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des débats  
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**Jedi 17 octobre 2002**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 October 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 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

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 10, 2002, on the motion for second reading of 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.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to compliment the member for Sudbury and the member Timmins-James Bay for doing a great job for their parties.

I seek unanimous consent for the evening debate on Bill 149 to proceed as follows: each party may speak for up to 20 minutes and there shall be no questions and comments at the end of that time; the motion for adjournment of the debate will be deemed to have been made and carried and the Speaker will adjourn the House; and for the purposes of standing order 46, tonight's debate shall be considered to be one full sessional day.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson):** Is there unanimous consent? I hear agreement.

Therefore, I understand we're going to split the time three ways, and the member for Scarborough-Agincourt will kick off.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on this bill that extends the use of red light cameras in our municipalities for at least two years, and perhaps longer. I would say to the public that I think it's a bill that has been found to be very useful by the municipalities that have been using it. I might take my hat off to one of my colleagues, our member from Eglinton-Lawrence, Mike Colle, who, members in the Legislature will remember, introduced what's called a private member's bill several years ago and fought

tirelessly to make this a reality. I think he perhaps never got the credit he should have. The government introduced the bill and it was passed, but he certainly was the champion of this and I think probably many lives have been saved as a result of that.

I'm supportive of this bill. I represent a riding in Toronto. It probably is true in most communities across Ontario, but it has become extremely dangerous to enter an intersection when the light turns green without looking both ways very carefully. Running red lights, certainly in the area of Toronto I come from, and I suspect in other jurisdictions, was reaching almost epidemic proportions. The police today have limited resources, and those resources, rightly in my opinion, are allocated to dealing with the more serious crimes in our communities. That's where I think we want our police devoting their attention. But what it means is that there aren't the resources available for policing matters like this in the same manner that we might have seen 15 or 20 years ago.

I can remember meeting with members of the police organizations who were talking to me and others about the need to embrace technology; that we as a society have got to make sure that, in all aspects of how we govern, we are prepared to embrace technology. This is one way we embrace technology. We can see right now in the police efforts in the US around Washington, DC, with the terrible sniper situation, that the break may very well come through the use of technology such as cameras. I gather that the armed forces are now involved with sensor planes. But the purpose of raising this is that this is one area where we can use readily available technology to augment our police resources.

**1850**

As a matter of fact, there is a red light camera very close to where I live, at Huntingwood and Brimley. That happens to be the exact place where a young police officer died just a year ago. It was a young woman police officer responding to a break-and-enter, you may recall, at high speed, because they'd heard it was an elderly person's home being broken into. They were not using the siren because they wanted to apprehend the person. It just so happens that there was a red light camera in that area. It did not catch the accident. The accident happened a few feet away, but had it been at that intersection, that red light camera probably would have been useful in the investigation.

We're supporting this bill. But it does lead, for the Legislature, to the issue of what other technologies we need to embrace here. What other things do we have to begin considering that our police organizations can use? I

might add that at some stage we're going to need a debate here too about how far we're prepared to allow technology to invade our privacy. I frankly don't know where to draw that line any longer.

I do remember that about 10 years ago there was a debate around the use of electronic anklet bracelets for prisoners who, rather than being incarcerated, could essentially be put under house arrest and technology could be used to make sure they didn't violate that. That was an experiment worth supporting, and it expanded. Those bracelets are now perhaps being used for individuals with Alzheimer's.

Where do we draw the line on technology? How far are we prepared to embrace technology in the interest of safe communities? Just today I heard that the average person is on camera eight times a day. Somewhere we are on a video eight times a day. That's going to increase dramatically. Do we want to use video cameras on most of our major streets? I suspect that would catch some people in criminal acts, but at some sacrifice to our personal freedoms.

It goes back to supporting this bill. It is part of the Legislature's embracing technology to help our police organizations with scarce resources do a better and better job. There will be other examples where I think we should be embracing technology, the use of video cameras, on a broader basis. We've all seen how many people have been apprehended with the use of video cameras in stores where robberies take place. The use of that video camera has been helpful. This is but the first of many bills, I suspect, where the Legislature will be asked to provide for additional use of technology by police organizations, and I support that. But at some stage, we also need to have that debate. How far are we prepared to go? What are the new boundaries we want to draw?

I think all of us would have drawn a different boundary before September 11 of last year, when we all realized that perhaps times have changed. You now hear people say, "I'm quite prepared to allow things that I wouldn't have allowed before September 11 of last year, if it means that we are going to have a safer community." As I say, that's an important debate that we need to have.

In any event, this evening we're dealing with the bill that enables the municipalities that want to to continue with the use of red light cameras. It has worked. As I said, it's an idea that my colleague Mike Colle had many years ago and it has proven to have been a good idea. Dalton McGuinty and our party are supportive of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** As per the agreement of the House, there are no questions and comments, so we'll move to the member for Toronto-Danforth.

*Applause.*

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Thank you for the applause from the other side. You don't know what I'm going to say yet.

**Hon Mr Baird:** I have great confidence you'll be wise.

**Ms Churley:** What I've got to say is, what have we got here today? We've got something like photo radar

here, I think. Mr Speaker, I certainly don't want to embarrass you, because you're in the chair now, but you are also a private member. I have the Hansard from when you spoke to this issue. I just can't help but quote you. It's not allowed to steal somebody's very words; I'm not going to do that. But you said something very interesting about this bill before us. You mentioned why the government brought this in as a pilot project and is now extending the pilot project. What you said was, "...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." As the Speaker said, and of course knows because he's the Speaker, you can't use that word here.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** What's the H-word?

**Ms Churley:** I can't say it here, because I'll be ruled out. I think you know what it is.

Let me give you a little history lesson—you weren't here, so there's no blame on you, because I'm sure you would have supported the NDP on this; I'm positive. All the new members in the Liberal Party, I'm sure, would have supported the NDP. But back then, when the NDP was in government—I think it was 1993—after extensive consultation with communities, and with police officers in particular, the NDP brought in something called photo radar, which was cameras on highways, because there was an increasingly difficult problem with speeding.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I remember that.

**Ms Churley:** Remember that? You weren't here, but do you remember that? We were using surveillance technology in a positive way, because that's what this is all about, and we were doing it for a darned good reason.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Tax revenue.

**Ms Churley:** I'm going to quote you now. They're still saying that, Mr Speaker, because they're afraid of what you coined as the "H-word." I will now call that the "David Christopherson H-word."

They're still saying the same thing. We tried and tried to convince both the sitting Liberals at the time and Tories, who were a little band sitting over here then, a very loud and boisterous little band preparing for the Common Sense Revolution. They did not take safety considerations very seriously at that time, because all the evidence was there that photo radar would make a difference and save people's lives.

*Interjection.*

I would say to the Minister of Energy—who's heckling me nicely over there, smiling, that it's a tax grab—you've got your lines down. They're still using the same lines. That's what they said then: "This has nothing to do with safety, this is just a tax grab," even though we had full support from the police on that issue. You guys then, who were sitting over here, and the Liberals were sitting there, vehemently, not just even gently, opposed it, as though this was the worst socialist plot ever hatched on this planet. Given some of the other things we were doing, I was really—

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** We didn't say that.

**Ms Churley:** You weren't here, Marilyn. I remember what was said; I remember it very well. I really wish I

had the actual quotes with me, and I'm going to have to bring them forward, because this is an opportunity to have a little fun with the party that was sitting over here and then was the government, because they absolutely and vehemently opposed photo radar. We kept trying to explain to them that actually the principle behind what we were trying to do with photo radar was exactly the same—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please take your seat for just a moment. I know we're not going to be here that long this evening, but it's a little louder than most of us prefer when we're speaking. If you could tone it down, it would be much appreciated. Sorry for the interruption, member.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, I hope you're not suggesting that the members aren't listening to me.

**Ms Mushinski:** I am.

**Ms Churley:** You see, somebody is.

Anyway, let's get serious for a moment. I support the bill. It's not very often that I get the opportunity to stand up and say I support a government bill. It's a good bill, but it's a silly bill. It shouldn't be before us today. It shouldn't be here because you brought in a pilot project a couple of years ago. Instead of just bringing in the law, you brought in a pilot project. Do you know what this bill is? I know you do know, Mr Speaker, because you spoke to it. It's a couple of pages and all it does is extend the pilot project. That's why we're here tonight.

**1900**

The government might argue, "You don't have to be here. You could just give us quick passage." I suppose we could do that, and we pretty well are getting out of here early tonight, because we've agreed and actually made a deal here tonight. So we support this bill. We believe it does contribute to public safety and is using the latest technology in a really productive, positive way. This really is about saving lives, and that's important.

What I would like to say, and I know others have said it as well, is that you really should give the municipalities the power to just do this. We've had many discussions in this House. The Minister of Municipal Affairs brought forward a new Municipal Act, which of course I didn't support. It was entirely inadequate for the modern economy. The larger cities, not just in Ontario but across the country, are now the economic engines of our country and are still treated as creatures. Can you imagine, Mr Speaker? The city of Toronto is still treated as a creature of this government. The Municipal Act that was brought forward still treats a city as large as Toronto, your city of Hamilton, the city of Ottawa and other large cities across this province as though they're creatures that can't make these decisions on their own. There are business people—the people that the government most likes to listen to—saying the same thing, that the time has come to release the cities, take the shackles off and give them the freedom and the resources to carry out their responsibilities, many of which you've downloaded on cities without the resources to do them.

I'm going to digress just very briefly, because it is connected. In the Justice O'Connor report, part two,

where he talks about full cost recovery for water—and it is related—

**Mr Chudleigh:** What do red lights have to do with Justice O'Connor?

**Ms Churley:** I'm coming to that.

He makes a real point of saying that there are some issues around municipalities' ability to pay. He was gentle about it, but basically he was saying that the government has downloaded too many services, particularly social services, on to municipalities and that they should review it.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** Don't even get me going on education. That's another subject for another time.

What he is saying is that the government should review that downloading, particularly the social services, so they can do the things that they should be doing. This is why it's relevant. This is an area where we should give the power to municipalities to do what they do best.

I understand from reading the bill—it was a quick read over dinner back in our caucus offices. We had very good fish tonight, by the way. I'd like to congratulate and thank all the cooks and the staff in the dining room for providing us with that really good dinner when we had to be here at night. We really appreciate the work they do on our behalf.

We are here tonight again debating a bill that does nothing but expand—and you would agree this is rather silly—a pilot project. Why not just make it into a real project? Forget about the pilot part of it; let's actually say we're going to do this because the proof is there now. We know the evidence is there that it saves lives. Municipalities do know their communities far better than we do. Of course, many of us here come from the municipal sector.

**Hon Mr Baird:** You know?

**Ms Churley:** I was a city councillor in the Riverdale area. I know it very well, and I can tell you a story. When we talk about these red lights at intersections, this is just but one example of something that happened to me and my little grandson. We were almost victims. We were at the corner of Gerrard and Carlaw, close to my home. The light had changed. I was holding his hand, which I'm very grateful for. It had actually gone all the way from red to green. A woman was in front of us. She stepped out because the light had totally changed. We were just behind her. James was starting to run ahead of me, and this car came barrelling out of nowhere. I'm sure we've all had experiences like this over the past few years. I don't know how fast it was going, but well above the speed limit of 40 kilometres an hour. The woman in front of us came this close to being hit. I grabbed her. I was holding on to James with all my might. I grabbed this woman by the coat, and just in the nick of time—and I mean in the nick of time—pulled her back. We came that close to being hit. It just came out of nowhere.

I think we're hearing more and more of such stories these days. It is so easy to speed. People are in a hurry all the time. We here are in a hurry all the time: you're late for a caucus meeting; you're late for an important cabinet meeting; you're on duty, and you're late for the House.

Whatever it is, we're always in a hurry. We're too busy. There's too much going on. That becomes the priority for people to get from point A to point B as fast as they can.

This is a really good use of modern technology to try to alleviate that, to try to make sure people understand that those cameras are out there. We just don't have the resources any more. It's always been hard to find enough resources to have enough police officers on the street when there's so much else to do. Having red light cameras at certain intersections will go a long way to saving lives and making our streets safer, particularly for our kids and the elderly. Those are the people we are most worried about.

By extension, what I would urge the government to do—and there are rumours that the government is looking at a way to bring photo radar back. Can you believe it? I hope they do. If you do, I promise I will—well, no; I can't promise not to have a little bit of fun with it. I can't promise that I won't read some of the quotes from when we were in government, because there are so many, but I promise that this party will support you, and you will show that sometimes it's OK to flip-flop. We make fun of people when they flip-flop. Of course, we don't flip-flop—no, I won't go there tonight.

This is a case where I would be very grateful if the government of the day would flip-flop and say the NDP was right after all and bring back photo radar to this province.

I think I'll end on that note. I'm sure that people are anxiously waiting for me to finish so they can go home—or go to meetings, which is what I have to do.

I would say to the government that it would make far more sense to turn this into a real bill that gives municipalities the authority to install those cameras and to move forward from there and bring in photo radar, or whatever you want to call it—we really need to take that next step. Perhaps the government will find even more advanced technology and find some very good reasons to do it to get them off the hook so we don't have to use the H-word again.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Certainly a lot of constituents in Nepean-Carleton are supportive of this bill, as are a lot of hard-working law enforcement officers in Ottawa-Carleton, where I'm from. There are red light cameras in the city of Toronto.

I see the member for Scarborough Centre here. I thought I'd use this opportunity to mention that Marilyn Mushinski, the member for Scarborough Centre, will be celebrating her 20th anniversary as an elected official in the coming week. I know all members would want to congratulate her on that.

I'm very pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in this debate.

Because Michael Gordon Harris and Peter Hardie would like to call it an early night, we should maybe conclude the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That completes it. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock Monday afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1909.*

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