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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 8 October 2002**

**Mardi 8 octobre 2002**

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

Tuesday 8 October 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 octobre 2002

*The House met at 1845.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RED LIGHT CAMERAS PILOT PROJECTS  
EXTENSION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA PROROGATION  
DES PROJETS PILOTES AYANT TRAIT  
AUX DISPOSITIFS PHOTOGRAPHIQUES  
RELIÉS AUX FEUX ROUGES

Mr Clement, on behalf of Mr Sterling, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 149, An Act to extend the red light cameras pilot projects to November 20, 2004 or for an indefinite period / Projet de loi 149, Loi visant à proroger jusqu'au 20 novembre 2004 ou indéfiniment les projets pilotes ayant trait aux dispositifs photographiques reliés aux feux rouges.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I am pleased to rise this evening and speak on the second reading of Bill 149 which, by the way, for the members watching, is a fairly large and very comprehensive bill. I'm sure that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We really needed the Minister of Health to announce that he was splitting his time with you.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Yes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Now, the member for Durham.

**Mr O'Toole:** I am very pleased to split my time with the member for Niagara Falls, Mr Maves, who I hope will be showing up some time later.

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre):** He's here already, isn't he?

**Mr O'Toole:** He's not here just yet, but he's certainly en route. It's my understanding—

**The Acting Speaker:** We're having a little bit of difficulty this evening. You can't split your time. It's the Minister of Health who is splitting his time with you. He could have split it with other people.

**Hon Mr Clement:** I'd be happy to note that I'll be splitting my time, subject to the approval of the House, of course, with the member for Durham and the member for Niagara Falls.

**The Acting Speaker:** All right. Now the member for Durham, who will be splitting his time with the member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr O'Toole:** I thought I was splitting my time with the Minister of Health, but—

**Mr Sampson:** I was worried that the whole justice system was going to come crashing down.

**Mr O'Toole:** It could come to a screaming halt.

I do want to make some important comments with respect to the broader issue of road safety. I know this government takes the issue of road safety as very interesting and it's pleased to recognize that the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Extension Act, 2002, is the name of the bill. The bill was introduced before our summer recess last June. The purpose of the legislation is to extend the red light camera pilot project for an additional two years, until November 2004. Ontario has the safest roads in Canada and the second-safest in North America. The legislation before us today would build on Ontario's strong record of road safety.

The proposed legislation would amend the provisions of the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Act, 1998, which was passed by the Legislature in December 1998. Under the legislation, the province authorized municipalities to install and operate red light cameras at intersections within their respective jurisdictions. I do have a number of comments, and I always like to drive the debate down to my own riding of Durham. Throughout my comments this evening I'll be mentioning a number of people who take road safety as a very serious matter.

The legislation provided for a pilot for two years. However, it now appears that the municipalities have indicated they would like to have more time to assess this technology and its effectiveness. Five of the six municipalities have formally asked the government to extend the pilot project. We as a government co-operate with the municipalities, and that's clear by Minister Sterling's initiative here.

Under the draft legislation we are currently considering, the government is proposing a two-year extension of the red light camera pilot project. These pilots have been underway in six municipalities over the past two years. They're designed to test the effectiveness of red light cameras at major intersections as a deterrent to drivers who run red lights, which everyone in this House believes is unacceptable.

1850

Six municipalities are participating in these pilot projects. They are, for the record, the cities of Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa, and the regional municipalities of Peel, Halton and Waterloo.

I think it's important to point out that, together with the province, these municipalities have shown tremendous leadership in exploring innovative approaches to enforcing our traffic laws. On behalf of the government, I would like to commend them for their efforts as outstanding road safety partners.

We know that many efforts and approaches are needed to improve safety on our roads. Everyone should take the initiative. That is why, in addition to the red light camera pilot project, the government also asked the participating municipalities to increase their efforts at traditional enforcement mechanisms. As a result, the police service in each municipality undertook special enforcement blitzes to discourage drivers from running red lights. The campaigns were required to last a minimum of 20 hours a year for each year the pilot projects were carried out. The goal here was to give us data as a basis for comparing the effectiveness of red light cameras, traditional enforcement mechanisms and a combination of the two. We're trying to find the best practices to have the safest roads in the world.

By giving the municipalities another two years to study the effectiveness of red light cameras, this proposed legislation would have a significant impact on the future of road safety in Ontario and would certainly be a leading example for the rest of Canada. Certainly, after four years, we will be in a much better position to assess the results of the project which I have described, and with those results, the potential benefits of red light cameras into the future.

Preliminary data show a 40% reduction in red light violations at the test sites. While these results are only preliminary, they suggest that red light cameras may also significantly reduce other potential road safety hazards. They also suggest that it is well worth our while to extend the pilot project for a further 24 months.

All told, the municipalities rotated 18 cameras through a total of 70 intersections. Increased police enforcement took place at an additional 30 intersections in the six jurisdictions.

With an average of just 1.1 road fatalities a year for every 10,000 licensed drivers, Ontario has the lowest fatality rate in Canada and the second-lowest in North America. That deserves your attention, and it deserves the support of this House.

Ontario can be proud of its outstanding record in road safety—and I commend our Minister of Transportation, Norm Sterling, for introducing this comprehensive legislation.

Our government will continue to place a high priority on maintaining the province's excellent record in road safety, while continuing to work for safer roads in the future. This is a relentless campaign for road safety. Red light cameras may have an important role to play in the future of road safety as well. Extending the red light pilot project that has been underway for the past two years will help us to determine what their role should be going into the future.

The bill would respond to the municipalities' requests by letting the pilot projects continue until November 20, 2004. If evaluation shows red light cameras are an effective tool, this legislation contains a provision for repealing the deadline for completing the pilot project before November 20, 2004, through an order in council. In effect, that would make this legislation permanent.

The proposed legislation is designed to improve road safety, safety on our roads generally and driver attitude toward red lights. Ultimately, it would help us save lives. So I would ask my colleagues in the Legislature to join with me and our government by supporting this very important initiative.

When I work with the local police services in my riding of Durham, I'm continually amazed by the volunteer participation in projects which I want to speak about for a moment. Those projects are Clarington Roadwatch and also Scugog Roadwatch, and I believe there's one in almost every municipality in Durham. With your indulgence, I'll read the names of these volunteer participants on the Roadwatch committees, and I thank them for their service: Constable Keith Richards, John Bate, Evylin Stroud, Lorna Lamers, Cheryl Reynolds, Ron Radcliffe, John Bird—not to be confused with John Baird—Annette Kukemueller, June Dey, Sandy Lyall, Karen McCauley, Ron Baker—who's the traffic coordinator for the municipality of Clarington—Gail Gosleigh, Christina Munday, Diane Serra and John Wilson. These are the members of the Clarington Roadwatch committee.

For those viewing, Roadwatch is an implemented program in each municipality where you and I, as drivers on the road, have a role to play in policing safety on our roads. If you notice someone violating the Highway Traffic Act, or any other traffic violation—a red light, not stopping at an intersection and other violations—simply take down the number and deposit it in a box or a collection point for the Roadwatch program, which is widely advertised in the area. That letter and that box of information are sent to the police—the Durham Regional Police in this case. They look up the driver's record and also send them a notice of the violations of which they've been observed to be in non-compliance. On one or two or three of these violations, they eventually have to attend an interview. But it's a good reminder for those who can't tolerate those people who are indifferent to the rules of the road, and also a reminder to those who are violating the rules themselves.

I also want to mention the Scugog Roadwatch. Scugog's main municipal area is Port Perry. There's Blackstock and Nestleton and other areas very close to Uxbridge. It's a rapidly growing, beautiful community in my riding of Durham, and the chair there is Fred Heap; the secretary, Bill Craning; former regional councillor Ken Gadsden, who's now retired; his wife, Margo Gadsden; Ken Carruthers; George Costain; Jean Costain; Marion Lee; and Constable Lee Smith.

Again, Roadwatch is but one initiative that I believe each of us can take an active role in in making our roads

safer, not just in Ontario but in setting a good example for our children and young people.

Working in co-operation throughout the Durham region, I want to put on the record the important work and contribution by the Durham Regional Police, led by Chief Kevin McAlpine, Inspector Tom Cameron, Staff Sergeant Alan Mack, Bowmanville Constable Pat Burke, Newcastle Constable Tom Martin, rural Constable Greg Knopp, Courtice Constable Peri Naccarato, Port Perry Inspector Mike Ewles, Inspector Dietmar Schoenrock, Oshawa Inspector Bob Chapman, and Doug Cavanaugh, president of the Durham Regional Police Association. Doug is the new police association president, and I believe he is a person I intend to be meeting shortly and have met with in the last while.

Durham Regional Police, and I believe the OPP as well as our Minister of Transportation, like all of us here today, want to have the safest roads for our children and for all the citizens of our ridings and, of course, this great province of Ontario.

At this point in time, with the very few minutes I have left, I relinquish the floor to my good friend Mr Maves, and hope that everyone will support this important Bill 149.

**Hon Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if the members present would consider unanimous consent to allow the member from Parry Sound to speak following the member from Niagara Falls.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Galt has asked unanimous consent that the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka be included in this leadoff speech. Agreed? Agreed.

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**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I rise today to support the second reading of the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Extension Act, 2002. As my colleagues will recall, the Minister of Transportation introduced this bill for first reading at the end of June, just before we broke for the summer recess.

The latest statistics show that Ontario has the safest roads in Canada and the second-safest in North America. The proposed legislation before us today would build on our impressive road safety record and on the success of the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Act, 1998, which was passed in this Legislature in December 1998. That legislation, you will recall, authorized several municipalities in the province to install and operate red light cameras at selected intersections for a trial period of two years.

Under the proposed bill, the House would authorize a two-year extension of the pilot projects that have been underway in six municipalities over the past two years. Those projects are designed to test the effectiveness of red light cameras at high-risk intersections in deterring drivers from running red lights. This bill would allow the pilot projects to continue until November 20, 2004.

As I mentioned, Ontario already has an outstanding road safety record. We're very proud of that record. Our roads are the safest in Canada, and the second-safest in

all of North America. I want to reiterate so the people at home realize that. It's an impressive statistic. Our government is proud of this record, but we also recognize there is always room to improve. Maintaining the province's excellent record in road safety will continue to be one of our top priorities, and improving the safety even further of Ontario's roads is the goal of this bill.

I think it is important to point out that red light running is a significant cause of fatalities in Ontario. Based on highway traffic data for the year 2000, red light running accounted for more than 7,000 collisions and more than 3% of all traffic-related fatalities.

From the same data, we also know that at municipal intersections in the province, almost one quarter of all collisions occur at intersections where there are traffic signals, and more than 14% of those collisions can be attributed directly to drivers who run red lights.

The sad fact is that almost half of all deaths at municipal intersections that have traffic signals are caused by drivers who run the red light. Clearly, we must continue our efforts to improve driver behaviour by reducing and eventually eliminating this dangerous and irresponsible practice.

The annual cost of collisions in Ontario has been estimated at approximately \$9 billion. And the cost of red light running, including hospital bills and property damage, has been estimated at close to \$300 million. Those costs are significant. But we cannot put a price on the pain and suffering that are caused to thousands of people who are injured in collisions each year, nor can we put a price on the pain and suffering of those who lose their loved ones in a collision with a driver who runs a red light.

As I have already mentioned, the legislation authorizing municipalities to implement a red light camera enforcement pilot project was passed in December 1998. The legislation called for a two-year pilot period during which participating municipalities would evaluate the effectiveness of red light cameras in preventing collisions at intersections.

Six municipalities decided to participate in the pilot projects. They are the cities of Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa, and the regional municipalities of Peel, Halton and Waterloo. Over the past two years, these municipalities have taken a lead role in implementing red light camera pilot projects.

All stakeholders believe that a concerted effort is required to improve driver behaviour and that it will take a combination of enforcement and education measures to end red light running. As a result, in addition to undertaking the red light camera pilot projects, the participating municipalities were asked to step up their traditional enforcement methods.

In each participating municipality, local police conducted traditional enforcement blitzes on red light running for at least 20 hours during each year of the pilot project. The idea here was to have a basis for evaluating the effects of increased enforcement and the operation of red light cameras.

Under the existing legislation, the red light camera pilot projects are scheduled to end on November 20 of this year. However, five of the six participating municipalities have formally asked the province to extend the legislation and allow the pilot projects to continue for another two years.

The draft legislation currently before us responds to the municipalities' requests to extend the red light camera pilot projects for a further two years. This additional period would enable them to gather more information on the effectiveness of red light cameras as a deterrent to drivers who run red lights.

In terms of the reaction to the projects so far, it would appear that the public is generally very supportive of red light cameras. A recent Environics study indicated that red light cameras are supported by some 55% of all Canadians. Here in Ontario, however, support was much higher, at 84%.

I would also point out that a number of other transportation stakeholders, including the Canadian Automobile Association and the Canada Safety Council, have also expressed their support for extending the red light camera pilot projects.

As I said earlier, Ontario currently has the safest roads in Canada, and improving intersection safety represents an important part of our government's broader efforts to reduce aggressive driving throughout the province. Traffic statistics and common sense tell us that drivers who disobey red light signals pose a serious hazard to other road users and to themselves.

Ultimately, red light running needs to be addressed through a combination of public awareness, vigilant enforcement and effective legislation, all of which are geared to changing driver behaviour. While the government continues to believe that traditional police enforcement measures represent a highly effective means of targeting drivers who run red lights, we want to give our municipal partners a chance to test and evaluate this additional tool for reducing red light running.

As a result, the government is proposing legislation that would extend the red light camera pilot projects for a further two years. That extension would give us a larger database to assess the effectiveness of red light cameras in enforcement.

I have spoken to some of the representatives of the municipalities that have had red light cameras and they feel that they need this two years to gather more data and they need the time to look at the current data they've collected over the past two years to determine the actual effectiveness of red light cameras. By drawing on that enhanced data, we can better decide on the extent to which this technology should be used in the future.

I don't know if red light cameras are the answer. I know that there are other jurisdictions around the world that attempt to use different technologies: red light cameras and speed cameras on the road. I know that in London you feel like you're being watched. Every block that you go you see a camera on the road somewhere. I don't know if that is the answer, and I think the

municipalities that have run the pilot projects with the red light cameras believe they've been effective to date. But, as I said, they're unsure as to the total effectiveness of the red light cameras. We're unsure and other municipalities that may be interested in red light cameras are unsure if they want to move there. So I think this step with this bill, to extend red light cameras in those five jurisdictions for two more years, is a wise one. Unfortunately, I wish it didn't take legislation to do that, but it does. So we're here tonight to pass this legislation. I'm going to support it. I believe my colleagues on all sides of the floor will support it.

Now I'm going to turn over my remaining time to the member from Parry Sound—whose riding is actually called Parry Sound-Muskoka—the good Mr Miller.

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Thank you to the members of the Legislature for unanimous consent to allow me to speak. I join the members from Durham and Niagara Falls this evening in talking about the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Extension Act, 2002.

Mr Speaker, as I went by, you mentioned that you didn't think there were any traffic lights in the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, but I can assure you we do actually have traffic lights, although I do remember a time when I was growing up in my town of Bracebridge when there wasn't a single traffic light there. It was a big deal when we got our first traffic light. But things have been booming in the riding of late, so we have quite a few traffic lights now.

This bill represents an important provincial initiative in the area of road safety. It was introduced last June by the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Norm Sterling, and our government would like to see it passed early in this session.

#### 1910

The proposed legislation is designed to amend some of the provisions of the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Act, 1998. That statute was approved by this legislation in December 1998. Its provisions authorize municipalities to install and operate cameras at intersections as a tool to help reduce red light running. The act provided municipalities with the authority to conduct red light camera pilot projects for a two-year period. The participating municipalities are conducting a study to assess the effectiveness of red light cameras at high-risk intersections as a deterrent to drivers who run red lights.

Under the proposed bill, the pilot projects would be extended for another two years, until November 2004. However, the bill also provides that the date when the pilot projects are scheduled to end could be repealed by order in council. If red light cameras are deemed effective in reducing red light running, the red light camera legislation would become permanent.

As the members know, Ontario has made great strides in road safety. We have the best road safety record in Canada and the second-best in North America. Our government is proud of this record, and we have worked hard with our partners to earn it. We have implemented

some of the toughest road safety laws anywhere in the world. At the same time, we have implemented a comprehensive action plan for road safety.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Speaker: I would like to seek unanimous consent at this very moment to request the Sergeant at Arms go out and find a single Liberal.

**The Acting Speaker:** I heard a no.

**Mr Miller:** I'm sure we'll find a Liberal somewhere.

We have proven that graduated licensing of new drivers not only works but it also can and does save lives.

Over the past few years, our government has made a consistent effort to improve driver education and awareness. One of the most important messages we've tried to convey is that all drivers need to exercise extreme caution when they are entering and crossing through intersections. These education efforts are important, but we also recognize that education alone is not enough, because it takes many years to change long-term driving habits.

As a result, we have also stepped up our efforts to enforce road safety. As I am sure all members are aware, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ontario Provincial Police team up regularly on special enforcement campaigns, everything from drinking and driving to commercial truck safety. Recently, fatigue is the new focus that the OPP is starting to focus on, to try to raise awareness of driver fatigue. In know in my area, there is the Driver Reviver pilot project that was started this summer just north of Huntsville by Constable Harry Rawluk of the OPP. Of course the government and the police can't do this alone. We in Ontario are fortunate to have a wide range of committed road safety partners.

The province also took action in August 1998 to bring in stiffer penalties under the Highway Traffic Act for drivers who run red and amber lights. We increased the fine for running a red light from a minimum fine of \$60 to a minimum fine of \$150.

Red light running is a dangerous and irresponsible practice. It is also a significant cause of injuries and deaths on Ontario's roads. In the year 2000, for example, red light running accounted for almost 3% of all collisions and a total of 26 traffic-related fatalities. Some 23.7% of all collisions at municipal intersections happen at intersections with traffic lights. Of these crashes, a significant number are caused by red light running. In fact, in the year 2000 alone, 48% of deaths at municipal intersections with traffic signals were caused by red light runners.

It is clear we need to work harder to change this aspect of driver behaviour. It is also clear that, left unchanged, that behaviour will continue to have huge social, economic and emotional costs.

Every year, collisions in Ontario occur at a tremendous cost to our society. In fact, this cost was previously estimated at \$9 billion. When you factor in the cost of hospital bills and the damage to personal property, the cost of red light running is reckoned to be about

\$300 million per year. That's a lot of money, but certainly you can put no price on the injuries and deaths that occur as a result of red light running.

Because of this, the six municipalities currently participating in the pilot projects asked the province to enable them to test red light cameras. The province responded by passing legislation allowing a two-year pilot project. The six participating municipalities are the cities of Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa, and the regional municipalities of Peel, Halton and Waterloo.

In addition to piloting the red light cameras, the six municipalities have also conducted a number of enforcement blitzes on local roads in co-operation with local police. The goal of this dual approach is to help determine the effectiveness of red light cameras compared to increased traditional enforcement.

The initial results of the red light camera projects are promising, but the municipalities feel they need a longer period to evaluate this technology. Under the existing legislation, the red light camera pilot projects are scheduled to end on November 20 of this year. Five of the six municipalities have asked the government for a two-year extension on these pilot projects. The government is seeking the Legislature's approval to let the red light camera projects run for another two years. Under the proposed legislation, we would extend the end date of the projects to November 20, 2004. This extension would respond directly to the municipalities' requests, and it would give them more information and more time to assess the effectiveness of the cameras as a deterrent to red light runners.

Last March, the first report was released. The preliminary data suggest that there has been a 40% decrease in red-light-running violations at intersections where the cameras were installed. That's quite a significant decrease. While these are only preliminary results, the province believes they show enough promise to warrant the continuation of the pilot projects for another two years so more evaluation can be done.

I referred earlier to Ontario's excellent road safety record and I suggested that the government will continue working with other levels of government, as well as our transportation safety partners, to improve the safety of our roads. In particular, we will continue working to reduce aggressive driving in all forms, including the running of red lights. We know that when drivers disobey traffic signals, costly and tragic collisions are often the result. We need to reduce and eventually eliminate this behaviour, to protect all road users and to save lives.

The proposed bill would give Ontario more data on the effectiveness of red light cameras, and that data would help us assess this potentially beneficial technology more effectively so we can determine where it fits in our future road safety plans.

I would like to conclude my remarks today by urging my fellow members to join me in supporting the prospect of safer roads in the future by giving their unqualified support to the bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I rise to comment on what the members on the government side said about Bill 149, the Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Extension Act, 2002.

I think this is not only a vindication of Mike Colle but also an admission on the part of the government that in fact his red light bill, the act he introduced, was excellent legislation. I remember at the time the nays on the other side, the hoots and the screams, and all of a sudden what we have is his act implemented by the government. Again, another idea from the Liberals which is taken by the government and used effectively. We don't mind that. In fact, we're getting rather used to it, and it's fine.

The bill was Bill 20. It was introduced by Mike Colle.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** That just shows how open-minded we are.

**Mr Bartolucci:** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound is making some noises. This is the same guy who wants to be included in the northern health travel grant because he thinks Owen Sound is in northern Ontario. That says much for the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

I want to commend Mike Colle. It was indeed his initiative which caused the government to act. This act saves lives, there's absolutely no question, and cuts down on carnage in the streets of Toronto. But you know what? It would be nice if for once the government stood up and said, "We'd like to commend the member, Mike Colle, who was interested enough to put forth good legislation." It should be in his name. It isn't. He understands the politics of the situation. The reality is you want to extend something that Mike Colle introduced.

I say congratulations to Mike Colle and to this government for wanting to extend his idea.

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**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** Three quick things about Bill 149 and the government's comments: first of all, I don't say this very often because of all the legislation you've taken out of this place and put into regulations, which means it doesn't see the light of day, but I have to tell you that in my opinion, it is not the best use of this Legislature that we actually have to have a law passed to extend a pilot project. Of all the powers that you've given to the Executive Council, it seems to me that this would be pretty straightforward to give to the Minister of Transportation, with a notification in the Gazette that indeed a regulation had been passed saying you're going to extend the pilot. To take up the time of this place—we have crises in health care and education, the economy is going in the ditch, all kinds of concerns about whether there's going to be a war or not, and here we are having to pass a law. That's the first point. I don't think this issue justifies passing a law. Therefore, I think when you originally framed the law, this extension should have been allowed by regulation.

Second, there's a word that I can't use, but what it means is you say one thing and do another. You made a big deal about getting rid of photo radar because it was a populist thing to do, but at the end of the day, that's what

this is. I didn't hear any of the members speak to that fact. My colleagues in the Liberal Party are correct: you had to be dragged kicking and screaming; you wouldn't let municipalities do this. Why? Because you didn't want to be called the "H" word; because you knew exactly what this was. This is saying one thing and doing another. There's an "H" word, and we can't use that word, but that's why you didn't want to allow it. Eventually, under public pressure, you did. But it doesn't remove the fact that you could save lives on the QEW and on other major highways if you brought photo radar back. There's no difference between this and photo radar except politics.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to comment and get involved in this debate. Certainly, this is not about politics; this is about safety. It's the municipalities that have participated in the red light camera pilot project that requested the province to extend this legislation. The request and the proposal in this legislation would be until November 20, 2004. It's at the request of municipalities. This is a safety issue, and really it allows the province to evaluate the success of this particular pilot project.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Tascona:** Thank you, Mr House leader. The House leader is helping me here.

As we know, the municipalities with respect to this particular issue are Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Peel and Waterloo, fairly large municipalities. This is a serious issue dealing with people running red lights and issues with respect to people making right turns where they're not supposed to make right turns and they see a red light. There really is a difficult issue, in terms of safety, with respect to this province and in terms of the way things are handled, especially for young children, in terms of their expectation of whether they can cross the road or cars going into intersections. This becomes a very dangerous environment.

The fact of the matter is this is not a political issue. Ownership of this issue is strictly in the safety of what we can provide through this legislation. So the legislation is going to be extended for two years, and it's at the request of the municipalities.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** It's quite obvious that this enormous bill of three quarters of a page—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You read it?

**Mr Patten:** Yes, I did, completely—essentially says that at the request of the municipalities we will extend the time for them to study and consider more thoroughly, even though we have strong indications so far, the data related to the significance of this program.

I want to add my voice to that of the member for Sudbury, who congratulated our friend Mike Colle, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, for putting it forward, and he more than put it forward. I recall back in 1998—for those of you who know Ottawa, the King Edward-Rideau intersection is the one area where major trucks come into and leave the city. It has caused several deaths



inordinate to the numeric traffic, but the volume of major trucks in particular. One of the families that were there—Roger Laporte, who has a horticultural nursery, lost his son on that corner. He and his wife were there to talk to other people to suggest that this kind of a device would be helpful in stopping people from running red lights. The campaign certainly wasn't limited to Ottawa; it was in Toronto and Hamilton.

I want to applaud Mike for his efforts on that score. The government picked up and moved a bill, and I acknowledge that they did so and they're doing so again. But it would be nice to hear from them from time to time to acknowledge the original creator of the concept and the original leader in this particular House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I want to thank all those who spoke before, on both sides of the House. I certainly want to thank my colleagues the member for Sudbury and the member for Ottawa Centre for those kind words about the work that was done in getting this legislation to become a reality.

The most important thing here today is that this shouldn't have required legislation; it should have been an automatic trigger in the original legislation. But I guess nothing is perfect, and I certainly welcome the fact that the pilot project has been extended.

No matter whether you're in the provincial or federal House, we can't forget that old adage from Tip O'Neill: everything that is important comes from a local base. Sometimes I talk to politicians, federally and provincially, and they say, "That's a local matter. I don't want to deal with traffic safety. Leave it with the local police, council or mayor." But as provincial lawmakers, I don't think we can forget the fact that the safety of people walking, using transit or motor vehicles across this province, be it in big cities, small towns or hamlets, or on our provincial highways, is of utmost concern to this Legislature. If you ask people what is the most dangerous thing they do every day of their lives, they will all tell you it is getting into their cars.

There isn't enough attention paid to safety on our roads and streets. There are literally millions of dollars lost in extra health care, damage to property and vehicles, as a result of car accidents which occur much too frequently. I was happy to see that Ontario statistics for car accidents and collisions were actually some of the lowest in Canada, which was very welcome. That's something I think we sometimes gloss over, but investing in safety and making laws that make our streets safer are critical roles that we have in this Legislature.

What prompted me to get involved in promoting this concept of adding cameras at intersections was that in my riding at that time, at the St Clair-Dufferin intersection, there were nine people waiting for a streetcar, and a car at high speed ran up on the safety island, the streetcar island, after running a red light. It wasn't so much even the fact of the tragic thing—there was one person killed and six or seven people badly injured—the fact is that the person who ran the red light essentially got off with a

slap on the wrist. I think the fine was something like \$300. They didn't even lose their licence. The people in my community, in the city of Toronto at that time, asked me if there was anything that could be done, because they were sick and tired of seeing people disobey traffic signals. They were routinely running these lights, running the orange into the red, but mostly running the red, at that intersection. They asked if there was anything we could do.

**1930**

I approached the Metropolitan Toronto police and the metropolitan transportation experts and asked them if there was any potential way of averting these tragic accidents in the future. They looked at a variety of different measures. Some people suggested more police at the intersections. I remember talking to Chief Julian Fantino, at the time, and Deputy Chief Boyd, who said, "Listen, we cannot babysit the 1,500 intersections in Toronto that have lights. We can't be there."

The police also told me that even if they were at the intersection when the infraction occurred and the person ran the red light, when they went to court to try to testify to the fact that person ran the red light, invariably the charge would be thrown out of court, because it was almost impossible to verify the testimony of even a police officer who was at the intersection and for his testimony to be taken seriously. The defence lawyer would invariably talk about a thousand different things that might have happened in terms of the light, the angle, the other people, the obstruction.

The police in Toronto and Ottawa to whom I talked said they were frustrated spending days and days in court trying to get a red light runner convicted of a fine when they were witnesses, and they could never do it. They said it was rare that a police officer's testimony, or anybody's testimony, would ever be taken into account when a person ran a red light. In essence, these red light runners were getting away with it, because they knew they could get away with it in court.

The police were very supportive of using this technology to try to make their job easier, but also to protect and save lives. The police said they welcomed technology as long as they could be part of the stakeholder process in coming up with the technology. So they were part of it. They agreed that this would enhance their work and would also act as a deterrent.

This is the other aspect of this technology in that these red light cameras are put at the most dangerous high-collision intersections in a city or municipality. They are the ones the police already know. In some cases, these accidents and these red light runners have been going through these intersections sometimes for 10 or 15 years and nothing has been done. So the police, right off the bat, knew the intersections. They said, "We know where we would put them. We've got a list. You can put them up tomorrow. We know where they run red lights all day long." This is how bad it was getting.

So a pedestrian coming the other way would assume they could cross at the green. But no assumption could be

made, because people were routinely running—not even on the orange; they were entering the intersection when it was already red. This is how bad it was getting, and this is how bad it still is at certain intersections.

I should mention that some of these intersections which were the scenes of habitual red light runners in the city of Toronto were Dufferin and Finch, Don Mills Road and Sheppard, Bayview and Eglinton, Finch and Signet, Jane and Finch, Leslie Street and Sheppard, Keele and Wilson, Yonge Street and Steeles, Don Mills and Eglinton, Jarvis and Lakeshore Road. These were constant problems for the police, so the police welcomed anything that could deter these people disobeying the law on a routine basis and getting away with it. The tragedy of it was that people were getting hurt and there were, as I said, serious accidents continually at these intersections.

Then, I found out that not only was this the case in Toronto, but it was the case in almost every major municipality. We went to Hamilton and had meetings in Hamilton with city councillors and the police there. They said there were two or three major intersections in Hamilton where it was a problem. The same thing in York region, where there is a horrendously dangerous intersection at Weston Road and number 7. At Weston Road and number 7 in York region, it wasn't only cars habitually running red lights, but it was also huge trucks routinely running red lights. So you almost took your life in your own hands if you tried to cross as a pedestrian at Weston Road and number 7.

Also in Ottawa, as my colleague Richard Patten said, there was an extremely dangerous intersection at Rideau and King Edward, and that was another intersection with a lot of trucks routinely running the red light. The police had tried time and time again with all kinds of extra surveillance etc; they'd come right back the next day and run more red lights. So I know in Ottawa they certainly were one of the leading municipalities in advocating the red light technology. I think it was Councillor Diane Holmes from Ottawa, who was on regional council at the time too, who was a great advocate of red light cameras in the city of Ottawa. That's why Ottawa has them.

My colleague Jean-Marc Lalonde was there when we went into the area of Cumberland and Orleans, where there had been a horrific accident; one of Mr Lalonde's constituents was killed by a red light runner, a young, vibrant man by the name of Michel Laporte, who was a member of a long-established family in Cumberland-Orleans. The father, Mr Roger Laporte, was so distraught that his son was on his way to work and was hit and killed at an intersection by a red light runner. Then, when Mr Laporte went to court, he was even more distraught because the person who was convicted of careless driving, or whatever it was, basically got off with a slap on the wrist. This person had a record of being previously caught for driving carelessly and for running red lights. Yet that person was still with his driver's licence, was still driving carelessly.

Mr Laporte, the father of the young man who was killed, Michel Laporte, was just at his wits' end and had

contacted Mr Lalonde, the member for the area, and said, "Is there anything that can be done? I don't want my son's life to be lost in vain." He said how can it be possible that this individual still had a driver's licence, how can it be possible that all the courts could give him is a slap on the wrist, and how many more people have to die before lawmakers, politicians do something. I remember Mr Laporte even came all the way to Toronto, he was so upset. At that time we were asking Premier Harris to adopt my private member's bill, and he was just beside himself when he heard that Mr Harris, the Premier at the time, was not interested in such legislation and thought it wasn't necessary etc.

It was through the efforts of people like Mr Laporte, who had to tragically lose his son through this, that more and more people became aware of this blight, this very dangerous red light running which was endangering the lives of innocent motorists and pedestrians right across this province, especially in some of our larger cities.

#### 1940

The thing that was most apparent in looking at this type of technology was that in many other jurisdictions this type of technology was working very well. I did a lot of searching on the Internet and talking to people by phone in Australia, where the technology was in place for over 15 years. In cities like Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney they used the red light cameras very effectively and they were saying that in some instances the amount of red light running was cut down anywhere from 33% to 70%. I also talked to people in London, England, where they use the technology, Israel, some parts of Arizona, New York state and parts of Pennsylvania. So this technology was essentially very established.

It's just the use of high-resolution cameras. These high-resolution cameras take a picture of the signal and at the same time they take a picture of the licence plate. So there is no doubt that the technology is able to capture the car entering the intersection on red and it clearly shows the licence plate. It's that definite in terms of its resolution.

Once the photo is taken and recorded on the tape, it is then viewed by local traffic authorities or the police. Then the people who are caught running the red—and I'm not talking about people who enter the intersection on orange but people who enter the intersection on red—are therefore sent a fine. The fines can range up to \$120 if you're caught entering an intersection on red and recorded on camera.

This kind of technology, I feel, is part of the new generation of solutions to making our roads, our highways, our streets safer. As you know, Mr Speaker, it's not as challenging perhaps—or maybe it is challenging; I'm just saying in terms of the amount of road rage and traffic gridlock we witness in southern Ontario or the GTA compared to Manitoulin. I'm sure you have your cases of road rage there too.

It is just getting so intense on our roads. People are so anxious because there is more and more traffic, more and more gridlock, more and more frustration on the roads.

People are weaving in and out, trying to get to work or to an appointment. It gets to the point where sometimes people forget the fact that they are behind a vehicle at such high speed that they could do serious damage to themselves and others. As we all witness it, those of us who are in our cars, we do get very upset, especially when we're in a hurry or late, and we sometimes behave as we shouldn't. That's what sometimes perpetrates a lot of this running of lights, high speed and erratic driving.

As our roads become more and more tied up with gridlock, as more and more frustration and road rage builds up, I think the pressure on the provincial government or municipal governments to make our roads safer is going to have to increase.

Right now the police do an outstanding job, but the police cannot be everywhere. As many police officers told me, "Listen, I can't afford to be chasing traffic violations all day, because I've got such a workload in terms of break-and-enters, people selling crack cocaine or domestic violence. I wish I had more time to be on the roads, to be on the highways, to try and catch some of these people who are risking their lives and the lives of others, but the police resources are limited." I think that the more technological devices we can use to enhance, support and supplement what the police are doing, the safer our roads will be.

I think not only was this technology's advent long overdue; we should be looking at all kinds of other technological aids in terms of traffic control. Right now, we essentially do some innovative things on the 401 and major highways where we have digital signs which indicate that traffic is snarled up ahead etc, but we don't really do enough to manage our roads and the flow of traffic. It is all done haphazardly, accidentally, and there isn't enough of a systematic, comprehensive approach to traffic management. That's why something like this technology is, as I said, part of a whole series of strategies we could use to make our roads safer. In fact in many cases it helps our traffic move more smoothly so that we don't build up anxiety in people right across this province, and we are.

The startling statistics demonstrate that half of the collisions that occur on our highways occur at intersections. If there's a place where you're in great danger when driving a car, it's at an intersection. That's when you have the turning of cars and sometimes people trying to get through an intersection, with or without lights, at high speed. Intersections are very vulnerable places. This is why, again, I think this technology doesn't solve all of our problems caused by careless and reckless drivers, but it does act as a deterrent. It acts to basically remind us that we have to obey the signals. Not enough people obey the signals. We all, I guess, think that we can go a little faster. We think we can perhaps go on the orange all the time. We're always on the run. That's why, I think, if they know that there are cameras there, we've got an opportunity perhaps to remind people that running lights or speeding can cost you in the pocketbook.

The good thing about this project too is that it also allows different municipalities to perhaps see how this technology works. I know the people at the transportation department of Toronto are very happy with the results they've seen. They want to continue it, as did the other municipalities. I guess one of the sources of dismay they have is that they constantly need to get provincial authority for this kind of thing. Many municipalities say, "We are municipalities of 400,000-plus," like Hamilton or Ottawa, "and growing ever faster, with 600,000," and Toronto. They still have to go on bended knee to Queen's Park asking to put this kind of technology in their cities. Really, I think the time has come for this provincial government to allow cities that have good ideas about making their streets safer to implement such technologies rather than having to come to Queen's Park all the time for permission to do this. I think it's about time municipalities that have done their research get the freedom to basically try new, innovative technologies, because they know what's best for their streets. They know what's best for safety in their jurisdiction, yet they have to get Queen's Park's permission.

#### 1950

We spent about three years, I guess, trying to get Queen's Park to approve this technology as a pilot project, and now even the extension of the pilot project, as the member from Hamilton said, has to come back here for more approval. I think it is about time this government and this Ministry of Transportation started to treat some municipalities as mature government jurisdictions. Instead, it keeps on babysitting them and treating them as if they don't know what they're doing.

I think in many cases in terms of road safety, some of our municipalities have better expertise than the province has. The province has the whole province to take care of whereas the traffic engineers, the police forces, the transportation professionals in municipalities know first-hand what's best for their intersections or their streets or their municipality. They have that daily experience, rather than the province imposing some kind of requirement or solution from on high, when they know very little about the daily challenges in a city, a town or a village.

In this case, we are still at the stage where municipalities like Hamilton and Toronto have to constantly come back here for more approvals to continue this project. I still haven't had an explanation why we need this constant approval by Queen's Park for everything. They talk about Big Brother. Well, I think Big Brother is here at Queen's Park.

It's also interesting that despite the red light cameras, people are still running red lights. In the year 2001, the Toronto pilot project caught 9,000 motorists running red lights on camera. That was in Toronto, over a one-year period. They still do it even though the red light cameras are there. But the number of red-light-running incidents has been reduced and the number of serious collisions has been reduced. That's why people in Halton region, for instance—in fact, Halton is the only one that has not asked for an extension. I'm not sure why. In many cases

perhaps it's a matter of financing etc, but the other municipalities have asked for an extension. I was glad to see that at least the minister agreed to have an extension of this legislation so that the other municipalities can continue to use this program and iron out perhaps the technical adjustments that have to be made.

There was only one suggestion I made to transportation officials about this technology. I thought it wouldn't hurt if at certain red light intersections where the cameras are, you could also try in some cases a warning sign in advance. In other words, about 100 metres before you come to the intersection, why not have in some cases even a blatant warning sign that says, "You are entering a red light camera intersection," or "Beware. Slow down." I think that alone would be a bit of a deterrent and would make people slow down as they entered the intersection. I don't see why they couldn't try that at a few intersections.

As you know, these cameras can cost up to \$90,000 each. They are extremely sensitive, extremely sophisticated, but the amount of money collected in tickets pays for the price of the technology—the cameras, the film and the maintenance. So the cameras pay for themselves.

**Interjection:** How much are the cameras?

**Mr Colle:** It's \$90,000 a camera.

What I've said too is, what is the cost of a serious collision at an intersection when a car gets T-boned? What is the cost of a person, a loved one, a child or someone getting seriously injured in an intersection because of red light runners. I think the cost is worth it. It's something that definitely works, as even the pilot projects have proven. People all across the GTA and Ottawa certainly think the project is worth keeping and perhaps, in one way or another, could be expanded if the government allowed other municipalities to do this kind of technological safety enhancement without going to Queen's Park all the time.

The other aspect of this bill also reminds us that there are so many things we could be doing to educate not only adult drivers but young children and teenagers about road safety. You get your driver's licence and you're never really asked to look at the issue of safety or safe driving again. It's almost automatic that you keep your licence. A lot of young people who get their licences don't realize that it is a privilege and a right combined to drive a car. If you turn on a television or radio station, there are very few reminders given to us about the responsibility of driving on our roads and highways. We're all human and we all forget about safety.

I know there was a doctor who recently suggested that people who were in accidents where it was proven they didn't have a seat belt on should perhaps pay some of the medical costs of the accident. The doctor worked in emergency rooms where he saw people coming in who wouldn't been considered an emergency and wouldn't have required life-saving surgery if they'd had their seat belts on. Every now and then the OPP and the local police do a blitz, but I don't think there are enough reminders given in terms of, "Don't forget, that seat belt

buckled up will save your life." We all have to do more of that, and I would hope that this Ministry of Transportation would enhance that type of driver education, safety education and be in our schools, our high schools especially, and teach our young people and remind them of the serious responsibility there is in driving a car.

As you know, our speed limits are 100 kilometres, but most of the cars that are on our roads now can easily do 180, 200 or 220 kilometres. I don't know what they can do, but you've got these huge engines that can go at incredible speeds. It's inviting for motorists to say, "Look at the power I've got in this car." You see these people in these Porsche Boxsters driving along the highway at incredible speeds.

I think we have to remind people that, yes, you have the right to drive and the privilege of driving, but you don't have the right to endanger other people's lives. That's the biggest concern we have. It's not just your right to drive or your right to be behind the wheel of a Maserati or a BMW; it's the responsibility you have to the other innocent people who are on the highways or who may be crossing an intersection as you drive.

**2000**

Again, most of us have seen the increasing road rage, the increasing gridlock, the increasing anxiety on our highways, yet we know that very little long-term, comprehensive planning has been done to alleviate this. That's why I've been a great proponent of not only more safety on our municipal roads and highways but also of using public transit to alleviate the stress and pressures on our roads.

As you know, this is the only government in the western world that doesn't give any money for the operation of the public transit system. It throws one-time capital funds at things, but it's the only government that requires the Toronto Transit Commission, for instance, to get 85% of its revenues from the fare box—I don't know what it is in Ottawa; it's probably about 65%—and then the other 15% has to come from property taxes. That's unheard of, whether you go to Germany, England, the United States, Ireland, anywhere. In all those jurisdictions, the government responsible for transportation subsidizes the operation of public transit's operating side. The Mike Harris government unilaterally walked away from that kind of operation funding which had been the hallmark of Ontario for decades. We can't really make our roads safer—I don't care how many highways you build—unless you take the pressure off. Public transit is one way of alleviating the pressure on our highways. I ask anybody if driving on the Don Valley Parkway or the 401 isn't a real test of your driving ability—it is extremely dangerous because of the volume of cars and trucks.

As you know, the trucks on the 401 are all there because of the high cost on the 407. The tolls are the highest in the world. The trucks in southern Ontario have to use the 401, because the 407 highway, which we gave away to a Spanish consortium for a song, is too expen-

sive. Therefore, all the trucks are still on the 401. It is extremely intimidating. And then these trucks spill off the 401 on to intersections.

The anxiety that builds up on our major highways also has an impact on the anxiety and stress on our intersections in our cities, because if people driving on the 401 or whatever it is—on the Queensway in Ottawa—can't get through traffic and they're stuck in gridlock, then as soon as they exit on Maitland Avenue or something, they speed up, trying to get through the next light, because of gridlock. I think there's a direct correlation between the amount of gridlock, which is growing in our cities, and the amount of careless driving and anxious driving that is happening all over Ontario.

This red light camera legislation is part of the technological investment in safety. But again, it alone cannot reduce the growing amount of speed on our roads, reckless driving and unpredictable driving habits which are happening more and more, as we see in all our communities across this great province.

The interesting thing too is that people sometimes mention, "Well, we shouldn't use cameras in public places." And they were saying, "Well, this legislation is no good because I am against cameras in public places." At that time, I remember telling the Minister of Transportation at the time, Mr Clement, "If you go into the Mac's Milk store, there are cameras as you buy your milk. If I go to the bank machine, I've got a camera there. If I go into the plaza, there are cameras inside the shopping mall. There are cameras basically everywhere for security and safety." So I said, "What is wrong with having a camera at an intersection to save lives?" I think in Sudbury they've used cameras to great success to make certain streets in Sudbury safer.

**Mr Bartolucci:** It's called Eye in the Sky.

**Mr Colle:** It's called the Eye in the Sky, the member from Sudbury, Mr Bartolucci, says. They work. So I don't think we have to be ideological—and I don't even know if it's ideological, but there's some sort of myth around using a camera—and I'm not saying that we should use cameras everywhere, but prudently, and if it's for security and safety.

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals want to try and use cameras in schools, where the school feels they're a great benefit in enhancing safety. So why not use a camera in the school if the principals and the parents want a camera in that school? In many of our schools in Ontario there are speeding cars constantly in front of our schools as children are crossing or children are being dropped off. So I'm certainly not averse to having a camera in that school zone if there's habitual speeding or reckless driving around the school. As the police will tell you, they can't be there every morning and every afternoon to catch these people, and even if they do catch them speeding they always come back the next day or when the police aren't there.

If there's technology like this that has been tried in different places, like Alberta, Arizona or London, England, let's look at this technology to make our

communities safer. That's what's paramount. As I said, we had this long drawn-out debate that this was some intrusion of privacy, and it would be the end of democracy as we know it if we had red light cameras. Well, I think the pilot projects have proven that the world hasn't come to an end and that we have increased safety and that it seems to work. We're trying to expand it, hopefully, and make it go into other communities.

If all the members here think of the communities they represent, there isn't one community or one intersection or one piece of roadway where there isn't habitual speeding or dangerous traffic. We all know them, where we live or in the area we represent, where we possibly would like to do something better to make that intersection safer. That is why the municipalities wanted this type of legislation. It essentially gives them a tool. That's all it is. It is not the ultimate weapon, but it is a tool in terms of making intersections safer. It is something that even the Canadian Automobile Association supported. It was something that they thought could help, and it was something they could support.

I remember the police commissioner, a lawyer I think the member from Ottawa Centre recalls I went to university, with Peter Vice, who was the chair of the Ottawa-Carleton police commission.

**Mr Patten:** A good Tory.

**Mr Colle:** Some people tell me he's a good Tory.

I remember him telling me that he was supportive of it. He's quoted in the Ottawa Citizen: "It is a real problem, and in my view it's rampant here in Ottawa-Carleton." He's talking about people who blow or run red lights. In fact, Mr Vice goes on: "On my way home from that meeting, and I live close to police headquarters,"—this is the chairman of the Ottawa-Carleton police commission—"I saw two cars go through red lights." Then they go and ask a spokesman of Mr Clement—he was the Minister of Transportation at the time—"But already a spokesman for Mr Clement has put the answer bluntly: 'No.'"

"The request hasn't actually reached the minister's office yet, said Dan Schultz"—remember him, Tony?—"but the decision has already been made, since plenty of other cities and towns have asked for the same thing. 'The cameras themselves are not the most effective solution,' he said.

"Now regional councillor Diane Holmes is wading into the debate. She'll ask the region's transportation committee to try" these things.

## 2010

It's good to see people from various cities, of all political stripes, who didn't have their heads buried in the sand, who were asking to support this legislation.

One of the strongest centres of support for this legislation was Ottawa, led by people like Mr Peter Vice. They asked him, "Why don't you get the police to stop them when a person runs a red light?" Well, here it says, "The police commission's Mr Vice says that's a dangerous idea: 'One of the hardest things for even police officers to do is to stop a moving vehicle.'"

Therefore, you can't ask the police to go into a car chase because some guy is going 80 miles an hour through an intersection. It is very dangerous. With the camera, you've got proof that the person ran the red light. You can send him a pretty strong message if you give him a ticket for 180 bucks in the mail, and that is what is happening.

Time and time again we are trying to encourage this government to listen to new ideas. This was a new idea that this government tried to discredit, block, stall. But sooner or later we had petitions from people right across Ontario: a lot of people from the Hamilton region, from Brampton, from York region, Peel region. They all said, "We need to try this kind of technology." I was very happy to see that the government was forced to come in and listen to people for a change. We were more and more unhappy that the people were so involved in this battle and it took a long time.

We were successful in getting the pilot project, but I would like to see this become more than a pilot project. I'd like to see these cameras at the discretion of the local municipality. If they feel that technology like this works, why not allow them to do it? They're not asking for money. They're not asking for the provincial government to invent the technology; it's already there. So there's no need to continually ask these municipalities to do all the things they do well. The taxpayers of those municipalities pay through the nose in property taxes and fees. Yet, when they want to do something to improve safety in their municipality, they always have to come to Queen's Park. That is not good public policy. It's best to devolve to municipalities things they can do best, and I think traffic safety locally is something they are expert in. Some of the brightest people I have ever run across in terms of transportation issues are local people, whether they come from Hamilton, York region, the city of Toronto or the city of Ottawa. There are some ingenious people who have worked on road safety for hundreds and hundreds of years.

For many years in the city of Toronto, not too far from here, probably about a 10-minute drive north of here on Avenue Road, there was one of the only streets in Toronto where they put speed bumps. I don't know if you had them in other municipalities. It was right by De La Salle school. They had speed bumps because the traffic was so horrendous. For many years, the speed bumps helped that street. The municipalities at the time tried to get more speed bumps. It was almost impossible, because the experts said that speed bumps didn't work, sometimes did damage to the undercarriage of cars and were difficult for snowplowing, etc.

It's interesting enough now that wherever you go in Toronto we have used what they call "traffic-calming devices," and speed bumps are part of that. I'm not a total fan of speed bumps on every street, but I think it's an example of a municipality, local officials or local rate-payers responding to a traffic problem. No matter who you are or what you do for a living, if it's unsafe on your street or where your children live, go to school or play

and there's immense speed or reckless driving, why not let them introduce traffic-calming devices and plans because they have no other thing to do? They can't stop the traffic from coming on to the streets, but at least they can slow it down and make people more aware of the fact that there may be children or senior citizens. Why not let the municipalities use more of their ingenuity to find ways of making intersections, streets, safer for their citizens? I don't think it's always necessary to have the province telling them what to do when it comes to safety. That's why, again, as I said, this red light camera technology is one that is very effective.

I would like to read into the record a very good article from the St Catharines Standard. This was June 1998. I think it says a lot of what this whole issue is about and the need to look at this whole issue of traffic, and the politics of it too. It's from the Standard on Monday, June 8, 1998. It's an editorial. It reads: "The majority of people in this province had to be heartened at the turn of events last week when a handful of Tory MPPs voted against their party line and supported the notion of using cameras to crack down on red-light runners."

I was glad to see that there was a handful—I remember Mr Pettit, who's not here any more—a couple who did support the idea. They broke ranks. On that side, they all vote as they're told. I was glad to see—I remember Trevor Pettit, was it?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Colle:** Anyway, it was quite a sight to see a Conservative actually voting against what their orders were.

"But don't get your hopes up.

"Thursday's approval in the Legislature was only the second reading of this public safety measure, and there is still a huge and improbable step to be taken before this private member's bill, introduced by Liberal Mike Colle, gets past the necessary third reading and becomes the law of the land.

"The most formidable obstacle comes in the personage of the Premier and his cabinet, who throughout the ongoing discussions of this matter have publicly clung to the premise that camera enforcement would only reveal the vehicles involved in red-light infractions and would not identify the person who is driving when the offence takes place."

In other words, Premier Harris and all the members—they now call it "the former government"; I know Janet Ecker today said "the former government" gave them the \$10 million tax boondoggle.

What they were trying to say at the time to discredit this kind of legislation was, "All it would do is hurt the owner of the car and not the driver." I don't know what the logic was, because if I was a father and my son had my car and ran a red light, I as the owner of that car would want to know that my son ran the red light. I would hold him and myself responsible if he was doing that. But they said, "Oh, no, this doesn't get the real driver; it just punishes the owner." This was what Mr Harris was saying all the time.

2020

“The accusation is made by political detractors that the real reason the Tories are loath to allow such use of cameras is because of pressures from their rich and influential ‘buddies,’ who would supposedly be among the victims of such surveillance.

“In a reality check, however, such a claim is shallow at best, based more on stereotypes or anti-Harris sentiment than on the percentage of traffic offenders who might be major contributors to any political party. You’d be as likely to photograph the car of a plumber or an editorialist as you would a Tory bagman.

“So why this insistent anti-camera stance from our elected minders of the province?

“Although the senior government members have been careful not to show their hand in too much detail when pressed to dissect the basis of their position in this issue”—that is, these cameras; the editorial is saying, “Why do they oppose it?”—“it is evident that the dislike for such mechanical traffic cops has less to do with catching the right driver than it does with their ingrained personal ideologies.

“By its nature, the strong streak of libertarian thinking which affects the motives of the current government, and which certainly distinguishes it from previous Tory reigns in Ontario, bristles at the very notion of too much ‘state intervention’ into the private lives of citizens, regardless of whether or not they’re political contributors.

“This was what made photo radar one of the earlier victims of the Harris government, and because of this same instinct, our key policy-makers cannot reconcile themselves with the ‘Big Brother’ illusion of using technology instead of traffic cops to catch red-light runners.

“The issue of intersection anarchy is not a chronic problem in Niagara or indeed in many centres around Ontario, but in traffic-choked Toronto (a place many of us visit from time to time), no fewer than 10 people were killed last year by impatient or inattentive drivers who ran red lights, or raced into a crossroad in the dying glow of an amber traffic signal.

“Even if cameras did result in less than perfect effectiveness, and some charges were thrown out of court because the wrong individual was charged, the public’s awareness of such enhanced enforcement would make more drivers less likely to take the chance. And it would almost certainly mean more innocent people would be alive.

“Now that it has received second reading, the red-light bill will be referred ‘to committee’ and to public hearings for further study. This could end up in it being neutered by a stream of amendments meant to render it useless. Or, even if it does emerge from that process intact, the government could simply order its caucus members back into line to ensure the defeat of the bill in the final vote.

“But surely there comes a time concern for the common good has to prevail over dogmatic intransigence.

“This is not revolutionary; cameras are routinely used in many countries to make roads safer. In Ontario, this is an obvious instance where the Premier and his coterie

must put the well-being of citizens ahead of the bogyman.”

That’s from the *St Catharines Standard*, back in 1998. That is a bit of the history of what this good legislation—the beginning of good legislation—had to fight against. There were all kinds of straw men put up, why you couldn’t do this and you couldn’t do that, but I think it was just such an outcry from across the province, basically asking Premier Harris and his ministers at the time, “Why can’t you try this? If it works in Australia, in Arizona, in New York state, in Virginia, try it and see if it saves lives.”

I really want to give a lot of credit, especially to the Laporte family who tragically had to lose their son, Michel; to all the councillors in Hamilton, Peel region and Toronto; and to the police forces in Toronto, Hamilton and especially in Ottawa, who were really in the forefront.

I should mention that Ottawa is also at the forefront of another very interesting and dynamic life-saving technology, and that is the PAD program, the portable automatic heart defibrillators, which are the size of a laptop computer. They go into arenas, airports and casinos, and they save lives. This government has blocked that kind of legislation again too. It’s another example of good technology that saves lives, and this government always has some kind of phony ideological reason to block it. You tell me why these portable heart defibrillators are against the ideology of the Conservative Party or whatever their libertarian or neo-con past is. Just like the red light camera technology, why would the portable heart defibrillator, which saves lives every day—it has already saved six lives in the casino here in Toronto. The Greater Toronto Airports Authority has just put 60 of them into the airport.

There are rural areas, for example, in Manitoulin, where they would be wonderful. What is the response time in Manitoulin for an ambulance, for first responders, if there’s a heart attack—in Toronto we’re fortunate—a half-hour away or whatever? If the local nurse, high school, arena manager or volunteer firefighter has a portable heart defibrillator he’s trained with, along with CPR, he could save that one life. If it’s one life that you save—but this government has blocked that technology. I’ve had that private member’s bill before this House and before committee and they blocked it. For what reason, I have no idea.

For the first time in this Legislature, I had a sitting judge of the Ontario Court come and make a deputation to a committee. He said he wanted one in city hall in Toronto because he’s afraid that staff or lawyers or people before the court are going to have heart attacks, and he cannot avail himself of this technology because this government does not support portable heart defibrillators in places of high stress like city hall. If you want to see a stressful place, go to Toronto city hall courtroom and see the stress in that place. This government won’t allow the technology in that court to maybe save one life.

These portable heart defibrillators, which cost about \$5,000 each—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Questions or comments?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to speak briefly to the comments raised by my friend from Eglinton-Lawrence. He had a lot to say, it was a whole hour, and he did it well. He was one of the first few people to push hard for red light cameras in spite of the opposition that came from the Conservatives. God knows why they did that for many years. It's true, I don't know why they did that. It's something that is very useful. We know that and you now know that. Red light cameras are good for safety, and that's the issue. It was clear then, and it took some time for the Conservatives to get around to it. It often surprises me. What should happen is that municipalities should be given the power to do this on their own. It's pretty sad that you have to come here each and every time asking or begging the province to permit the city to do this.

Yes, they extended the municipal red light camera pilot for two more years. Yes, it gives the province the option to make it permanent without going back to the Legislature. But they shouldn't have to come to you. It's something that should happen as a matter of course. The cities should be empowered to do that in their own communities because they know their own communities best. It's not something you want to centralize or ought to centralize, it would seem to me. Giving cities the power to do this without having to come and beg is the right thing to do. It would seem to me that's the course you should be heading on. On the other hand, it's good that you listen in part, that you're listening a little harder. Ernie Eves has become soft, poor man. It's good that he's getting soft, but there's room to be softer on this issue.

2030

**Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing):** As the official opposition knows, Ontario already has an outstanding road safety record. Our roads are the safest in Canada, and as a matter of fact they are the second-safest in all North America.

It's interesting that we stand here today to bring this bill forward to further this good cause of red light cameras and all we're hearing from that side is "but." Are they going to support it or not? They're talking in circles; they're going down streets; they're talking about everything but—to fill in an hour. Why don't they just say, "Yes, we support this. Yes, we understand how important it is." Your government introduced it. Do you know what? It's the right thing to do. Just stand up and say, "Yes, we support this legislation," just like all the communities that are involved here say, "We want to do it for more years."

Just say yes. Do the right thing. No need for anyone to take credit here. It's not a very big bill in the grand scheme of things when we're dealing with lots of issues. All parties should stand up and say, "Yes, let's do it." We don't need to talk about it for three hours, and about

everything else. Just say, "I support this." Do the right thing and say that.

**Mr Patten:** I find it interesting that the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka somehow has it reversed.

**Interjection:** No, Nipissing.

**Mr Patten:** Nipissing, rather. I'm sorry. Excuse me.

He's not really aware of the background of this. All parties have agreed to this. So the only thing I can conclude, as with many bills of this nature where we all agree on many issues, is that the government wants to just show the public that they're putting in time. It certainly is hard time for the opposition, especially when the ideas emanate from the opposition.

I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, Mike Colle, who provided the initial leadership on this. I think he could write a book on this subject. He certainly took us through an anthology this evening and pointed out the relationship between these particular camera systems, the costs of them, the relationship to density of traffic, other jurisdictions where they have had this, such as Australia for 15 years, the research he did in terms of Germany, in terms of England, in terms of states in the United States.

This shows the commitment of a member to do this. He's not in government and he doesn't have to do this, but he does it because he cares. He went to where he heard people who had lost members of their family and he talked with them, and they said, "Can't we do something?" This man said, "Yes, let's try. Here's an idea. What do you think?" The municipalities agreed. So we all agree on this. Why are we wasting time? I'm sure if the government wanted to put forward a motion to get support on all sides, you would probably find that you'd get unanimous agreement.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I guess we should be grateful in Ontario that finally the government is saying to us after seven years of not listening to anyone that we should be grateful and bow our heads to the gods across the way and say to the Conservative government, to Ernie Eves and the rest—be grateful. The government has actually done something right and we shouldn't have to say anything at all. That's a rather interesting comment that was made by the member across.

I say to the Liberal member, however, who purports the importance of this bill—and I agree with him; I think this is an important bill—that it's important for the municipalities and for drivers across this province to have mechanisms such as red light cameras to prevent accidents. It's a great thing. But I'm just wondering, where was the Liberal caucus between 1990 and 1995 when it came to photo radar?

I remember being a member of the government when we brought forward photo radar to save lives on our highways when it came to reducing the speed overall. The Liberals voted against it. They were opposed to it every step of the way. Now all of a sudden there's a new-found faith in technology to prevent accidents in Ontario. So I'm a little bit confused. When it was the NDP that



brought forward photo radar, which is a similar thing, the Liberals voted against it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I'll talk about them later in my speech that I'm about to give. Now all of a sudden they're in favour of red light cameras. So with the Liberals there's a bit of a problem in understanding their position. One moment it's one thing, the next moment it's the other. When the polling numbers indicated photo radar may have been a bad thing on the public scope of things, they were opposed to it. Then when people figured out it was a good thing, all of a sudden—Liberals confuse the heck out of me. I just have to say to the member from Lawrence, wherever it is—

**Interjection:** Eglinton-Lawrence.

**Mr Bisson:** Eglinton-Lawrence—that I'm glad you finally made a conversion, but it's been one pretty late down the road.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Colle:** I thank you for the comments. We have a new member from Nipissing, and he wasn't here when the parent of the young man who died was pleading for help. He wasn't here, and for him basically to say that we in the opposition don't have the right to speak when we have debating time is beyond belief. That you have the gall to come here and tell us that we can't speak on behalf of the constituents of Eglinton-Lawrence or the constituents of Ontario—what are we here for? If we can't speak, what are we here for? You would like us to do what you do all the time, just do as you're told, put up your hand and vote. Well, sorry. On this side we can actually speak and we have the passion of our beliefs. If you want to be basically a person who just puts up his hand and does as he's told, you're obviously on the right side of the House. We believe in standing up for what we believe in, and I believe that the Laporte family, who lost their son—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Colle:** They obviously have no compassion for the hundreds of people who were injured in traffic accidents, and the Minister of Agriculture is laughing about it.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** The pot calling the kettle black.

**Mr Colle:** People were dying at intersections and Helen Johns is laughing about that. That's disgraceful, the Minister of Agriculture laughing about people dying at intersections, and she's continuing to laugh about it. That is disgusting.

Mr Speaker, I won't go down to her level, because she thinks that the right of the opposition to advocate is wrong. Well, as a member of the opposition, I will continue to advocate and fight for my people and fight for what's right in this province. I won't be shut down by the likes of Helen Johns, the Minister of Agriculture.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would remind members, we do not use members' names, only their ridings or positions. The member for Timmins-James Bay.

*Applause.*

**M. Bisson:** Merci, mon collègue. Oh là là. C'est du déjà vu. Ce n'est pas la première fois qu'on se trouve ici dans ce débat. C'est très intéressant qu'on se trouve ici aujourd'hui encore, deux ans—si je me rappelle bien, c'était en l'an 2000 qu'on a premièrement passé ce projet de loi. Le gouvernement du jour, le gouvernement de Mike Harris, a dit, « Important de mettre ces caméras très haut sur les coins de rue dans les municipalités à travers la province pour assurer la sécurité de circulation. » Il y a eu des problèmes. Le monde traversait des feux rouges, et je me rappelle dans le temps que nous dans le Nouveau parti démocratique étions un peu surpris et on a dit, « Hey, c'est Mike Harris, le même gars qui a décidé, "Photo radar : bad." Puis là il dit, "Red light camera : good." »

Je me dis, c'est quoi qui est arrivé ? Pourquoi y a-t-il tellement une différence ? J'ai besoin de me demander, dans ce temps-là, quand on a eu ce débat-là, exactement pour quelle raison. Je pense que les raisons sont pas mal claires. Il y avait deux différentes—comment dire? Il y avait des « motives » en opposition qui étaient un peu différentes quand ça venait à être le gouvernement.

So I say to the government across the way, it's really interesting, this conversion. I really enjoy this. I like it when my friends across the way, who see themselves on the right of the political spectrum, all of a sudden shift a little bit to the left. The Liberals, well, God, they're shifting left and right all the time, so we won't even talk about them right away.

But I'm glad. You guys have finally taken a step forward and you've said, "Do you know what? That photo radar wasn't such a bad idea. We're not going to go all the way and call it photo radar. God, we couldn't do that, because Mike Harris and the opposition Tories of the day opposed photo radar, but it's OK to use that technology to stop people as they cross red lights." But I'm glad you've made the conversion, I really am, because I agree, as most members in this House I'm sure agree, that this is actually a good thing.

We know, for example, by the stats that have been put forward by the various municipalities—all six of them that have basically got into this as a pilot project over the last two years—there have been over 23,000 charges laid across Ontario in those six municipalities as a result of people crossing red lights that resulted in accidents in some cases, and more times than not probably put somebody in danger. If properly done, this particular initiative can actually save lives.

**2040**

I'm absolutely glad that the government has made this conversion. I think it's a good thing. It shows me that there is hope in this province. There is hope for social democrats. There is hope that even a right-wing Conservative government could come over and start seeing the ways of some of us in the social democratic party of Ontario. I think it's rather interesting. So I say to the government, bravo for having brought this two years ago.

My only comment in regard to what you're doing now is, why do we have to come back here to do this in the first place? Why didn't you, as we suggested in the year 2000 when you put this bill in place, give municipalities the power and authority to do this themselves? I think most of us in this House would agree that municipal governments are very responsible. Municipal governments are in a good position to decide, yes or no, if they wish to install red light cameras at intersections in their municipality.

We said at the time you drafted the legislation that you should at the very least give the municipalities the authority to pass legislation on their own enabling them to do it and allow municipalities to do what they think is right with those particular red light cameras. The government of the day said, "Oh, no. We want to study this. We want to do it as a pilot project. We think it's better to look things over." So they only did it for a two-year period and they put a sunset clause in the bill, and here we are two years later, coming back to the Legislature yet again as Big Brother to municipalities, deciding what's good for those municipalities.

So my first problem is, I think this is something we should have given municipalities the right to do up front, and number two, we should not have been put in a position of having to come back here two years down the road and do it again. We could have been utilizing House time to do something probably just as important, if not more important, and we could have taken this away from the House agenda.

I see that in the legislation the government is giving itself, as the government, through the Minister of Transportation, the ability to extend it past November 20, 2004. In other words, if a municipality decides to go further, the government of the day, whoever it is, will be able to enable the Minister of Transportation in that government to say, "Yes, you can continue with this project past 2004."

I would argue that we should make an amendment to this bill. If it goes to committee, I'll suggest an amendment that basically says, "Let's give the municipalities the respect they're due and allow them to make the decision whether they want this program or not." I think municipal councils are in a far better position in their municipalities to make that decision. I look at members like Mr McDonald, who comes from North Bay, and others who have sat on municipal councils. I think they understand, as I do, that it's probably a much better thing to allow the municipalities to make that decision themselves. So on that point, I'll just say we should be making an amendment, through the committee process, that says to the municipalities, "We respect you, as municipalities, to make this decision. We're transferring this over as a municipal responsibility." If they decide they want to do this project, we can certainly put some regulation around it about what can be done and then allow that to happen in a way that municipalities themselves can deal with saying, yea or nay, that they want to do it.

The other thing I think we should be doing in this legislation, which is not that apparent in my view and is probably more through the regulations than the legislation, is really spelling out how we set these red light cameras. One of the complaints I've heard in the city of Ottawa, and I've heard it here in Toronto, in Peel and in a few other places when I've read articles, but specifically in Ottawa—I have a brother who lives there. I visit every now and then, and, as most members do, I go there on committees and different things. I've talked to different people in Ottawa who say, "Geez, it's like they're hiding those cameras. It's as if they want to catch us." Instead of providing advertisements saying, "There's a red light camera. Slow down," the signage is put in such a way that it's hard for the motorist to see and the municipality just reaps the whirlwind of all those people getting their pictures snapped as they run through the red lights.

If we're truly talking about a safety initiative, I would argue that we need to put up good posting. As most motorists know, if you know there's an OPP officer or a local town police officer out there with the radar or you know, for example, there's a sign that says, "There are red light cameras on this intersection," people aren't very likely to cross it whether the camera is working or not, because they're afraid of getting caught. It's never paying the fine that scares people; it's the fear of getting caught. If people have a sense that they are going to get caught, they are less likely to do the infraction. So I would argue that what we need to do is put something in regulation around this bill that stipulates that when municipalities set up red light cameras and we give the ability to do that, there's a provision that you have some good signage to make sure motorists know the red light camera is there and in that way try to deter the actual infraction happening in the first place. That would be one of the things I would suggest to the government.

The bill itself is fairly innocuous. It's only one section with three parts, all on one page. All we're basically saying in this bill is that we're going to extend the deadline from 2002 to November 20, 2004, and allow the pilot projects to go ahead.

As I said, the first amendment should be to allow municipalities to do this on their own. Secondly, some regulatory change needs to be made, in my view, to spell out to municipalities that in fact you need good signage to assure yourselves that the red light cameras are properly posted to discourage people from doing the infraction in the first place.

The bottom line is, this is all about safety. I don't care which side of the House you're on, I think we all agree that if we can stop people from jumping red lights, there's a potential for saving lives and, at the very least, a potential for less injury. That is a saving, in human terms, in suffering and pain that people incur from that, and also to our medical system. This, in the end, can be a savings to our medical system as well. I would say to the government, however, that we need to take a look at other places where we can use this technology.

I just want to go back and talk about photo radar, because it is related. I remember that when we were government between 1990 and 1995, we had rolled out the initiative of photo radar on the 400-series highways across Ontario. A number of vans were bought and were moved around from place to place. Basically, photo radar was set up in a number of areas to discourage people from speeding. Because there was the knowledge that that van might be on the stretch of road you drove in the morning or in the evening, many people slowed down.

I would just relate the experience I had. I remember coming out of Toronto International Airport, or Pearson airport, as we call it now, with a car rental one night. I was flying into the city for some meeting that I was going to somewhere outside of Toronto. On my way out to the meeting, I pulled out of the airport for a run on to the 427, I guess it is, that comes out of the airport. I was so used to getting on that—you know how you get out of the airport. When you got on, you really had to speed up to catch up with the traffic that was going by so you could slot yourself into the traffic flow. I got on and had to slam on my brakes. The traffic was such that people had slowed down to the speed limit, and it actually surprised me. I was so used to coming out doing 120 or 125 in order to slot myself into the traffic in the right lane, and in fact it was right down to about 90 kilometres an hour. I remember think at that time, "Boy, this photo radar thing really works."

The first point is that when it was in place, people actually did slow down. When we go back and look at the stats for the time it was in, there were fewer accidents on those highways than there are now. I would argue that there was another initiative that in the end could have saved lives, another initiative that certainly could save potential injury and money to our health care system, that this government did away with.

The other thing that I thought was remarkable on the photo radar program, which was put in place I guess in 1993, was what the Tories had to say about it at the time, because the government at the time did this as a safety initiative. I remember that day after day when we went through the process of passing that legislation through the House, members from the now government, then the third party, would get up and say, "This is strictly a cash grab. This is nothing more than the government trying to fleece money out of the pockets of motorists." I remember Mr Stockwell, Mike Harris, Mr Runciman and a number of people who are now in cabinet were really opposed to the photo radar concept and thought it was nothing but a cash grab. I find it passing strange that two years ago we ended up in a situation—were you in favour of it?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security):** The speed limits were the problem.

**Mr Bisson:** The speed limits are a problem.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Artificially low. It's a cash grab.

**Mr Bisson:** We're going to get to that in a second—where you want to go with the speed limits—because we

now know the government is interested in bringing photo radar back in a different guise. There have been some rumours about that. They may or may not—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Well, if I knew you were going to give me something, I might just—you know. You should have come and talked to me before I got on my feet, Chris. If you want to offer something, Mr House Leader, put it on paper and put it in front of me.

I just remember back to those days, wonderful quotes from Chris Stockwell, I think then he was the critic for finance. He went on and on about how this was a cash grab and nothing but a desperate attempt by the government to raise dollars, and how terrible a thing it was. I just say it's interesting and passing strange that two years ago this government instituted red light cameras in this province. Same technology, same idea; utilizing surveillance technology in order to go after motorists. They recognized, rightfully so, that technology can be used in a positive way in order to make the roads safer.

**2050**

What's interesting, we hear through the grapevine, and this has been somewhat reported in the media although not very extensively, is that the government is now saying they're thinking about bringing back photo radar. But what they're thinking of doing is actually increasing the speed on our highways and making an absolute limit when it comes to the enforcement of those particular speeds. For example, where you had 100 kilometres an hour, they may boost it up to 120 and then throw photo radar on that as a way of making sure there's no tolerance. If you go 121 you get a ticket. That may not be a bad idea.

I've driven in Europe and different parts of the world where I've seen the extremes on both sides. For example, if you take a look in Europe—I was there in April and had the occasion to drive from Marseille all the way down through the French Riviera into Florence. On that particular stretch of road is a good—

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I didn't know socialists took those trips.

**Mr Bisson:** Nothing's too good for the working class, you have to know. The working class of Canada, because of the trade union movement, has negotiated great collective agreements, and workers are now able to travel alongside the bourgeoisie. It's a great thing for the tourism industry. We social democrats are proud of our role in making sure that workers have been able to negotiate wages, including here in the Legislature, to be able to enjoy a holiday every now and then with our wife or with our family.

I forget the particular stretch of highway; I think it's A-11, the one that runs along the French and Italian Riviera. When you're on that road, traffic is on average 140 kilometres to 150 kilometres an hour. When I first got on it, I was a little bit nervous because here you are in a little diesel Renault trying to keep up in these Ferraris that are just screaming by.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I can't afford a Ferrari. That's for the bourgeoisie. I drove the working man's car, the diesel Renault. That's what I drove to visit the beautiful city of Florence.

The point is, there's traffic on that highway that's basically going at 150 kilometres, 160 kilometres an hour. I had an opportunity to talk to a number of police officers, as you stop at restaurants and to get gas. On a couple of occasions I had a chance, both in France and Italy, to speak to police officers. I asked them, "You must have a lot of accidents on these highways." I thought for sure they were going to tell me, "We get accidents all the time, and carnage." In fact, they don't get a lot of them. I thought that was rather interesting.

I've gone back and done a little bit of checking, and there are a number of reasons why the accidents on those highways are lower. One thing is, the truck traffic is really reduced to a dull roar. They really have a good system of intermodal transportation where they utilize trains to move freight on intermodal rail on longer distances and are only using trucks for shorter hauls. It's a much more efficient way of moving traffic off those freeways. As a result, you don't have the congestion on those freeways that we see here, let's say in the city of Toronto, across the 401. Even at the best of times it's fairly difficult to move along that stretch of highway, for all the trucks that are on it. And the other thing that is interesting is that there is sort of a no-nonsense rule when it comes to reckless driving. They don't mind the speeds so much, but they really watch if they've got people who are weavers, as they call them.

The thing is, I'm not convinced increasing the speed limit itself, if properly done, is necessarily a bad thing. It's interesting to see that the government is looking at increasing speed limits on our highways and utilizing photo radar as a mechanism to say, "All right, we're going to push the speed limit up by 10 kilometres or 20 kilometres an hour but there'll be a zero tolerance when it comes to speeds over the legal speed limit." We all know what happens now. I travel up Highway 11 all the time. Most people probably won't believe me, but I don't do more than about 100 kilometres an hour now. I'll tell you why. I find if I drive fast, when I get to where I'm going it's like you've been rushing for three hours of driving and you get there and you're all keyed up.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** From Timmins to some places in my community it's a lot further than three hours.

**Mr Miller:** You fly it.

**Mr Bisson:** I get to fly, but not all the time. The clouds are low sometimes and I have to take a vehicle. The point is that I'm not one who does, but I find that most drivers speed—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I'll come back to that in a second. Most drivers tend to speed over the limit. If the speed limit is posted at 90 kilometres an hour, most drivers are doing 110, 120—in that range—and that's where most people

are at. I go about 100. I don't normally do more than about 105.

The point I make is that that speed is probably not dangerous on a number of our highways, because I would argue that our highways have been built with a better infrastructure. If you look at when we posted those speed limits years ago, they were based on technology of cars that maybe couldn't handle those kinds of speeds if there was an impact. Those cars, once you banged them, you banged them good. Second, the road infrastructure was not as good. You didn't have the passing lanes that you have now. The roads were not as soft, as smooth as they are now, compared to what they were 25 years ago.

I think there's an argument to be made that you could increase the speed limit a reasonable amount. I think that needs to be determined by experts. But I agree with the concept, and then you basically have an absolute no-tolerance policy for people who go above that speed, because we've already got it. For all intents and purposes, Highway 11 is 120 kilometres an hour. I get passed constantly as I drive up by Moonbeam, Kapuskasing, Constance Lake and communities in between. So that's what most cars are doing. The OPP cruisers are passing me as well. They just go right by me.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I'm just saying it the way it is.

The government's musing about coming in and utilizing photo radar as a mechanism to increase speeds is not a bad idea. I'd be more than prepared to talk to the government about that to find some way of bringing a bill into the House and, with some co-operation from all sides, not spending a whole bunch of time.

We have to send it out to committee. I think we have to hear from some stakeholder groups, because some people in our society might say, "Bisson, you're 100% wrong about that."

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Bring it in.

**Mr Bisson:** I'd love to bring it in, but the unfortunate part about being a private member in this House is that you get one spot per four years to bring a bill in. As the minister knows very well, we need to increase the role of private members to bring in bills like this, because I think—

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Come on over.

**Mr Bisson:** Not likely. Ideologically, we're way too far apart for that.

Anyway, I think it's something that should be done. I'm just signalling to the government. This is not the official position in the NDP caucus because we've not caucused the issue. But, as the transportation critic, and certainly as a northerner, I'm not opposed. Our stretches of highway are long. They're in fairly good shape. The vehicles are now designed so they can do it. If the government wants to come forward with a bill like that, I'm more than prepared to talk about it and see what we can do that's reasonable when it comes to the utilization of technology to push up the speeds on our highways.

I just look at the 400-series highways. There was an interesting case. I think Mr Runciman would know about

this. Two guys got into their cars and decided to drive from—where was it?—Brockville to Toronto at the speed limit, side by side. The two individuals—about a year or two ago; correct me if I'm wrong—decided, as an experiment, that they would both get inside their cars and drive from Brockville or Cornwall, somewhere out that way, side by side all the way to Toronto, at the speed limit, to make a point. The point is that they got charged. They were brought to court for obstructing traffic. The defence they had when they went to court was, "What did we do wrong? We were driving at the speed limit." We understand that's a bit of a play, because nobody was able to get by, but the point is that behind them was a big, long line of traffic. Finally, the OPP caught up with them and pulled them off the highway because there was a bottleneck on the 401.

We know the speeds on those highways, especially the 400-series highways—

**Hon Mr Runciman:** They weren't from Brockville. They were from Timmins, I think.

**Mr Bisson:** They probably were from Timmins. They were lost. They were trying to find their way to Toronto and took the wrong turn somewhere. But anyway, the point was that if people actually drove side by side at the speed limit on those highways, and did it for any length of time, it would obstruct the highway. I think we all agree that even though the speeds may be posted at 100 kilometres an hour on the 401, the 400 and others, most people are driving at 120, and I would even argue it's a little bit higher on those highways. So there is an argument to be made to push those speeds up. I think that's something that could be done.

**2100**

I mentioned earlier—and I don't want to do this without talking about my friends in the Liberal Party, because I always find that the way they position themselves is, I think, rather colourful. I just don't want to allow this debate to go by without pointing my finger over there at the Liberal caucus and saying, "You guys are trying to have it both ways at the same time, from here to Sunday."

We went through this debate in 1993 when photo radar was brought in and I remember what the Liberal caucus of the day said: "Oh, a cash grab. Bad idea, bad use of technology, invades people's privacy." They listed every reason why the Liberal Party should not support this piece of legislation. Then when they became opposition again, once they lost yet another election that they were supposed to win—and they'll lose another one, because everybody knows the social democrats will win the next time around—these people were of the view that all of a sudden this technology is a good thing.

Now we've got Mr Colle running around saying, "I thought up this idea. It's such a great idea and I support it. Boy, where has the government been all these years?" I just want to ask Mr Colle, where has the Liberal caucus been all these years? They had an opportunity to support this when we were in government in 1993 and, as on most issues, they flip and flop depending on what time of

day it is. You don't know what their position is on most things. So I say to the Liberal caucus, be consistent.

At least the government, in how they introduced the red light cameras, were trying to be consistent with their public policy in opposition to photo radar. They did it as a pilot project, and it's not photo radar, it's red light cameras. They tried to position it to at least appear to remain true to their principles and what their policy was. But the Liberals have no shame—absolutely none. No shame whatsoever.

It just bugs me to no end how that great big parking lot, the pollings, as I call them—if you listen to the polls, they're at what, 53%, 54%, whatever it is? It's a great big parking lot, so soft on the edges. I think most Ontarians say, "If I've got to park my vote somewhere, because I'm unhappy with the government of the day, be it New Democrat or Tory, I'll park myself over there," and then eventually at election time they move, and for good reason. These guys are nowhere on any issue.

I listened this afternoon, as I know my good friend Mr Runciman did, to the debate on education, and I was amazed. I was in my office doing some work, and I listened to the Liberals. They were going to put \$1.6 billion back into education, and they wanted to do all these wonderful, progressive things for education. But they never talked about where they were going to get the money for it. What was interesting was, they were berating the government for education policy but were purporting the same things. There are a number of issues in the education policy paper of the Liberals that are exactly what the Tories have done. One day they go out to a group of stakeholders and say, "Look how bad the Tories are," and then all of a sudden they go back to another group and say, "Look at what we're going to do," and it's exactly the same thing. I really find it interesting and passing strange.

On the hydro thing, we all know the Liberals want to privatize and deregulate hydro just as badly as the government does. But if you listened to Dalton McGuinty and you closed your eyes and you didn't know it was him, you'd think it was Howard Hampton sometimes, trying to talk about what's wrong with hydro deregulation and privatization. So I just say to the Liberals, it takes a lot of culot, as we say in French, to take the position you do on a number of issues.

The other thing I want to talk about, because it gives us an opportunity—this is on transportation—is the whole issue of traffic congestion, especially on our 400-series highways. I don't know how people do it. I come from northern Ontario and a traffic jam in my community takes four or five minutes at the most to get out of. In some of my communities, if there was a vehicle, there would be a traffic jam, because there are no roads, but that's another story. I don't know how people who live in places like Hamilton or Oshawa and travel in every day do it. You're just sitting in that traffic, driving yourself crazy, trying as best you can to get to work. And you wonder why there is road rage.

I think it's high time in North America and in Ontario particularly that we wake up and try to look at ways to decrease traffic on our roads. Our response so far has been, "When there's more traffic, you build bigger roads. If you build bigger roads, it will diminish the traffic congestion." But everything indicates if you build another road, people will use it. You could put an extra four lanes on the 401 and it's just going to fill up even more. The issue to me is that it's not building more roads that is going to deal with congestion. What we need to do is find ways of diverting traffic off those highways.

I would argue it would be very good to spend money to take a look at the whole issue of intermodal transport when it comes to getting much of the transport we see today on our highways on to the rail system. We all know that trucks play a very important role in transporting goods to and from the plant and the end user and that it's a fairly effective and efficient way of doing it from a cost perspective for both the people who are paying to ship it and paying to buy it.

On the other hand, there are some things to be said about intermodal transport. We have a couple of lines that run between Windsor and Montreal where we're doing some intermodal stuff on the longer distances. We've not done a lot in order to deal with really building the infrastructure around it so that in communities across Ontario there is a mechanism to quickly off-load what's coming off the train, put it on a truck and deliver it to the local community, and vice versa. As it is now, that system is not developed, I believe, in a strong enough way to allow that to happen.

I would suggest there are a couple of things we need to do in southern Ontario in order to take some of the traffic off the roads, and I would argue we need to do this going up north along Highways 11 and 17 as well. The first thing I would argue is that we really need to take a look at it. I wouldn't advocate going out and just spending money, doing it and not thinking it through. We should put together a parliamentary committee to take a look at this issue. How could we use intermodal transport in a way that's effective for the economy of Ontario? How can the government of Ontario, rather than investing billions of dollars in highways, divert some of that money and invest it in the rail system in order to take some of those trucks off our highways?

I'll tell you, it's one thing on Highway 401 to meet transports, but—my good friend Mr McDonald will know this—if you're driving Highway 11 at night in a rainstorm or a snowstorm; not even a storm, but light sprinkling—trucks are a problem. People get behind them and they're trying to pass them, they're impatient, so they sometimes jump out beside the transport truck when they shouldn't. I know, as you know, a number of people who have died in those situations, a number of good friends of mine.

The other thing is the length of some of the convoys. I've seen it myself on Highway 11. I look in my rear-view mirror and I've got 10 trucks coming up behind me and all of a sudden they start passing me on the highway,

or, if you're a faster driver, the other way around. That in itself is not a safe thing.

I would say there's an argument to be made for really looking at how we can do intermodal transport by diverting some of the truck trailers on to rail cars in order to transport them the longer distances. It makes sense to me, for example, in a community like Hearst, Kapuskasing, Timmins or Smooth Rock Falls to say, "OK, you produce lumber, you produce paper, you produce whatever it might be as far as resources. Rather than throwing that right on the truck, have a good system of intermodal transport to take that load." For example, if it's the waferboard plant in Timmins, Grant waferboard, pick up the waferboard load on the intermodal truck, drive it to the transfer point on the ONR line, do a quick transfer on to the train and ship it to where it's going, because more times than not, that transport is driving into the United States somewhere or into the Toronto market. So they're fairly long distances. It would make some sense to move that truck traffic on to the rail system in order to get those trucks off our highways. This, I think, would be a much saner way of taking some of the traffic off and make our highways a bit safer.

The other thing it does is save us money when it comes to the repair of our highways. Again, my friends from northern Ontario, Mr Miller and Mr McDonald, will know that on our highways, if we don't do the cycle of maintenance that we need to, we end up with great big ruts because of all the truck traffic and the weight that's gone along those highways. Some of these trucks are really heavy. Some of them, I would argue, are overweight. What happens is that you end up digging ruts into stretches of the highways so that when it rains they fill with water and you get hydroplaning when it comes to driving down the highway when those highways get wet. There was a stretch of highway—I believe it was around Cobalt or Englehart; I don't remember exactly where it was—that was just fixed a couple of years ago. I'll tell you, if it rained, you really had to slow down because you started hydroplaning. The ruts were deep enough that the water that picked up in there—really, if you were going at a fast enough speed, your vehicle started hydroplaning. So I would argue that if we could get some of that truck traffic on to rail, you're going to take some of the wear and tear off your highways and save some money when it comes to the maintenance cycle on those highways.

The other thing is, it would do something for the ONR—again, I think Mr McDonald would agree, we're all looking for ways to strengthen the ONR in order to give it a better business base so that it can provide the kind of services we need up north. I think it would give an opportunity to the ONR to pick up some of that business.

They can't do it on their own. I don't argue that CN or the ONR could do it on their own; just "OK, let's do it," and they will come. I think there has to be a strategy where the provincial government says, along with the feds—we can't let the feds off the hook on this, because

they are also, in my view, somewhat responsible for this. We sit down and negotiate a sort of tripartite agreement. The provincial and federal governments and the rail lines themselves develop the infrastructure. We use taxpayers' dollars to build roads; I don't know why we don't use taxpayers' dollars to build infrastructure for intermodal transport so that we have some transfer points that are well equipped to do a quick turnaround. The transport truck leaves wherever it is in northern Ontario, some mill in Cochrane or Iroquois Falls or wherever it may be, drives a short distance, off-loads on to an intermodal rail car, ships it down to wherever it goes and there's a good transfer point at the other end. That would be one way, I believe, of taking traffic off the road.

**2110**

The other thing I would argue that we need to take a look at is the whole issue of urban transit—interurban transit; that's what I wanted to say. Everybody has seen this. You're driving the car from Hamilton to Toronto, you're listening to your radio station, and you look around. I'd argue 80% of the cars have only the driver. I don't think I'm stretching the imagination at all when I say that. About 80% of cars driving on the 401 in the morning or that are coming in on the QEW are basically just the driver; there's nobody else in the car.

So you look at the pollution to the environment, you look at the wear and tear to our highways, you look at how plugged up our highways are, because those drivers find it easier to use their car than to get on the GO service. You say to yourself, "Well, why after all these years haven't we tried to figure out a way to strengthen GO service between those communities in order to divert some of the people from utilizing their car into the rail system?"

Now, I know one of them—I don't take GO very often, but I've taken it from time to time when I've had speaking engagements in Burlington and Oakville and Hamilton and other places, or up by the Ajax area—is that sometimes it's just easier to take your car. If I have to go and take the train, by the time I get down to the train station, and if I happen to go in off-peak hours, I've got to wait a fairly long time to take a train, and then if I'm going further down the line, there's a bunch of stops by the time I get there. Then I get off and I've got to take a cab to wherever I'm going. I don't mind the cab fare if I'm able to get there fairly fast—or if you're going home, somebody's picking you up or presumably you left your car at the other end—if I'm able to get there quick enough.

I would argue that what we need to do is sit down with the GO Transit people; people in the ATU—the Amalgamated Transit Union—along with the management people at GO Transit and the users, and say, "How can we develop a schedule and build an infrastructure on GO that encourages people, along with a good fare system, that takes people out of their cars and puts them on to the GO system?" I think if you do that, there's a savings to be had in not having to spend money on your highways, because every time a car drives on the

highway, it shortens the life of that highway to a certain degree. If you can cut by 20% or 30% the volume of traffic on that freeway, you're able to extend the life of the freeway, thus saving some money in the longer years, as well as not having to build the expansions to the highway system that you would have to do otherwise.

So I would argue that this is one of the things we should look at. Again, this would be a really interesting issue to send off to a parliamentary committee so that one of the committees of this Legislature can look at that issue along with the intermodal issue to say what kind of investments are needed in order to build up the interurban transit that needs to be put in place in order to take congestion off the roads and to save some money.

Again, I just look at some of the trips I've had in different places in the world. I've travelled through Europe a number of times. The number of people who take rail service in Europe is far greater than what you see here. Why? Because it's convenient and it's cheap. If I'm in Paris or I'm in Brussels or wherever it might be—for example, on one of the trips that I did, I wanted to go from Brussels to Paris. Well, it was a lot easier to jump on a train than it was to take a car, and it was a lot—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** The government says, "Ah, look at that social democrat travelling around, going to cities like Paris." I'm proud to say that as social democrats, we and the unions have negotiated a good social contract with the employers so that we have the money to travel. That's what makes the economy go around. And it's about time the bourgeois don't get all the good trips, because we working-class people like to travel too. Listen, a lot of people over there in the Tory party are working-class as well, so don't berate yourselves.

Anyway, I'm just saying that if you look at the European model, there has really been a much more important investment in moving people by way of rail than we have here in North America. As a result, they don't have the amount of freeways we have here for the amount of population. You look, for example, at Ontario. What's the population in the province now, about 12 million, somewhere around there; 12 million or 13 million? Look at the freeway system we have and compare it to a country like France, Belgium, Luxembourg or wherever it might be. The freeway system over there is smaller in comparison to the size of population they have. The reason for that is fairly simple: they've really invested in rail service.

I always tell the story—I didn't know the train system the first time I went there. I think I was with my eldest daughter, Julie. We had gone to Paris and we wanted to take the train to—where were we going? Yes, we were going to Brussels that time. We ran up on the platform, trying to buy a train ticket, and they said, "The only way you can buy a train ticket when you get on the platform is to buy a first-class ticket to go to Brussels." I said, "How much?" It was less than C\$100 for the two of us. I couldn't get over it. I can't buy a single train ticket from Timmins to Toronto for less than \$100. It's 119 bucks for

one person, one way, coach. The distance from Brussels to Paris is about from North Bay to Timmins. For first-class tickets—mind you, it was only one way—it was less than \$100 for the two of us. I thought, “Boy, that’s interesting.” The reason is they’ve got the volume. If you look at those trains, they’re absolutely full. People are using them to commute long distances to get to work. People are using them to travel for everything from medical appointments, holidays or whatever. There’s a culture of using the train, because those governments have developed a train system.

The one I love best is the TGV in France. The TGV travels at 300 kilometres an hour. Imagine my good friend Mr McDonald wanting to come and visit me in the city of Timmins, if we still had rail service in Timmins—that’s another issue. But imagine if you had something like a TGV train that ran from North Bay—I would argue it would have to come to Toronto—all the way up to Kapuskasing or Hearst and Timmins. That was about a 10-hour train ride from Timmins to Toronto. You’d be able to knock that down to about three hours. The cost would be a lot less because, as it is right now, you’re paying, on a last-minute return ticket out of Timmins, 1,000 bucks on Air Canada. You could probably offer that on a train service for far less if we actually had developed that type of infrastructure.

Is there the passenger service to warrant a TGV-type train between northern Ontario and Toronto? I don’t know. That’s what you’d need the parliamentary committee for. I would argue it would be a really interesting thing to refer to a parliamentary committee in the intersession that we really look at the issue of developing a transportation policy in this province on ways to reduce traffic overall on our freeways across the province and that we look at the different models and technologies that are available to us.

The ironic part about this—I just thought of this—is it’s Canadian producers of rail equipment that do the biggest amount of sales in Europe when it comes to that type of technology. We all know about Bombardier. De Havilland and Bombardier are big players in Europe when it comes to providing the technology for the types of trains they use in Europe.

Again I say, I’ve travelled in different parts of the world and I’ve seen the complete opposite. I travelled to Thailand about four or five years ago and spent a month there one winter. It was really amazing. There is no infrastructure. They’ve got freeways and they’ve got rail service but—everybody’s seen the movie *Bridge on the River Kwai*. My brother Claude and I went to Kanchanaburi, the name of the town. We rented a car and driver, because I wouldn’t dare drive in Bangkok. Has anybody ever been there? Has anybody been to Bangkok? The traffic there is unbelievable.

**Interjection:** Red light cameras?

**Mr Bisson:** There’s no such thing as red light cameras. People drink and drive and it’s OK. When you have an accident over there, there are no rules at all. It’s catastrophic. You see burnt-out hulks on the side of the

freeway and you say, “What’s that?” “Oh, there was an accident here yesterday and it just finished burning.” Then they come and take away the burned car and throw it in the dump. I think the bodies go with it, I would swear to God, because when they have accidents, it’s really tragic.

Anyway, to get back to the *Bridge on the River Kwai*, it’s an actual story. Most people would know that Allied prisoners—the Brits, Australians, Canadians and Americans—were interned in camps along the Burmese-Thai border during the Second World War to build the railway that the Japanese needed to supply the troops and materials they needed to make war. It’s quite a tragic story, the number of Allied soldiers who died building these things, but there’s an actual bridge on the River Kwai. It actually exists. It’s a reconstruction of the 1943 model—

**Mr McDonald:** Not a bad movie.

**Mr Bisson:** Not a bad movie. I always thought that Niven was a little bit overrated, but that’s another story. The original bridge we see in the movie is a bit of a farce, because they made it out of bamboo and all that. It was a wooden bridge. It was bombed by the Allies and then the Japanese rebuilt it in 1943-44 out of concrete and it’s still there.

**2120**

My point, talking about bad rail service, is that my brother and I went out on the bridge to take pictures. We were walking out there and standing over the River Kwai. We were on the bridge, saying, “My, look at this bridge. It was built in 1943. All of a sudden, the train was coming down and there was nowhere to go. Tourists were sort of jumping off and squeezing—some of us can squeeze more than others. I had to find a pretty big spot back then because I’ve lost 20 pounds since then. You had to literally jump off to the side of the bridge to get out of the way of the train. It was pretty bad infrastructure, and consequently the only people who take trains there are people who have no choice. Unless you want the adventure, there’s no reason to do it because the system is quite bad.

I just say to the government that on the issue of transport, it would be very interesting to put together an all-party parliamentary committee to look at this issue and ask, are there ways to take traffic off our highways and put it on to rail service? What’s clear is that we can’t keep on going the way we are now. We can keep on building highways, but eventually it’s self-redundant. Build it and they will come.

The other thing I want to comment on about transportation, and this relates to rail as well, is how bad the east-west connections are in northern Ontario. My good friend Mr McDonald now has to travel as an MPP; he did before when he was on council. If you’ve got to go from, let’s say, Timmins to Thunder Bay, it’s 1,200 bucks return on Bearskin. Who can afford 1,200 bucks but an MPP and a few business people? We have our expenses paid. When I travel and take a \$1,200 ticket to go to Thunder Bay, I submit it to the finance branch and



they pay me back. Most business people, all business people, work that way. They submit the bill to their employer.

But if you're an individual in northern Ontario wanting to visit Thunder Bay for whatever reason, who can afford 1,275 bucks to go from Timmins to Thunder Bay return? My point is there's hardly any other way to do it except by driving. If you don't own a car, you either get on a bus, and a bus—I forget what it is; I actually checked it because I was thinking of taking it—is something like 14 or 15 hours. Most people say, "I'm not prepared to sit in a bus for 14 or 15 hours to get to Thunder Bay." There is a three- or four-hour layover in Hearst. You take the ONR bus to Hearst and wait three or four hours in the middle of the night. I've talked to people and it's not a very pleasant experience. Hearst is a beautiful community, but who wants to get off a bus in the middle of the night, especially in winter, for three or four hours and then take off and go to Thunder Bay?

So you say, maybe people can take the train. If you're in Thunder Bay, you can't take a train. You've got to drive an hour and a half away, I think to Longlac, to grab the train. Then if you're trying to get to Timmins, I guess with the train you would either end up in Foleyet or Chapeau, which would be the connection to get off, at which point you would then have to drive up to Timmins. We have effectively killed transportation in northern Ontario.

It's really come to a point where if you're trying to do business up north, it's a very expensive business. If you're trying to do business among northern communities, you had better have a car and be prepared to drive, or else have a lot of money and be able to fly, because there's no other real option for people to travel for business or pleasure in northern Ontario.

Successive governments federally—we've got the federal Liberal government that basically has devastated our transportation system up north after having said they were mad at Mulroney for trying to do the same. Jean Chrétien is five times what Brian Mulroney ever dreamed of being. I find that a really ironic thing. It bugs me. Everybody said, "That Mulroney, we just have to get rid of him." I voted against him. I didn't think he was any good either. But for the option they said, "We're going to vote for Chrétien," and Chrétien is five times what Mulroney ever wanted to be. He sped up privatization at the federal level like times five. He basically said he was going to rip up NAFTA; he signed it. He was going to scrap the GST; he still imposed it. Our transportation infrastructure up north has basically been devastated. I think one of the things we have to look at through this parliamentary committee is—

**Interjection:** Who voted for him?

**Mr Bisson:** That's the amazing thing. The psychology of why people vote Liberal is quite interesting. It's actually quite scary when you think about it, because they like to talk like New Democrats but they act like Tories. It's really interesting to watch Tories—I should say Liberals; same thing.

The parliamentary committee I suggest would be able to look at that issue of what transportation is like in northern Ontario, look at ways of being able to provide better services in the north so that when people are trying to do the east-west connection across the big part of the province—and it's big. As Mr McDonald and others from northern Ontario would know—Mr Gravelle is here as well, and Mr Brown—it is a really tough thing to do. So this committee could look at that particular issue, how we're able to increase the east-west connections across the north.

The other thing I just want to say in the three or four minutes I've got left this evening—I've still got time on the clock for the next time we come back—is the need for roads in some communities in northern Ontario. We haven't got any. We've got a whole bunch of communities in northern Ontario that have no roads at all.

When you guys are talking about putting extra lanes of traffic on the 401 or the 400, can we just take some of them, even if we didn't have the pavement on them, because we'd like to have a road from Highway 11 up to Moosonee. That would be a really good thing for a start. We'd love to have an all-season road going up the coast and connecting those communities. Ogoki is another community in my riding that would love to have a road that comes back down Highway 11 toward the Nakina area, and there's a whole bunch of other communities in northwestern Ontario. If you are talking about building roads in southern Ontario, we just want to remind the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who is here, that we want some of those roads. You can leave off the asphalt. We're not greedy; we'll just take gravel and you can oil it every now and then. We'd just be happy to have a few roads up north in those communities that are landlocked.

Again, how do you do business in those areas? For example, for a community that has to bring in material for a construction project, building a house, a school, a hospital, whatever it is, the transportation cost is enormous. We can get it by rail up to Moosonee—that's not a problem—but try to get it beyond there. My good friend Mr Luke Cool, who's mayor in Moosonee and runs MTL transport services, basically barges that go up north—that's an expensive proposition for people who have to buy those products. So roads would certainly be a big thing.

I don't think people up on the coast or people in Howard Hampton's riding want it all done in one day. All they want to know is that there's a plan, that the government is committed to moving toward building roads on a reasonable timeline so they can say, "At least in my lifetime and in the lifetime of my children we're going to see roads that we never had before in some of these communities."

I want to advocate for the Speaker of the House, because I know there's no such thing as road rage in Manitoulin. That was mentioned earlier tonight, and I know, because I've driven in Manitoulin, it's impossible to get road rage there. He would like to have a couple of

highways as well. So on behalf of all us northerners, I'd just like to advocate, if you're talking about putting extra lanes on the 400, the 401 and all that stuff, boy, we would really settle for a couple of roads.

Speaker, I see it's almost 9:30. I would suggest we adjourn the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being almost 9:30 of the clock, this concludes this evening's discussion of red light camera pilot projects.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2127.*

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Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen,  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop  
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