It flies in the face of the taxpayers of Ontario. It's a slam at them, most directly, and it's a slam to the people who work at MTO that they had to work with substandard equipment and, now that new equipment is coming in, they're going to privatize the whole thing.

So what were the people working at MTO working with before? They must have been working with

substandard equipment. Now we're going to privatize and going to have the best of everything that this technological world can provide. This is a slam to the taxpayers and it's a slam to the people who work at MTO that they would do that at this time and to the families who worked for MTO with loyalty for years and years on end. That the government is doing this is nearly scandalous.

In the first place, it would appear that every minister went to the John Snobelen School of Create a Crisis. Every minister must have watched that tape and said, "Look, the way to get anything done in the Legislature of Ontario must mean that we have to create a crisis. The crisis we will create is this one: We know that the G2 licence graduates are coming along and after five years are going to have to come back in and be tested. We'll ignore all the warnings that we've heard from sound individuals that this was going to occur. We'll even ignore our own common sense," which they purport to have, "and we'll just ignore all that."

There were lineups and lineups and lineups of desperate people trying to renew their licences, working families trying to ensure that they had a valid licence in order to go to work to provide for their families. There were students—many, many students—who were going to university who required that transportation in order to achieve that goal at university or college, or perhaps in the workplace. Many of our university students must now have jobs because of the escalating costs of tuition and therefore need a vehicle to go to work after their schooling is complete during the day.

I have just a few samples of the requests to my constituency office pleading that the government do something about the 10- and 12-month waits to get their licence. Their licences were expired or expiring. I know that every member in this House has received countless numbers of people who could not get an examination: a 12-month wait for booking; called in January, licence expires in August, testing is in September; called in August, appointment is in the following January; called in April, test in November, job involved. All of these people—and this is only a sample. I couldn't carry them all here, but I brought many, many of them for the people to see here in this House, and I know that others have the same.

Not only that, since the government doesn't trust the integrity of my constituency office, here are press releases talking about the same issue: that people couldn't get their licences in a timely manner.

This is by Donald McArthur, Windsor Star: "Chatham was booking G2 tests Monday for January 10, 2000 and G1s for Nov. 5. Sarnia was booking G2s for March and G1s for December." So if you don't believe the integrity of my constituency office, the press is also verifying this.

1720

The point is, the government created a crisis once again, and said, "The only way to solve this is to privatize. This will be what we'll hinge everything on." People see that the services at MTO were not timely, and

that was because of government mismanagement. That's plain and simple. They knew for five years that was coming. The government was warned. They had five years to prepare and they did not act nearly soon enough. There were no new offices created, the resources weren't there—10-month waiting lists, and some much longer. You put students, working families and people across Ontario into quite a dilemma. I know that members' offices were called in this regard.

What do we need to do? The government says, "We need to rush in and fix this. You know what we should do? We should privatize it." Wrong. That's the wrong road to head down. There is little assurance that driver testing will improve under this bill.

The minister says that he would like people to get their licence within a six-week time frame. There is nothing in the legislation that guarantees that people will get their licence within six weeks. It's just bluster on the minister's part; that's what it is. It's his statement to have people believe that privatization will somehow be better.

There will be no guarantee of improvement for urban residents, and we have strong concerns about the service that will be given to northern and rural Ontario. We are concerned that those services may diminish. After all, in a privatized situation, profits are the motivational factor, and people will look at the bottom line, the investors in this privatized company that's going to operate in this transaction, and they will say, "Perhaps we don't want to be in northern Ontario. Perhaps we don't want to be in rural Ontario. Would we like to be in the great metropolitan areas? You betcha." They will go there; they will want to be there. But we're very concerned about rural and northern Ontario. Not only are we concerned about the possibility of new offices, we're concerned about the existence of the offices that are in place now and what the motivation for profit will do to those communities and those offices.

I want to remind the members opposite that I've spoken about this many times in this House, that you closed an office in Ridgeway. The member for Essex has just mentioned that you also closed offices in Leamington, which happens to be part of my riding now. The people in those communities pleaded with the government to leave those offices open. If the government wants rural economic development, they have to leave some structures in place that will assist the people into the future, and closing these offices is not helping rural economic development. Car dealers are having difficulty with this situation. The people who live there and who want to avail themselves of a driver's examination are having difficulties. It just seems that rural Ontario is kind of an afterthought with the government. They treat northern Ontario in similar fashion. But you're working against rural economic development when you start to close down schools in rural Ontario, when you start to take away the institutions of government that we have all known and treasured.

The government says that privatization is their new venture and their new ideological bent. I think that the

people in Walkerton and the tragic events that happened there would really question your blind ideology-driven agenda for privatization of vital government services. Vital government services need to remain in place. We need to ensure that we don't have a reduction in standards and a reduction in services.

With the events that we saw on September 11—if the government doesn't want to heed or listen to my comments about Walkerton and that situation—more than ever, that tragedy has underlined the absolute necessity of a strong public service dedicated to protecting its citizens through rigorous standards, thorough inspections, mandatory testing and strict enforcement. We need dedicated professionals reporting to a responsible government, not hourly employees paid by a private company that is not accountable.

I mentioned that the Provincial Auditor has commented on cost savings through privatization and the privatization of highway maintenance.

His 1999 report showed that privatization had not saved any money and "may ultimately result in significant increases in the cost of highway maintenance." The auditor expressed grave concern that in privatizing highway maintenance the government acted against Management Board policy in the fire sale of taxpayer-owned maintenance equipment worth \$6.5 million.

That brings me back to my first comments about installing new workplace stations and equipment at this time, now, just a little ahead of the passage of Bill 65, in order to facilitate privatization. What accountability will there be for the taxpayers of Ontario in this sell-off? As I say, I really do find it an affront to the people who worked at MTO that they would now upgrade the equipment. It is an affront to those workers.

If it's not savings, then what's the government's mad rush here? Is it to improve services? What guarantees are there for improved services? There are none in the bill. There is no guarantee that the people of Ontario will wait no longer than six weeks to obtain a road test. There are none whatsoever.

This bill is a fundraiser's delight. Mike Harris is selling off Ontario bit by bit to his friends. The member opposite was asking where these people will come from who will take over the MTO and these services we're talking about today. They will come from the front row of Mike Harris's fundraisers; that's where they will come from.

The Minister of Transportation has made some quotes about this bill in the past. He said, "In the months ahead, our government will continue to examine government assets and the important services it delivers." So the government may not be ending with this particular privatization. They may be moving on to more. "We will continue to pursue alternate delivery." The pursuit of alternate delivery was mentioned many times by the government members here today. That's code for, "We are going to privatize yet other parts of the ministry."

"We will continue to examine innovative options to improve how services are delivered to the people of

Ontario.” They are going to examine innovative options to improve services and delivery to the people of Ontario. Those, I believe, are more words meaning privatization; there is no guarantee in this bill that the government would not.

We are concerned about the services and locations, such as rural and northern Ontario. As well, we’re concerned about the higher costs. Driver testing companies are free to offer additional for-fee services. The concern we have is that people taking drivers’ tests may feel pressured into purchasing these additional services in order to pass their test. They’re going to allow for other sales within that office, all sanctioned by the minister. However, we believe there could be pressure put on those people seeking a driver’s examination to buy other—whatever the government may deem reasonable—packages in order to provide profit to this company and to acquire, in the end, a licence.

Private companies have access to MTO databases and confidential driver record information. The government claims that there will be protection here and there will be private sector confidentiality here. But we know what happened at the Province of Ontario Savings Office with the confidentiality of people’s monies. It didn’t work at all, so we’re very concerned about this.

This is a new addition to a bill that we haven’t seen before, this confidentiality and privatization, and it’s only in Bill 65, as I’m aware, to date. It raises the question about all the other bills the government has brought in that don’t have this protection. If this is so good for Bill 65, how come it’s lacking in all other bills that we’ve seen to date?

The company’s best interest, since they are motivated by profit, may be to fail drivers, assuring that they would have to pay for even more driver testing. The motivation here is clear: it is that of profit.

In 1963, the Minister of Transportation felt his most outstanding achievement in government efforts to develop greater public safety was to bring driver examination into the public service. He felt it was his crowning achievement. James Auld said that the conversion from a fee examiner system to one that is staffed entirely by trained civil service examiners was a highpoint in improving public safety.

1730

Mr Agostino: Was Norm Sterling minister then?

Mr Hoy: No, Mr Sterling was not, I don’t believe.

Prior to this initiative, drivers’ licences were for sale in Ontario, and it was rife with corruption. Mr Auld, to his credit, took that back under the government’s wing. I think it was a well-founded and a progressive move.

One of the dangers in this act of course, as we peruse it from front to end, is that the province cannot be liable for any act by a delegate or sub-delegate. So the province will not be liable. It won’t be liable for any of these delegates or sub-delegates. That’s very telling. They have a piece of legislation, and once they privatize it, they wash their hands of it and say, “We cannot be liable.”

Furthermore, the standards that the government talks about that they want to institute are not in the act.

We should have hearings on this bill, there is no doubt about it. The people of Ontario are seeing a massive change to the way this service is delivered. We should have hearings, most definitely.

In the government’s opening comments to this bill, they talked about “new service providers,” they talked about “other providers” and they talked about “alternative services.” That all means privatizing driver testing, and it opens the door, I believe, to future sell-offs of government entities.

Government members talked about the professional skills that exist within the MTO. I heard it from across the way—multi-skilled. They talked in glowing terms about the people who work at MTO, very glowing terms, and I concur with those ideals. Then they turn around and say, “We hope the private company that takes over this service will hire these wonderful people.” We have a very skilled workforce here. We have a government that mismanaged the system. With five years of warning, they continued to mismanage the system. I’m talking in terms of G2 licences. The government talked about the successes of MTO, and then they still are bent on privatization. Their own comments fly in the face of what they’re doing. Their own comments fly in the face of the direction they want to take.

There’s one thing the government members did not mention, and I think it’s very important when you’re talking about professional skills, multi-skilled people who upgrade in a regular fashion to provide the best services for the public in Ontario. They did not mention institutional memory, and it’s very important. These people know the history of what has gone on in Ontario, and that is something that can be lost here with the privatization of these MTO services. Institutional memory is very important. They know the people who will challenge the system. They know how they might try to do that, and they have been dedicated to ensuring that what we have here in Ontario is the best system available. It’s the best system available, and they are ensuring that.

At a time, as I said, when people have questioned and are certainly questioning public service and their high regard for it since September 11, I think we need to ensure that the very best services are given.

We will be voting against this bill, quite obviously, for the reasons I’ve given. There are no guarantees. Just think back to the minister’s own words: “We will continue to pursue alternate delivery service.” We believe that may include school bus and truck inspection and new highway inspection. I believe that is the future direction of this government, because they have not said that they categorically would not move in that regard. I would hope that the government would not continue in this mad rush to see Bill 65 passed into legislation.

I thank you for the opportunity to make these comments.

Mr Parsons: Here we go again. Every time this government announces an initiative that will improve service, I know the people in northern Ontario, eastern Ontario, virtually everyone in rural Ontario, are going to take a beating on this. They've been setting it up, and here we go again. It's an Alice-in-Wonderland government we have. When they say, "We're going to set up a system that's more accountable," they really mean less accountable.

With the present system, we as MPPs can deal with concerns that come from constituents who are unable to get a licence. With the new privatization, it puts a buffer in there. We probably won't even, as a public, have access to the contract, let alone what all the conditions are. Everything is in code with this government, and this is another example.

The people of Ontario pay taxes for services. They understand that. Several weeks ago I read a column in a newspaper by a gentleman named Linwood Barclay, who said, "Now people understand what their tax dollars go for—they pay for firefighters, they pay for police officers, they pay for ambulances." They pay for driver testing. It is a service that the people of Ontario demand and want.

I would suggest, as an aside, as people watch the driver testing being privatized, they need to ask themselves, "What's next?" Are we going to have for-hire police services? Are we going to have the low bidder for fire services? The reality is that no one in this province wants low-bidder fire services, hospital services or driver testing.

Driver testing, although not extremely high-profile, is a job with an awesome responsibility. We are taking our young people, giving them a motor vehicle—which, by the way, happens to be the leading cause of death for young people. It is extremely important that we have every assurance that drivers are qualified before they drive.

We are taking other young people and giving them 18- and 24-wheel trucks and having them travel down our highways, and it is important for all of our safety, as much as for police, as much as for fire, that the drivers be fully qualified.

The testing is being done now by examiners who are absolutely impartial, not worried about making a profit at their particular location, but worried that they do a responsible job and ensure that the driver they're issuing the licence to is going to be a safe driver. We're not seeing that happen with the potential of a privatized firm that removes our right as a Legislature and the public's right as citizens to impact on this.

What this government needs to worry about is having fewer spin doctors and getting some more real doctors for this province, because over and over we're seeing a proliferation of spin doctors.

I represent a rural riding. We have rural testing offices that we know don't make a profit. Hospitals don't make a profit, but they're a necessary service. I would suggest

rural testing offices need to be provided as a service, not as a profit centre for some private firm.

Our young people who need their test would like access to the testing office. But of even greater concern, as we're seeing the rural offices closed down and moved into larger locations, is that I'm having seniors come to me who say, "I'm very, very comfortable driving in my community." I spoke to a senior citizen from Picton who said, "I'm fine in Picton. I can drive from my house into town to buy the groceries. I don't travel outside of the county. I simply need access to the stores in town. But now I'm being told that I've got to drive to Kingston or I've got to drive to Cobourg. I've got to drive to a much larger municipality to take the test." But the test doesn't reflect where that senior actually drives every day.

1740

We've watched what this government has done. They improved services to our agricultural community by getting rid of ag offices. This is now on the same trail of improving service by getting rid of service—back to spin doctors.

We need to set aside the concept that somewhere out there is a firm that has not yet been rewarded with a contract and that we need to pay them with this contract, but recognize that the responsibility of government is to provide the services. From a profit viewpoint, if this government had its way, there would be one office in Toronto that does all the testing for all of Ontario. That would be by far the most economical, but it would be a shambles and a disgrace to the province for the citizens. We don't need to worry about the profit item on everything as long as we are getting value for our services, and we have very clearly shown that we're getting value for our driver testing when they are allowed to operate as they should.

This bill provides for standards. Everyone understands there need to be standards. I was an engineer with the Ministry of Transportation. We had standards for provincial highways. But when they wanted to build the private highway, when they wanted to build 407, they said, "Standards don't have to be the same for a private highway as for a public highway," and they altered the standards. Since these standards are not contained in this bill but in fact will be set by regulation into which no one has any input, there is a potential of saying, "These standards are interfering with the profit item. We can alter the standards." Standards are flexible with this government. Standards should not be flexible.

We've seen railways in the 1960s make their passenger service so inefficient that people quit riding them. The railways then said, "No one rides the railways. We need to be allowed to abandon them." It is very easy, as this government has done, to make the services provided very inefficient. They will then respond to us by saying, "Nobody wants to use these rural testing offices," when in fact the onus or the pressure should be to make them more efficient, more responsible.

We've seen how efficient this government is. The member for Chatham-Kent Essex just shared with us the

news that effective today this government is going to be replacing all of the computers in the motor vehicle testing offices. What that means is that when the first contract is let to the privatized firm, it will look extremely efficient because the taxpayers have picked up all the costs for the upgrades.

When this government privatized highway maintenance, they almost literally gave away the trucks. We can still see them on the road with the signs over top the ministry trucks. Trucks that were bought, were paid for, were owned by the people of Ontario were almost handed to these private contractors. I challenge anyone in Ontario to tell me that the roads are better plowed now than they were 10 years ago. They are not. We used to in Ontario bring in people from the other provinces and the other states who wanted to know how we maintained our highways in the winter, because we were the standard for North America. Now it's a disgrace. Now our people need to go and examine other areas. It's simply a disgrace the way we've gone. I would suggest to the people of Ontario that what has happened with the privatization of highway plowing in the winter is what will happen with the driver testing.

The graduated licence: good concept, really mis-handled. Maybe this should have happened five years ago, to explain to the minister that when someone gets a new licence for the first time and the ministry has a plan set out for them to return, they will return. It should not be a surprise. When a certain number of students leave grade 3, the school boards know that they will show up in grade 4. When people leave a driver testing office with the one step in their graduated licence, they will be back for the next one. Do not be shocked.

I know this government is rather proud of the accident rate being down in Ontario, but I drive into Toronto and I'll tell you, the accidents get much less severe when you're not moving. The property damage is almost zilch when you and everybody else around you are doing two kilometres an hour. Gridlock has been the only safety initiative initiated by this government since they came into office, but it has also hurt industry terribly.

I know this government is saying words like, "We will have these professional employees hired by the new employer," and that's true, they will, but it will be at lower wages. But the licence fee will stay the same. Fees should really concern the people of Ontario because, although we're hearing the "lower taxes" mantra being preached, we're seeing fees instituted in a daily and insidious manner. I know the fees are going to be set by this government, but I also know that there are other services that they'll be allowed to provide.

When I was growing up on the farm, there used to be a fly called a warble fly. It was a rather insidious little beast that would get inside a cow and would do all kinds of damage. I think the Italian word for it was Tory fly, but I'll stick with warble fly. This warble fly would do a lot of damage while still unseen, and then when it came out into the open, the damage was already done and it was too late to do anything with it.

But there used to be a gentleman—and he was privatized; he was hired by this government—who came around to the farm each year and inspected each of the cows for warble flies. At the same time that he was inspecting, he would mention to us that he had warble fly powder for sale. Now, we could have bought it at the co-op or anywhere else. He was selling it at about double the price. But my father always said to me, "Buy it from him. It will make it easier for our cows to pass the warble fly test." So even though we were under no pressure to buy from him, we bought it.

Here we've got these private firms that will have their fees set by the government, but they will also offer other services at their own fee. So the examiner could say, "Before we actually go out and do this test, would you like to buy this safe driving handbook? Would you consider purchasing this defensive driver course?" For that senior or for that young person, I can assure you that is a very intimidating offer that privatized firm will make to them. They will buy it. It's not enough that the company will make money just on the testing, but they're going to intimidate people into buying these other privatized services that shouldn't be there.

I think it is disgraceful that we would force the citizens of Ontario to purchase—

Interjections.

Mr Parsons: Of the speeches given here earlier, I think if they had been given in their original dialect, there would have been a Texas accent to them as they were read. We are following some US states in patterns that have not worked there, but by golly we've got to show they work here.

I think this government is trying to pass the buck to make a few more dollars for a few more friends—I guess there is an axiom you can buy friends—and we're seeing these privatized services go to very carefully selected individuals. The people of Ontario will suffer, the seniors will suffer and rural Ontario will suffer. This is a bad bill. I certainly will not be supporting it, and I think it needs to be rethought and withdrawn.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This bill is indeed all about providing a financial benefit for friends of the government. Make no mistake about it, this has nothing to do with public safety. It has nothing to do with convenience for the public. There is a mantra that permeates this whole government; it's a mantra that is purveyed largely by Guy Giorno, the person whose notes the Walkerton inquiry could not get at. They had to have a raid, you'll remember, of the Premier's office to try to get the notes from Guy Giorno. So he's the person I'm talking about. I wanted to put it in that proper context.

What happened, of course, was that the government wasn't prepared for the graduated licensing cohort, as we can call it, because you talk about double cohorts. This was a huge cohort coming in, a huge group of people who would have to be tested as a result of graduated licensing.

I must ask my colleagues—I actually thought the Conservative government brought in graduated licensing,

the way they were extolling the virtues of that measure. As I recall, it was the NDP who brought it in. But to listen to the government members, you would think somehow it was an innovation hatched in the mind of Mr Turnbull, the minister who is now the Solicitor General.

But here's how it's going to work, so people out there know, so the editorialists who might watch this might know, because they may be eating supper and watching this at this time. What they should know is that the Tories will be lining up at the fundraiser to have the right to operate this private business.

There will be a collision, I can tell you that. The collision will be between the people running to the fundraiser who want a new franchise to sell booze in some places and those who are coming to the fundraiser to have the opportunity to in fact test people and their driving. So that's what it's all about. The message has already gone out to the Conservative presidents: Get your people lined up. When you send out your fundraising letters, say, "Here comes another lucrative business for you, because our government is going to provide it to you."

1750

You have to know that what these people are all about on the other side—the Fraser Institute crowd, the Reform Party look-alikes—is discrediting public services. The Minister of Labour knows that; he's one of them. He knows that what you do is create the crisis, the crisis of confidence in a public service, and it gets so bad, it deteriorates to such an extent, that the public then accepts something they normally wouldn't accept.

They're trying to do that in health care. My friend from Sudbury would tell you that up in Sudbury. What they're trying to do in health care is the same thing: you create a crisis of confidence so that then you can start privatizing, and people in desperation will accept that.

May I draw an analogy? I was just thinking of it; it just came to mind. At Sunnybrook hospital there's new radiation treatment available at night. Now, that could have been done by Sunnybrook hospital if the Ontario government had provided the appropriate funding. Instead, they privatized it, gave it to the private sector.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You're thinking of the MRI.

Mr Bradley: No, no. I'm not thinking of the MRI. I know you're doing that as well. They're doing that as well with MRIs. They want to follow Quebec. They want to follow the lead of Quebec and of Alberta.

The former health minister here is shushing you. I understand why she would be shushing the Minister of Labour, because I saw—

The Deputy Speaker: Through the Speaker, please.

Mr Bradley: Through the Speaker. You saw as well, I think.

When the Leader of the Opposition stood up with that document leaked to us by Frank Mazzilli—I apologize; that's not the case. I can't say that—leaked to us by a government member somewhere, the information in it said, "We're to calm things down in the Ministry of Labour." So now we have the Minister of Labour

interjecting in every other portfolio there is instead of worrying about labour. We were anticipating his tribunals bill. I would have opposed it, of course.

Interjection: He backed down on that one pretty quick.

Mr Bradley: He backed down on that. He buckled under the pressure. I understand that he would have to do that.

But let me get back to the bill, because I think it's important we talk about that. Some of my colleagues have been right on when they have said what happened was this. Here's the scenario: this large cohort of people came in looking to be tested, so the government, on a temporary basis, hires them on.

The member for London-Fanshawe has got to be worried that they're going to start doing this with police services, that they're going to privatize that. Do you know how many private police services there are now in communities? And that is exactly what's happening. I want to warn him to be ever vigilant. Maybe as a result of my speech this afternoon they won't do it, but I'm going to tell you, they were thinking of it.

So there was a long lineup of people. They were phoning our constituency offices. So on a temporary basis, the government hired some people to do the testing. They had created this crisis, and now they say, "We have the perfect solution. All you have to do is privatize it."

Well, we had a lot of very good public servants there who were trying to do their job. Did they have enough staff? No. Did they have enough resources? No. Did they have the backing in the government? No. And we could have good public service—I've never said the government should be making steel or making cars or in a number of businesses and manufacturing; governments shouldn't be in those. But government should be in the business of public service, and this is an important public service.

Mr Hoy, who is our critic in this field, pointed out what happened in New York state. Fraudulent activity was taking place. People could slip some money under the table and get their licence, apparently. Others have mentioned as well, of course, that they would say to them, "Maybe if you took this additional course with our company, maybe if you took that course for a few extra dollars, you might have a better chance of passing." Now, some people will say I'm just being overly suspicious, but I'm not.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Only the Minister of Labour.

But what we have to bring this down to is what it is all about, and that is a fundraising scheme for the Conservative Party. That's exactly what it is. There is a building boom in Ontario that continues, and that building boom is building new halls for the Tory fundraisers. I know that in the Niagara Peninsula they all flock to the Premier's dinner. I can't get them to my fundraisers very much because, of course, we don't have all the largesse you people give out, not that we would

anyway. Of course we would never do that. But they come to the Premier's fundraisers. Even people I know who aren't Tories show up. They are waiting, because they heard my friend Norm Sterling, who was elected the same day I was, June 9, 1977—a wonderful day in Ontario for Mr Sterling. He recognizes that when they have these franchises to give out—the local Tories are rubbing their hands; they can't wait to get their hands on the money.

So what do you do? You send out the fundraising letter, just as—who is the guy with Trillium? Rob Power? Is that his name? Rob Power, I think it is, Mr Power from the Trillium Foundation. He got all the names of the people who are on these review committees in all the communities—

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): You call that networking.

Mr Bradley: Networking you call it—and he sent out a fundraising letter to all of them. I thought, “What a misuse of a list.”

Speaking of lists, my friend from Etobicoke North would be worried about this. We all remember what happened with POSO, the Province of Ontario Savings Office, in regard to confidentiality.

Tell me—I'm going to ask Mr Hoy again—is it not true that the Ministry of Transportation was putting out information as well, selling lists to people? It's not right that they should be doing so. But of course they want to have those tax cuts for the richest people in the province, for the corporations—\$2.2 billion. In order to do so, they have to bleed the money from somewhere else. So to get money they sell lists and introduce new user fees. I have now counted 1,172 new user fees in the province of Ontario, new or increased, including—

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The vehicle registration tax.

Mr Bradley: The vehicle registration tax in northern Ontario as well.

I recognize very much that while you people may say you've cut taxes, people of modest income, people who have not much to live on are the people who have to pay these user fees. The user fees don't bother the rich people; I'll tell you that. They do not bother the rich people in this province. Conrad Black—oh, he's gone now. Has he gone to England now?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Lord Black.

Mr Bradley: Sorry, Lord Black. Is there another title they use there? Lord Black, His Excellency or whatever you call him—Lord Black, as he is called now; he has his peerage. Anyway, he still has a residence in Mr Turnbull's riding. He still has a residence in the riding of the Solicitor General of this province. If one were to look carefully, although he didn't part easily with his money, we might well find he has made the odd donation, either moneywise or in kind, to—I used to call it the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, although it's hardly that any more; it's the Reform-a-Tories we have in power now.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Let me make an exception. The Chair of Management Board is an exception to that. He is one of the few Conservatives, and my good friend from Wellington is as well, Ted Arnott. There are still two Conservatives left in the province.

I see that we're close to 6 of the clock. I think I have registered some salient points with this House. If I may summarize very quickly, this is simply a fundraising scheme for the Conservative party of Mike Harris, the discrediting of a good public service and a move that will not benefit drivers and consumers in this province.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1759.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
Bartolucci, Rick (L)	Sudbury	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Beaubien, Marcel (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bountrogianni, Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Bradley, James J. (L)	St Catharines	
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma-Manitoulin	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Bryant, Michael (L)	St Paul's	
Caplan, David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC)	Oakville	Speaker / Président
Christopherson, David (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	
Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC)	Stoney Creek	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Cleary, John C. (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)	Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC)	Ottawa-Orléans	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Conway, Sean G. (L)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Cordiano, Joseph (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
DeFaria, Carl (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Dombrowsky, Leona (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Duncan, Dwight (L)	Windsor-St Clair	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)	Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)	Guelph-Wellington	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Galt, Doug (PC)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Gerretsen, John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	
Gill, Raminder (PC)	Bramalea-Gore- Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	
Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Parliamentary assistant to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au vice-premier ministre et ministre des Finances
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)	Nipissing	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John (PC)	Etobicoke North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)	Erie-Lincoln	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)	Burlington	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Johnson, Bert (PC)	Perth-Middlesex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kells, Morley (PC)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale-High Park	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / -Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity-Spadina	
Marland, Margaret (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martin, Tony (ND)	Sault Ste Marie	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Maves, Bart (PC)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mazzilli, Frank (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
McGuinty, Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lyn (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Aldershot	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Molinari, Tina R. (PC)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister responsible for Children / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire au premier ministre
Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Durham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	
Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Phillips, Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Pupatello, Sandra (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / -Ouest	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Smitherman, George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	
Spina, Joseph (PC)	Brampton Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Stewart, Hon / L'hon R. Gary (PC)	Peterborough	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint
Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail Parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire au solliciteur général
Tilson, David (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)	Markham	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)	Don Valley West / -Ouest Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Solicitor General / solliciteur général Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Wood, Bob (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services correctionnels
Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Willowdale	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Beaches-East York	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling, Gerard Kennedy,
Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt
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John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips, Joseph Spina
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General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
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Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese,
Norm Miller, Marilyn Mushinski
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
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Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Carl DeFaria, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Tina R. Molinari
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Ted Arnott, Marilyn Churley, Caroline Di Cocco,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Margaret Marland, Julia Munro,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona
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Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
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John Hastings, Shelley Martel, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Richard Patten
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
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Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells,
Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch,
Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Alternative fuel sources /
Sources de carburants de remplacement**

Chair / Président: Doug Galt
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Marie Bountrogianni
Marie Bountrogianni, James J. Bradley, Marilyn Churley, Doug
Galt, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,
John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Ernie Parsons
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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