



No. 76A

N° 76A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 21 October 2004

Jeudi 21 octobre 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 October 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 octobre 2004

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HIGHWAY MEMORIALS

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I move that, in the opinion of this House, Bonnechere River Bridge on Highway 17 in Horton township should be renamed Provincial Constable Philip Shrive Memorial Bridge, pursuant to the Highway Memorials for Fallen Police Officers Act, 2002.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr Yakabuski, you have 10 minutes.

Mr Yakabuski: It is my honour and pleasure to rise in this House today, not only for the first time introducing a matter of private members' business, but also for the very nature of the motion, and that is to honour a fallen officer of the Ontario Provincial Police, Philip Shrive.

When Philip Shrive joined the force as a civilian CPIC operator in 1972, he did so because he wanted to be a police officer. In 1974, he was presented with his provincial badge by his older brother Paul, who was already an active member of the OPP: badge number 4981. He had his first posting at Sioux Lookout.

Following that, he was transferred to Downsview and worked as a motorcycle traffic enforcement officer. He never lost his love of motorcycles; he retained that for the rest of his life.

In 1989, he went back up north and worked in the South Porcupine detachment as a court officer, district OMPPAC coordinator and with RIDE. He was also project coordinator in the crime unit. Here he began his direct involvement in the Ontario Provincial Police Association executive.

In 1996, he transferred to West Carleton, and after the closing of that detachment, he transferred to the Renfrew detachment in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

On May 16, Phil Shrive was involved in an accident while conducting routine radar enforcement and succumbed to his injuries seven days later. He understood when he accepted that badge from his brother that death could await him at any time. The nature of a policeman's job is one in which you don't know, when you leave that

detachment in the morning or the evening or whenever your shift begins, what is out there waiting for you. He understood that that was an inherent risk of the job. But I dare say that when he left the detachment office on May 16, 2003, only eight days from his retirement, that daily inherent risk was foremost on his mind. I am quite certain that Philip Shrive may have been thinking in a bitter-sweet way about what was going to happen eight days later, and that was his retirement—a retirement, I'm sure, that he would naturally be approaching with mixed emotions, because he was going to be saying goodbye to his comrades on a job that he served with distinction for over 30 years.

But he was going to be in a position then where he could spend more time with his wife, his children, and some of pursuits that he loved so dearly, such as that of being a fixed-wing pilot, and his motorcycles, as I had mentioned earlier, so he could get a little time to ride around that beautiful country that we share in Renfrew county in eastern Ontario.

I'm sure there might have been some repartee in the office that morning, some of his fellow officers maybe needling Phil a little bit about, "Well, eight days and counting, Shrive, you're outta here," maybe even, May 16 being a Friday, thinking about at some point having a chance to have a cup of coffee and talk about old times. I do know that his best friend on the force, Sergeant Dave Crilly, did share a coffee with him shortly before he went out on that last, fatal ride. So we wonder what might have been going through Phil's mind that day, but I'm sure, as I say, the emotions would have run the gamut in so many ways.

But later that day, as I said, Provincial Constable Philip Shrive was involved in an accident in the line of duty where he was critically injured, and he succumbed to his injuries seven days later. On that day, May 23, 2003, Ontario lost another one of its provincial police constables, Philip's wife Karen lost her husband, his parents lost their son, his two brothers and his sister lost a brother, and his children lost their father.

1010

Maybe I can take a moment now to point out that in the members' west gallery today are Philip Shrive's widow, Karen; Sergeant Dave Crilly of the Renfrew Ontario Provincial Police detachment, and Phil's best friend; and also Tony Lamothe, the executive officer of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. We thank you for joining us today.

In the year 2000, a memorial to police officers was erected here at Queen's Park to honour all the fallen

officers who lost their lives in the line of duty in the province of Ontario. Premier Mike Harris, Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston and Solicitor General David Tsubouchi of the day were there to unveil that memorial in May 2000.

In 2002, the then opposition member and now Honourable Rick Bartolucci introduced a private member's bill, and I commend Mr Bartolucci for his passion and his conviction in believing that something more had to be done. There had to be another way of memorializing and honouring these fallen heroes in a more individual way. So he introduced a bill to the House, Bill 128. If I may read it: An Act to permit the naming of highway bridges and other structures on the King's Highway in memory of police officers who have died in the line of duty. I wasn't a member of the House at that time but I certainly would have supported that bill, and I commend Mr Bartolucci and the members of this House for passing it at that time.

As a result of that bill, it gave us the opportunity to name structures after fallen police officers. Last year, Sergeant Mike Forester, Sergeant Colin Slight and provincial Constable Janice Sawbridge came to my office and asked if I would be willing to bring this forth to the Legislature. I immediately said that I would not only be happy but I would be honoured to do so. Subsequent to that, the council of the town of Renfrew, the council of the township of Horton, where the bridge is located, the council of the township of Admaston/Bromley, and the council of the region of Whitewater have all passed motions supporting this and encouraging me to do just that.

On the first anniversary of Phil Shrive's death, May 23 of this year, the members of the Ontario Provincial Police detachment in Renfrew erected a memorial in his honour on the very spot on Highway 17 where this fatal accident occurred. It is a cross with a replica of Constable Shrive's duty hat and also his badge number.

It is my hope that the members of this House will do Philip Shrive the honour of, in addition to that memorial placed by his fellow officers, allowing us to name the bridge traversing the Bonnechere River in his honour.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I congratulate the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his very good 10 minutes of history with regard to this fallen officer, and also for the initiative.

Let me speak now, Speaker, through you always, directly to Karen and David. Karen, as I mentioned earlier to you before the House took place, we today celebrate Philip's life. We celebrate his dedication, we celebrate his passion, we celebrate the diligence with which he carried out those very important duties as a police officer. We celebrate, in fact, in death the continuing memory of a man we should all be proud of.

I want to tell you, David, I've had the experience of hiring two police officers, in my time as a police services board member, who have died tragically in the line of

duty. I continue to be friends of those police officers' best friends, so I know the pain that you're experiencing today.

In that pain, Karen and David, I want you to realize that the emotion you're feeling is experienced in this House and across the province of Ontario. We are very proud of the dedication of your husband. Tragically, he died, and he must be remembered in a significant, meaningful way.

That brings me back to the private member's bill because, Karen and David, I believe it's very important for you to understand that the impetus for this private member's bill came from the Ontario Provincial Police. We have a representative with us here today: Tony Lamothe. They came and visited me and asked if I would champion the cause. It's an honour to champion this type of cause. Today we see the fruits of the harvest. We see that, for the first time in the history of the province of Ontario, a police officer will be recognized in a memorial bridge.

As I heard the member speak, I kept on thinking that this is exactly the type of situation that we should be remembering on an ongoing basis, because I heard the enormous love of the job he had. I heard about the enormous commitment Philip had. I heard about the enormous sense of camaraderie he had with his fellow police officers—especially David. I heard of the passion he had for his family and his wife, Karen, and for his association.

Truly, this is a celebration, albeit filled with the emotion that is always generated with death. It is a celebration of life, of the life of a good man, of the life of a good police officer, and that should never, ever be forgotten. Karen and David, know that we share in your pain. Know as well that from here on in, if this resolution passes, he will be remembered in a very positive, meaningful, real way. His candle will continue to burn very, very brightly, providing those of us in Ontario with the confidence we should have in our police forces, and also he will be that example for others to become police officers, to protect and to serve.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of speaking today, and God bless you.

1020

Mr Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): I am honoured to make a few remarks today, having represented the area that Constable Shrive served in, the township of West Carleton as it then was, from 1996 to 1999.

I want to speak particularly about his work as a community services officer, a marine operator and generally his work with the youth of the township of West Carleton. I'm pleased to acknowledge the help of Eli El-Chantiry, who is now the serving councillor for the area of the township of West Carleton in the city of Ottawa. As you know we had an amalgamation in and around 1999-2000. Before that particular time Mr El-Chantiry ran a restaurant in Constance Bay, and Phil would often drop in for a cup of coffee and talk with Eli.

Eli, not only now as a municipal politician, knew Phil very well and in fact was honoured to give one of the eulogies at Constable Shrive's funeral.

I like to also acknowledge Peggy Austen, the youth program coordinator of the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, who had a great deal of experience with Phil in his work at West Carleton. I wanted to say that we in West Carleton were really, really fortunate to have Phil there at that particular time, because in that community we lost five young people over a very short period of time. Unfortunately, more than one of them committed suicide, and therefore there was a crisis in the community, a crisis in terms of trying to deal with a very, very difficult problem. The community felt immediately relieved that Constable Shrive stepped up to the plate and helped with that situation in many ways.

Constable Shrive had a commitment to young people in our community. He was the first officer to have an office in West Carleton Secondary School, the high school in that particular area. He had classes with kids, he went and talked with kids about the problems of dealing with their anguish and grief with regard to losing young people in that community.

He held activities in West Carleton Secondary School to promote things like using seat belts in their cars and to deal with anti-impaired driving programs. We will never know how many lives he has saved through his public dedication, by working with the youth in West Carleton. I must say that when he was working with the youth of West Carleton his children—Neil, Karen, Graham and Becky—were involved in many of the things that he undertook as well.

He worked with the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre in terms of dealing with the increased awareness of issues of youth suicide, and developed prevention strategies as well. As a result of a suicide in that school, Phil got involved in the early development of the Brady Burnette Teen Assistance Fund, a partnership with the local business people and to raise funds and awareness regarding youth suicide prevention.

Phil loved boating, and he was the first marine officer ever to ply local waters. One of the things he did in addition to his enforcement duties was that he took out on his boat, from time to time, youth that were at risk, so that he would be able to influence them to lead more constructive lives as he went forward.

One of the most heart-rending stories that I did hear about Phil was told by Peggy Austen. He organized a very, very important event for a seven-year-old and a 10-year-old who were suffering from terminal cancer. He arranged for a box at the Ottawa Senators hockey club at the Corel Centre in the west part of Ottawa, to take those children to a hockey game with their parents, and he drove them back and forth in his police car. Both of those young children unfortunately passed away months later, but their parents remember the kindness and care that Constable Shrive showed with his generosity to people who were in great need of support.

West Carleton felt a great blow in hearing about this particular accident. One of the sad parts about amal-

gamation in the city of Ottawa was that we lost our OPP detachment, and we lost Constable Shrive as a result of that. We all in that area were fighting against losing the OPP detachment and people like Constable Shrive, and unfortunately we did lose him and his great efforts that he made to our community in that area.

Karen, I want to express the community's sadness, of course, but our thanks for all of the contributions your husband and your family have made to my community. He will be a man that will be remembered always, and we admire him greatly.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): It is indeed my privilege and honour to stand to speak to this private member's motion today. I commend the member from Renfrew for bringing this motion forward. We in Canada often name bridges, rivers, streets, towns after events in other countries, after people from other countries. This is an opportunity for us as Ontarians, as Canadians, to honour one of our own heroes.

I never had the opportunity to meet Constable Shrive. I never had the opportunity to know him or his family before today. But I do know, from what we have been told today and the very sad events that led up to his death, that he was a man who served his community. He was a fine police officer and he was a hero to the people who knew him.

Canadians are rather unassuming in looking at their heroes, in determining who their heroes are, in remembering them or in offering praise to them. You can go to literally any town or city in Ontario, and you will see that there are street signs that reflect trees, street signs that reflect fauna, street signs that reflect foreign places around the world, but you will not see the names of local heroes; you will not see the names of local people who have made an impact on their community. I welcome this opportunity to start to change that, to start to say that Canadians have a proud history, that the people of Ontario have a proud history, and certainly the family of Philip Shrive has a proud history that should be put on that bridge. The name should be there for all time so that people will not forget one truly great hero from that community.

The people of Renfrew have lost someone whom they had grown to respect, to know, and who had given of himself over many years of distinguished and dedicated service. That's what we need to remember. A hero can distinguish himself or herself in many ways, but I would think the greatest heroes are not those that do some heroic event once in their lives, but those who wake up each and every day and put their lives on the line, as Mr Shrive did. He went out every day knowing the risks of being a police officer. He went out every day to defend the people of his community, to make sure they lived with law and order, and in the end he gave his life in that service.

1030

We are supporting this bill in his memory, but we are supporting this bill as well so that generations from now people from the Shrive family, people who did not know

him at all, will stand on that bridge, and a child will ask his parent, "Who was Philip Shrive? Why is this bridge named 'Philip Shrive?'" The story can be told, and retold again, of how he gave his life in service of his community, that he made the sacrifice and made his community a better place in which to live.

We are supporting this because it is the right thing to do, but we are supporting this because Renfrew, and Ontario, was a better place because of Officer Shrive, and the remembrance in the name of this bridge will serve for all time the people of Ontario to remember a hero.

Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): I'm pleased to be able to stand in the House today and support Mr Yakabuski's motion to rename the bridge over the Bonnechere River in honour of Constable Philip Shrive.

I believe it's very appropriate that we honour the people who have given their lives to protect us. Our police officers, and indeed our firefighters and other emergency responders, go to the job every day not knowing what danger they will encounter in the course of their duty or what they will be called on to do to protect us. On a daily basis they face dangers, they face crises and they face incidents that none of the rest of us are called on to do in the course of our daily lives. They do this without question, without resistance. They know it is their job to protect the rest of us in our society. It is right that we should honour the people who protect the citizens of Ontario.

Philip Shrive is an excellent example of the wonderful police officers who protect us, the citizens of the province, in the course of their daily work. It is very right that we should honour Philip Shrive, who unfortunately lost his life in the line of duty, working for the people of Ontario.

I am very pleased to support Mr Yakabuski's motion.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition): It's an honour for me to speak to this motion as well, especially in the presence of Mrs Shrive.

I didn't know Constable Shrive personally, but I did attend his funeral in my capacity as Minister of Public Safety and Security. The depth of feeling and affection and love for Philip Shrive was so evident at his funeral. It was indeed a very emotional time, clearly, for the family, the community and fellow officers throughout North America.

I had the opportunity to be responsible for policing as Solicitor General and as the Minister of Public Safety and Security for almost six years in this province. I was the critic, in opposition, for the Ministry of Solicitor General in earlier days for about four years as well. I had the opportunity to work very closely with police officers from rookie ranks to senior management levels in policing throughout those years, and my respect has just grown and grown. The contributions they make on a daily basis, we've all heard of that, but I don't think you can really understand it unless you are a police officer, a serving police officer, or if you are a family member of a police officer—a spouse, the children, brothers, sisters—and others who understand and appreciate and recognize

the threats that they can be faced with on daily basis on any shift.

I should point out that both of my daughters are OPP officers, and I'm very proud of them. I recall my older girl talking about a pull-over she had on the 401 at 3 o'clock in the morning, a speeding car with Quebec licence plates. She's not the biggest gal in the world, but getting out of a car at 3 o'clock in the morning to confront someone speeding—fortunately, in that particular situation, another officer was passing by, pulled over and provided backup support. It turned out that these two individuals were wanted, and they are armed. That's the kind of situation—totally unexpected—that you can be confronted with, in what you think is perhaps the most innocent of situations, and be faced with life-and-death decisions. Those kinds of challenges can confront a police officer at any moment in his or her carrying out of duties.

These are subjects that I certainly can get emotional about, not just because my daughters are police officers but because I've been involved with so many of these issues over the years. What perhaps tugged at my heartstrings initially and got me looking at so many of these issues was the murder of Joe MacDonald in Sudbury a number of years ago, and getting to know the MacDonald family personally. I'm still great friends with Joe's brother-in-law, Franco Fragomeni.

What that was the catalyst for, when I had the great opportunity to be Solicitor General, was the development of the survivors' tuition fund, which provides education tuition funds for families of officers who lose their lives in the line of duty. Without doubt, I think that's the initiative I'm most proud of during my time in government.

I want to compliment Mr Yakabuski. I served with his dad in this House. Mr Sterling, and I think Mr Bradley, are the only remaining survivors of those days. It's making us feel old on occasion. But he is doing his dad proud; there's no question about it. He's doing his riding proud.

This is a wonderful initiative. It's wonderful in the fact that it recognizes Phil's life, his contribution to policing, and the ultimate sacrifice that Phil Shrive made on behalf of all of us.

Congratulations to Mr Yakabuski. It's wonderful to see Mrs Shrive here. We hope the government moves on this initiative very quickly.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I too want to support the initiative introduced today by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, and also to say that although I never knew the late Mr Shrive or Karen, this is an important way for people like me and many other members to recognize and honour the memory of the late Mr Shrive.

Many of us know, have met and talked to many policemen and women in the course of our lifetime enough to understand the service they provide and risks they encounter on the job, day in and day out. It's because of the risks they face and the service they provide that they enjoy the respect of all of us, the majority of

citizens in this province and this country. While the job may be free of risks, problems, dangers some days, many months of the year or sometimes years, they live with the fear that at any one point of their working lives as police officers they put themselves on the line and they put their lives on the line. They know that and we know that. That is why we respect the work they do. It's not an easy job. It's not a job that I would do. But we are blessed with the fact that there are many men and women who want to do that job for the sole purpose of protecting the lives of Ontario citizens.

1040

How do we honour those officers who die on the job, protecting the lives of the citizen of Ontario? This initiative, this particular bill we are dealing with, is a way to remember that individual life and the service they provided. It's a way to remind the public of the service that police officers are doing day in and day out and it's a way to honour policemen and women for the work they generally do. So it isn't just to honour the late Mr Shrive, but it is to honour the policemen and women, the police service.

By naming a bridge for the late Mr Shrive, it's a way to permanently put his name there so that we may remember. I think it's a good thing to do, and it's an important way for us, as politicians, to remind ourselves that we need to find respectful ways to honour their service.

So it's with pleasure that I'm here to support the bill and give some of my time to permit many other members who may wish to say what they would like to say on behalf of the late Mr Shrive, and for whatever comments they would want to make on behalf of his wife, who is present here today.

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): It's my pleasure as well to rise with my colleagues in support of the motion from the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke in support of a memorial for Constable Shrive.

I think one of the things we forget sometimes, as we honour the memory of the man who did the work in his community—and I heard about his work with youth and, obviously, his compassion as he dealt with people who broke the laws. I read that he gave them a break sometimes instead of giving them a ticket. I think we sometimes forget about the person himself and the incredible juggling that someone must do in that line of work for and with their families, that kind of dedication and the toll it can take on a family. To stay for 30 years on behalf of service in your community really says a lot about the man, the person himself.

That's the tribute, I think. We not only remember those who give their lives to serve and protect. That's not a cliché. I remember, as a mom, taking our kids to meet the police officer, because this was the person you could always turn to when you got into some difficulty. But as I now have two officers who are in my family, I recognize the extraordinary toll that it takes on their families, because there is the issue around fear, the fact that they go out to serve and protect others. It's tough and it's

hard, and for someone to stay in that for 30 years really is a testimony to the extraordinary gentleman that Constable Shrive must have been.

I say that every time someone crosses that bridge, they're not only going to remember his dedication as an individual, but his extraordinary commitment as a family man to his wife and to his children. Those are wonderful memories that we all can keep, and especially for his wife, Karen, and the children.

I thank you for bringing this motion forward and for permitting all of us in this House the opportunity to support Minister Bartolucci and yourself in memory of fallen officers.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. Just to clarify, it's my understanding that the House has agreed that the remaining NDP time will be used by the official opposition.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm pleased to join in the debate this morning and support this motion. I too would like to welcome Constable Philip Shrive's wife, Karen, and colleague to the Legislature this morning.

We often fail to show adequate appreciation for the front-line officers who work every day to keep us safe. They are brave and committed men and women to whom we owe a constant debt of gratitude. Every day, police officers put their lives on the line. Tragically, some officers are killed in the line of duty. It is our obligation to support their families and to honour these officers.

As has already been mentioned by the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, in 2002, the member for Sudbury, the Honourable Mr Bartolucci, introduced Bill 128, the Highway Memorials for Fallen Police Officers Act. Under this act, it is appropriate that this House pass this resolution to name the Bonnechere bridge on Highway 17 in Horton township after provincial Constable Philip Shrive.

Over his 30 years of service, Constable Shrive led a distinguished career and held many different roles within the OPP. As has been said, he was tragically killed in a roadside accident in 2003. I particularly note that Constable Shrive shared many of the passions that I share. He was a pilot and had a love for flying and he also enjoyed riding motorcycles, two different activities that I also share and enjoy.

I know that Constable Shrive is missed dearly by his family and friends. I can certainly relate to worrying about someone close to you going out each day and working in the OPP. My wife, Chris, works as an auxiliary OPP, and as such goes out on regular patrols with OPP officers in the Muskoka area.

I'm pleased to see that there's widespread support for this motion. My Yakabuski has brought this motion to us at the request of the members of the Renfrew detachment of the OPP and it is supported by the Renfrew detachment commander, the regional chief superintendent and all the surrounding communities.

I note that it was a traffic accident that caused the death of Constable Shrive and I think we have to do all

we can to prevent this type of accident. Just last year, as a step to avoid these accidents, member Runciman, previous Minister of Public Safety and Security, introduced and passed legislation to protect police officers, firefighters and other emergency personnel. I believe we have to pass more laws like that to try to do what we can to protect police officers.

But in the case of Constable Shrive, we must do what we can to honour his commitment and bravery. The OPP association honour roll includes the following quote entitled "Lest We Forget: 'Remember our fallen members and their memory, if we forget, who but their family will remember, after all we are all family.'"

Officers across the province do more than just uphold the law: they are part of the community. It is appropriate to have a more tangible tribute to our officers. During my morning routine, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and myself go for a 6 am walk. This morning, we walked by the police memorial. Each spring there's a ceremony and, unfortunately, more names get added to it. There are currently 89 names, I believe, on the police memorial. I noted that there is one name from my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, and that was Constable Richard Verdecchia, who was shot and killed in Huntsville in 1981. I think it is important that we recognize and honour these police officers that have given their lives in the line of duty.

I think naming the Bonnechere bridge in honour of Constable Shrive is a fitting way of remembering him. Lastly, I would like to congratulate the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for bringing this motion forward on behalf of the police officers of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. Congratulations, Mr Yakabuski, on bringing this motion forward. I will be supporting it.

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): King George II said that bravery never goes out of fashion—never. That's something that all of us in this House have to keep in mind, something that we'll always be aware of because there are those of us who create laws and there are those who uphold the law.

The bravest people we have in our society are our police officers. I rise today to support the resolution by my friend the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. His motion clearly touches something that touches all the members in this House: the need for us always to remember, to celebrate and to hold up those in our society who truly are heroes, who go about and do their duty without complaint every day, and particularly to support their families, who pay a tremendous price on a daily basis, some of course more than others, but every day pay a price, knowing their loved ones are going out to uphold the law, to serve and protect.

1050

I wanted to speak to this motion because it reminded me of my friend Brenda Herbert, whom I've known for many years. Her husband is Rod Herbert; he's with the Sebringville detachment. Brenda's sister, Marg Eve, was the very first female OPP officer killed in this province, tragically on the 401, in the line of duty. I didn't know

Marg—she came from my riding—but I knew her sister and I knew her brother, who also wears the badge. Sergeant Margaret Eve—her badge number was 6768. I know through personal experience the tremendous pain that her family went through.

So I want to commend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for his forward-thinking bill that he brought into this House that allows those of us who write the laws to always be able to act on behalf of all of the people of Ontario to remember those who uphold the law. Obviously, Karen, in the case of Phil it was a tragedy with an addition of grief that is almost unbelievable. It reminds me of what the great writer Herman Melville said: "Familiarity with danger makes a brave man braver, but less daring."

When I first became involved in the political process, I spent an evening with an officer from the OPP detachment in Sebringville for what they call a ride-along. Every member of this House should go on a ride-along; it's a remarkable experience. It allows us—those of us who never get to see that—to see what it is to be an officer in a car alone, minutes away from any backup, which is something that I know the OPP in a rural area deal with on a daily basis; and just how very, very important that is, that we are able, through Minister Bartolucci's bill and through the resolution from my friend, to have that bridge at Bonnechere—that's a wonderful name, Bonnechere, but it's going to have a better name; it is. People 100 years from now will always remember. I can imagine school children who will say, "Why did we name that bridge? Who was Phil Shrive?"

We can't bring him back, but we can remember him. That's why there is the memorial at Queen's Park. That's why those of us, as I said, who create the laws always have to be mindful of those who have to uphold those laws.

Finally, in closing, I want to say that we should always remember the words of Homer: "Always to be bravest and to be pre-eminent above all others." I can think of no more fitting tribute to the members of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): I am pleased today to rise to support the motion being brought forward by my colleague John Yakabuski from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I think it's a testament to how much he cares about his community that the first motion he tables in the House is one that honours a fallen police officer.

I want to thank the family and Karen for coming. I can only imagine how difficult it is for you today, but what a tribute to your husband, that Mr Yakabuski has brought this forward.

Thanks also to David Crilly and to Tony Lamothe, the executive officer with the OPP association. I know that Constable Shrive had a great dedication to the association, as well as 30 years of service to his community.

We often fail to show adequate appreciation for the front-line police officers. Our police protect Ontario every day. They are brave, committed men and women,

and we owe a great deal of debt and gratitude. This is one way that we can certainly acknowledge all their services. They put their lives on the line. They're killed in the line of duty. I think it's only fitting that a bridge be named in honour of a fallen officer and so close to the scene of the accident. It's certainly going to be a reminder to everyone in the riding.

I want to thank Minister Bartolucci, who is not here with us now but was, for bringing in the Highway Memorials for Fallen Police Officers Act in November 2002, which is the year that it was passed. I know that the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has the support of all of the local municipal councils in the riding. It is the will of these municipalities, who want to honour one of their own. We should respect their wish in this matter to name the bridge after the fallen officer.

I know about the OPP honour roll and memorial that's out across from us today. A couple of members of the OPP from my riding whose names appear are Randall Skidmore, a provincial constable from the Coboconk detachment who was killed in February 1986, and Eric Nystedt, a provincial constable from Minden who was tragically killed only a few miles from where I live. He was killed in 1993. I know that they are still in memory. They have an annual memorial run in Sault Ste Marie, and he continues to hold the record for the 1.5 kilometre run at the Ontario Police College. We need to remember our fallen officers in our riding at that time.

The preamble of the bill introduced was:

"We, the people of Ontario, are forever grateful to the dedicated police officers who have courageously and unselfishly given their lives in the line of duty. Our debt to them can never be repaid.

"We are also forever grateful to Ontario's police officers who have demonstrated extraordinary courage by giving their lives to preserve our free and peaceful society.

"We must never forget the contribution of those men and women to whom we owe so much. As a gesture of our respect, we seek to honour them by permitting the Legislature to name highway bridges and other structures in their memory."

I think there is very little more that needs to be said, because I can't think of anything we could do that would be more appropriate than to pass this motion and call upon the government to rename the bridge in honour of the fallen constable. I hope everyone supports the motion.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):

It is far too often that our police officers who protect the public fall in duty. I can tell you from first-hand experience when I was parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General the number of situations with police officers and also with firefighters who are there to protect the public, and they leave us in circumstances that we don't understand.

I take one case in point, which is Police Constable Kuzmich from the South Simcoe Police Service, a situation where, with two young boys and at a very

young age, he left us, and in circumstances that nobody understands. I just want to say to my colleague Mr Yakabuski and to the family of Police Constable Philip Shrive that this Legislature cares. We understand. I think it is important that this recognition go to this officer and in recognition of police officers across this province.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Yakabuski, you have two minutes to reply.

1100

Mr Yakabuski: I want to thank my colleagues on this side of the House from Lanark-Carleton, Leeds-Grenville, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Haliburton-Victoria-Brock and Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. I also want to thank the members from the government side, the honourable Minister of Northern Development and Mines from Sudbury and the members from Guelph-Wellington, Etobicoke Centre and Perth-Middlesex, and also, from the New Democratic Party, the members from Beaches-East York and Trinity-Spadina.

What we saw today was the spirit of non-partisanship at its very best. We have seen members of all sides of this House come together to support a motion that I am honoured to be able to present to the House, to support this motion for a cause everyone supports.

I dare say that if the time allowed for it, we could speak for hours on this, and every member of the House would be willing to speak on it, but the rules being as they are, we have an allotted amount of time.

One thing that shone through in the responses over and over again was the common denominator of Philip Shrive's life, his life as a man, his life as a police officer, his love for people, his love for his fellow officers, his love for children, his love for his family. He was one of the good guys. I heard that said by more than one person.

I could go on and give copious quotations from people who have worked with Phil Shrive, who have served with him, who have been his friend in personal and professional ways. Suffice it to say, we lost one of our great ones, one of our great officers in Phil Shrive in May 2003. It is so appropriate that today this House comes together to honour him and to honour his wife in this way.

CITY OF TORONTO
AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Ms Wynne moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 120, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 120, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, Ms Wynne, you have 10 minutes.

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I want to congratulate Mr Yakabuski, and I want to acknowledge that we're moving from a very human, non-partisan

discussion to one that is inherently political. I just wanted to acknowledge that transition.

It gives me great honour to rise today to speak to Bill 120, the City of Toronto Amendment Act, 2004, which I introduced in this Legislature on October 12—and a bit of a sense of the surreal, and I'll talk about why that is. I choose to think of this bill as an act to increase local democracy in Toronto.

I have introduced this bill because I believe there is a crying need for a broad, public discussion of how our local governments should function, what their relationship with the provincial government should be and the areas over which there ought to be local control.

If passed, Bill 120 would signify a recognition of the city of Toronto's potential to address local concerns. Toronto has been, in its past, a model of urban civility and strong local governance for the world. It should be that again. If passed, this bill would promote the principles of responsibility and accountability by situating control as close as possible to the people affected, allowing the city to respond to issues of local concern.

That's not to say that this bill is intended to be a discussion that is relevant only to Toronto. Many municipalities around the province, and in fact across the country, are considering their relationship with provincial governments. However, the fact is that a City of Toronto Act, 1997, exists; it was enacted by the previous government. It's a flawed piece of legislation and it needs to be amended. It is the charter for the city of Toronto, and we need to get it right.

I want to take a minute to put this bill in context, because it doesn't come out of the blue for me. We're having this discussion today because of the political ethos that shrouded Queen's Park with the election of the Conservatives in the spring of 1995. Their value system was disturbing to many of us. In fact, it was antithetical to the compassionate system of government we had experienced for generations in Ontario, including a responsive local democratic system. The value system of meanness and division really didn't ring true with the majority of Ontarians, I believe.

It seemed from their actions that that new government was intent upon blaming people who were not fortunate enough to be financially successful, forcing communities and citizens within communities to fight for resources, and forcing the marginalized to further fend for themselves, removing concepts of equity and fairness from the lexicon of government.

One of the galvanizing moments for people of social conscience in the first year of the Mike Harris years was the moment when 21% cuts to welfare rates were introduced hand in hand with tax cuts for the province's wealthier citizens. At that moment, in Toronto and around the province, concerned citizens began to meet in neighbours' kitchens—I had a group meeting in my kitchen—church halls and university seminar rooms to strategize how they could help to preserve social justice in the face of this new Tory neo-conservative dogma.

But I believe it was the advent of policies that threatened to undermine our very democratic structures

that shook citizens of this city, because without those structures in place those social justice issues could not be redressed.

The Tories' Bill 103, which came to be known as the megacity act, was the catalyst for the creation of the group Citizens for Local Democracy, which was led and inspired by John Sewell, who is with us today, and Liz Rykert. Sewell, as a former mayor of Toronto and an urban thinker, knew exactly what was at stake as the Tories moved to make their simplistic and unfounded hatred of this city real.

For two full years I worked with Citizens for Local Democracy, or C4LD, as we met first in the Toronto city hall council chambers and then in the sanctuaries of downtown churches to support each other in our resistance to the megacity, to listen to inspirational political speeches by some of the local politicians—the member for Beaches-East York being one of those—and provincial politicians, to hear local music and poetry that was written on the occasion of the fight for local democracy, and to strategize. I dare say there are some members in the House who remember that we even visited this august chamber on some occasions.

But the Tories amalgamated the former municipalities of East York, York, Toronto, Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke nonetheless, against the advice of urban thinkers, against the advice of people like Jane Jacobs and Ursula Franklin, who had lived in this city and understood what made it work, and against the will of 76% of the people who voted in a referendum in March 1997 against amalgamation of these cities.

The amalgamation itself was debilitating, but in combination with the downloading of new costs and the further withdrawal of power to determine its own destiny, the whole bundle of issues created a malaise in this city from which I don't think we've recovered. Citizens of Toronto believe their city is not as healthy as it was prior to amalgamation. Most significantly, and I think of more fundamental concern, there seems to be an increasing disenchantment and disengagement from government at the local level. We have to turn this around if we're going to have a healthy democracy in this country.

Hence, I think that's why we're seeing a call for a new deal. That's why we're seeing a call for a new relationship with the other levels of government. That's what this is about.

Since last fall, I really believe that with the election of a new mayor and a new Premier, there has been some hope that recovery is possible, that moving forward in evolution is possible. Premier McGuinty has already demonstrated leadership by indicating our government's willingness to work with cities to give them the mechanisms they need to function fully.

My bill is part of that tapestry of change. It's one piece of the very large public debate that I believe we must have about how the provincial government and cities can better relate to each other and define distinct spheres of responsibility, authority and co-operation.

If passed, here is what Bill 120 would do and why.

This bill would give Toronto the option to, first of all, change the number and boundaries of its wards. Toronto is among the only jurisdictions in Ontario that does not already have this power.

Secondly, it would allow the city to change the number of city councillors. If the city can control the number of wards, it has to be able to control the number of councillors.

It would allow the city to change the status, roles, structure and relationship of community councils to the city council. This would allow the city to delegate final decision-making power over issues of local community concern to those communities, or to seek other approaches to make community councils more effective. What this bill does not do is prescribe what that relationship should be between city council and community councils, but it allows the city to make some of those choices.

1110

It would allow the city to change its election finance rules. In response to Councillor Michael Walker's initiative, the city has recently expressed that the current province-wide rules are not appropriate for the city. Election finances are an important aspect of democratic control, and this would give them the option to take that on.

It would also give the city the option to set the dates of its municipal elections and the term length for city councillors. Councillor Howard Moscoe has begun work on this front. I believe the city is competent to determine when it is best to have its election and for how long councillors should serve. Again, those are all optional.

Finally, this bill would give the city the responsibility to administer its voters list. Particularly among the city's tenants, the voters list has been inaccurate, and the city should have the authority to address that situation.

With the exception of the administration of the voters list, and it would be possible to amend that piece, the adoption of these responsibilities would be optional on the part of the city. The point is that this bill recognizes the maturity and sophistication of Toronto and the ability of its elected representatives to act in the best interests of its residents.

Introduction of this bill is an extension of the work I have done in the last 10 years in this city. It is the expression of my deep belief in the value of citizens having access to local government that can respond, make good decisions and be flexible in the face of big problems. I introduce it in the recognition of the need for local governments to have the option to experiment and to look at different models without cumbersome interference of a higher level of government.

In his recent book, *A New City Agenda*, my friend John Sewell remarks, "Provincial politicians have no interest in making cities stronger and provincial governments weaker." I know he will forgive me when I say that I sincerely hope that we prove him wrong, and in doing so, we will all come out stronger—province and city alike.

My hope is that this bill will add to the debate that we're having about local democracy in every corner of Ontario. I hope that I can count on support from all of the sides of this House. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm very pleased to rise and comment on Bill 120. I congratulate the member for Don Valley West for bringing this bill forward. Actually, I have enjoyed spending some time with the member from Don Valley West. We've been on a couple of political panels together. I know how strongly she feels about Bill 120 and the principles that underlie it. You can certainly get that from her introductory comments to the bill today. From our conversations, I think this reflects her work with Citizens for Local Democracy, an association from some time ago.

I was a bit disappointed with some of the strong language that came forward. I thought we were back in 1997 again, reflecting on the decision of the government of that time to bring the city of Toronto together. The member certainly had the opportunity to bring a bill forward to de-amalgamate Toronto if the views were held so strongly that that was a mistake. I think Premier McGuinty made some promises in that regard with respect to Kawartha Lakes, respecting a referendum to de-amalgamate there. Then, once in office, he sent his Minister of Municipal Affairs to back away, to get off the hook of that particular promise.

I think also there were some promises made by the member—let me check the exact riding name—from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot with respect to the situation in Hamilton. But I believe, as well, that the promise made during the election has been forgotten now that the Liberals are in office. Nonetheless, the member has brought forward a bill that, if passed, gives additional administrative powers to the city of Toronto. I do congratulate her for bringing this bill forward for debate.

I know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs himself is looking at similar issues. From our discussions in the estimates committee these last number of days for the fall of 2005, I believe he is currently working—perhaps also through his parliamentary assistant—on the City of Toronto Act. I believe the minister's approach, from what I understood, was hand in hand with Municipal Act reform to see if these types of new powers—administrative or financial—should go hand in hand across the province or be unique to the city of Toronto or a small number of municipal areas. Hopefully, the parliamentary assistant, if he's making a comment, can elucidate that particular issue.

The minister was rather reticent to give particular comment on the member's bill. He said he respected her right to bring it forward. She had given him a heads-up. I appreciate the minister's points on that. Perhaps the parliamentary assistant can give us an indication of whether this bill is in line with the government's thinking and their negotiations with the city of Toronto and AMO, or if it's in another direction entirely.

In the absence of that guidance, I think we in the official opposition see this as a starting point for debate. I

suggest that it could go to committee as something that we could debate as we discuss the role of municipalities in the 21st century. There is an evolving debate about what roles municipalities should have in this century, whether they should be given new authority or what kind of authority that would be, whether there should be new financial levers at the same time to help invest in municipal services. In the absence of substantive material from the minister himself, perhaps Ms Wynne's Bill 120 could be that starting point for that discussion.

There are a number of principles that obviously, as Conservatives, we would support. Certainly, our record in reducing red tape and overburdensome regulation would be something we would continue to follow in our advice as opposition members in that committee. I'll be supporting the principle of local decision-making where possible.

We've seen some initiatives by the government: Bill 26 and the extraordinary powers given to the minister; Bill 27, the greenbelt legislation and some of those extraordinary powers that took away local decision-making. With respect to the gas tax, municipalities that don't have public transit systems not benefiting from the gas tax, and determining what local transportation priorities to fund, the government initiatives run against that grain of local decision-making, but we'll see if they take a different course with respect to Municipal Act reform.

We want to see included in the debate greater accountability directly to the taxpayers of the province in the municipalities, a goal of lower taxes and fees on already overburdened taxpayers. The member does not address the fiscal issues—this is simply an administrative reform—but if we had the opportunity to debate these types of reforms in committee or here in the House, greater accountability to taxpayers and lower taxes and fees would be admirable goals in this process.

I think we all in this chamber respect that Toronto, unique in this province, unique in this nation—not only, obviously, by its sheer size, the importance of its economy, its draw for tourists and magnet for talented immigrants from across the world—produces unique challenges for a dynamic business sector, unique challenges for English as a second language, unique challenges for transit and transportation, getting people and goods to work and to home in a safe and efficient manner. It's not clear to me if those particular challenges would then cause these particular administrative changes to be necessary in terms of their uniqueness to Toronto. Are these types of administrative powers something that should be unique to Toronto? I think the member does not make that claim. It's important for her as a member from the Toronto area.

Would other municipalities—for example, large, single-tier municipalities like Ottawa, like Hamilton—be similarly interested in entering into this debate? I suspect maybe we'll hear from some of those members today on their views, whether these powers should be unique to the city of Toronto or should be discussed broadly across municipalities, even those currently involved in a regional or county set-up.

My friend and colleague from Niagara Falls is here—the sort of municipality that's part of an upper-tier region. Would the lower municipality or an upper-tier municipality be interested in greater administrative powers? I, myself, have been through this debate to an extent by bringing a private member's bill forward for the direct election of the regional chair of Niagara. A number of regions have gone this way, I think. Because of the authority of that office, the broad scope, that individual should be directly elected. There has been response to that bill. So I would anticipate that municipalities across the province would be interested in addressing this issue of additional administrative powers.

Then there's the big debate, of course, on the fiscal triggers, the fiscal levers, the fiscal tools. Is it the government's intent to give new sources of revenue to municipalities? I discussed the gas tax a bit earlier, which seems to be creating two classes of municipalities: those that will receive the gas tax, and probably around 300 municipalities that won't receive the gas tax. Hopefully the parliamentary assistant will give some insight into the government's general direction on the fiscal issues that are absent from this bill but, I think, need to be discussed hand in hand when we talk about the approach to municipalities in the 21st century.

1120

We're curious about the dynamics within the governing caucus as well—a lot of stories reported about the city of Toronto members versus the GTA members versus the rest of the province members; the urban-rural challenges that any caucus of that size would face. We've seen a lot of that, I think, in the discussion about the gas tax: "What's the distribution model?" I think that was actually promised for October—it's still October; it's within the first year. You can debate whether that's an exactly kept promise or not, but I think it illustrates—

Interjections.

Mr Hudak: I know; you guys want as much latitude as you can have on keeping promises. It was more than a year ago that the election took place, but the point that I'm trying to illustrate here is, I think you probably had, and correct me if I'm wrong, a lot of debate within caucus and cabinet on the distribution of the gas tax because you had to weigh the city of Toronto, the GTA and the rest of the municipalities' points of view. So I look forward to debate from across the floor on their view on some of these issues that Bill 120 presents for us.

In my role that I'm honoured to have as municipal affairs and housing critic, I recognize the evolving debate and the role of municipalities in this new century. I look forward to entering into it in greater detail. I commend the member for Don Valley West for putting something of substance on the floor for our debate—

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): Deamalgamate Ottawa. What do you think, Tim?

Mr Hudak: Well, I talked a bit earlier about the amalgamation issue and said that was one possibility that the members opposite would have brought forward in their

opposition a few years ago, but today we're concentrating on Bill 120 and administrative reform.

I'll be voting and supporting Bill 120. I look forward to an opportunity to enter into greater detail in debate. I do hope that the House leader will send this to committee so we can investigate some of the details that I've addressed today—the uniqueness of Toronto, should these powers be given to other municipalities as well, and is this the right balance of authority? Most importantly, while Ms Wynne has brought this forward, I'm interested to see what kind of support she has, particularly from cabinet and her colleagues from across the province, if this is the approach the government's going to take on this important issue.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): It is indeed a privilege to speak to this issue and to commend the member for Don Valley West for bringing this initiative forward. I have known Ms Wynne for a long time. In fact, I first met her around the whole turmoil that was involved in the Citizens for Local Democracy and the forceful—forcible, not forceful—dismantling of 150 years of local democracy in the municipalities of Toronto, Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, York and East York.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Hard to forget that legacy.

Mr Prue: The people in my area have never, ever forgotten what happened to them and to their mayor, to their council, to their local democracy—

Interjection.

Mr Prue: Well, their mayor is standing here. But they have never forgotten what has happened to their community and their ability to make changes within the community. Although the people of the amalgamated city of Toronto still have, I guess, some vestige of democracy—they get to go out and vote every three years for the mayor and council—much of which they used to hold sacred is now gone. I will tell you that there are many differences between Toronto and every other municipality, particularly the smaller municipalities and towns in Ontario.

Do you know that in most local towns you can go and see your mayor or councillor? You would often know who they were. They were people in the community. Today in Toronto, that's almost impossible. It is a difficult enough prospect to go and meet the mayor of a city of 2.5 million people, with the responsibility that person has, but it is equally getting difficult to go and see your municipal councillor in Toronto, who represents 58,000 people. That is more than most of the municipalities have in total in Ontario. Each councillor in Toronto is responsible for an average of 58,000 people. The days when the local councillors used to go out and talk to the people are long gone, because the local councillors in Toronto now all have three or four staff people who are the intermediaries. Those are the ones whom the citizens meet. The days of having meetings—

Mr Baird: You have staff members?

Mr Prue: No, no. The days of having meetings—I'm getting heckled from the Tories, and I'm not surprised. The days of the meetings of citizens, and citizens' input, are also long gone. There used to be hundreds or thousands of meetings held in the former municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the six municipalities in Toronto. Today, those are numbered in the tens or twenties. The number of meetings where citizens have input has been hugely truncated. The contact with civic workers has now gone completely down, and you no longer know who the civic workers are.

There was a time in York, East York and Toronto when people knew their local civic workers. They worked in and around the community. They knew of people who would have difficulty bringing their garbage to the bin. They knew when the parks needed to be cleaned. They knew when the grass was growing too high. Now all of that is centralized downtown, and people no longer know the individual neighbourhoods and communities in which they work. They're sent out to different places every day.

There is no longer an opportunity for input on boards and committees. I can speak best about East York. In East York, prior to amalgamation, we had about 400 people who served on the boards and committees of our municipality, on the skating rinks board, the safety council, the committee of health, the committee of adjustment—all those things that municipalities have—400 individuals who lined up every year to be on those boards and committees. Do you know how many people are on the boards and committees from East York in the city of Toronto today?

Mr Marchese: Forty?

Mr Prue: Three. We've gone from 400 civic-minded people giving of themselves for their community down to three who represent us in the city of Toronto. This is what has happened to the people of Toronto. They still have a vote, but they have nothing else. They have no control over the agenda of their local municipalities, particularly on planning issues. The decisions are made by a community council which, to a large extent, does not reflect their neighbourhood or their former municipality.

In fact, East York was carved up like the proverbial turkey, with that section that Ms Wynne now represents being in the North York community council and the rest of East York being in the downtown central community council. The community is not there any more.

I welcome the bill. We totally support what is in this bill. But I have to tell you that I am not naive as to the prospects of this bill being passed. I asked the minister yesterday and the day before in estimates a whole bunch of questions about what is contained in Bill 120. I asked the minister whether he would support the provisions, or whether his bill that is coming forward later this same year would contain the same or different provisions.

I have to tell you that on a couple of the aspects, the ward boundaries and the number of wards, he was in agreement that the city of Toronto should have that

responsibility. He was also in agreement that the composition or powers of the community councils could be changed by the city of Toronto. He thought that was a good thing.

But then he was not nearly so positive when I asked him questions on the last four aspects. He was not nearly so positive on the city of Toronto setting its own election date, should that election date differ from the rest of the province—because we all know that takes place on the second Monday in November, right across Ontario. I questioned him on how he would react if Toronto set a different date, and he didn't seem to like that very much.

He also didn't like the change of the term of office. If Toronto, for example, chose a four-year term of office versus three years everywhere else, it would also skew the election dates and they would be held in alternate years. So he wasn't too pleased about that.

He wasn't too pleased about the election finance rules. I'm going to deal more with those and some questions I have for Ms Wynne and perhaps for committee on those.

And he was not very pleased about the central voters' list.

I asked him, more importantly—because, although they're important issues, I think they are not germane to the central issue here, and that is that the amalgamated city of Toronto is not working in the best interests of the citizens who live here—I asked him questions about Kawartha Lakes and why they have backed down on a democratic referendum which they pledged to honour prior to the election and which they now refuse to honour, to the consternation of the people there.

I asked him about the other communities that are trying to mobilize and get changes made to the city of Hamilton and to Chatham and to other places around the province, and he was not willing to bend on this.

1130

I asked him about the referendum in Quebec, that took place in June of this year, in which 30-some municipalities took back some of the powers following amalgamation, literally got most of the powers back for their local communities, and whether he would consider doing that for Toronto or Kawartha Lakes or Hamilton or Ottawa or any other place in Ontario. His response was a very flat no, that the government has other agendas and other items and they are not going to be looking at that. This was extremely disappointing to me and, I think, to all of the people who care about local democracy.

If I was a cynical person—I don't think I am, but if I was cynical, I would have to tell you that I think this bill may in part be to see and gauge what the reaction is from this Legislature and, perhaps more importantly, what the reaction is from other municipal leaders across Ontario. But I'm not, so I'm going to be favourable.

The most contentious aspect, and I want to raise this today, and I think it is important to raise it in the Legislature, is section 8.2, which sets out that the city of Toronto will be able to make changes to the Municipal Elections Act and, where they are in conflict, overrule that. I want to tell you, I think we have to tread very

carefully on this, and I'm hoping that when it goes to committee there will be some really good discussion, because section 8.2, the election campaign finances, sections 66 through 82 as set out here, talks about things like contributions, penalties, expenses, the election campaign period, the duties of the candidate, whether or not you can launder money, all of these things. They are all here, and I would be very reluctant to give the city power that is in conflict with the general principles of this. If there is a conflict, perhaps it should read the other way around. I think back to Mr Lyons, when he laundered the money. He was caught laundering the money and the OPP decided he did launder the money, but they weren't going to change him. That provision is in here. If they took that out, that would allow for money laundering. Quite frankly, I don't want to see that.

In the absence, though, of all of this, and I want to give my friend from Trinity-Spadina at least five—well, he's going to get four and a half minutes, anyway. This bill would allow some of the vestiges of local democracy to return. It will allow, if passed, the community councils to have a real voice, and I would hope a final voice, on those aspects which reflect totally neighbourhood concerns. They ought not to be debated by others. Quite frankly, when I was on the city of Toronto council, it was kind of bizarre that I was passing and voting yes or no on road signs in Etobicoke when I didn't know where the streets were and knew nothing about them. There are huge debates there, and it is nonsensical. It should be dealt with very locally whenever possible.

In saying that, I would ask the members on all sides of the House to support this bill, not necessarily for what it contains, because there are some flaws in it, but because the people of Toronto need a democracy that works. We used to be the envy of the world. People used to come to Toronto to study a city that was called "New York run by the Swiss." They used to come here to look at how democracy worked. Well, I want to tell you, my colleagues, no one comes to look at how this city works any more, and we in this Legislature need to do everything we can to return Toronto to its days of glory, when it was a vibrant and wonderful democracy and when people actually had some input in their local government.

Mr Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Thank you, to the member for Don Valley West, Kathleen Wynne, for bringing this bill forward and for all of her work in local democracy issues through the years.

I want to begin by saying that I will certainly be supporting this bill. I think it's very important for this Legislature to have a discussion on these kinds of issues. I think it will be very helpful to hear comments from MPPs on all sides of the House on this very important issue, an issue that's important not only to Toronto but, frankly, to the entire province.

I support this bill because I think it is time to recognize that Toronto is large enough and mature enough as a level of government to be able to govern itself in a lot of different ways, to be given the tools to be able to sustain itself, to be given the tools to be able to govern itself

without always having to come hat in hand to the province on each and every thing. Ward boundaries, the number of wards, the number of councillors, the names of wards, these are things that I think we can easily agree the city of Toronto, and probably all municipalities, should have control over.

There are a few things in this bill that I have some concern over, not great concern but some concern. That doesn't lead me not to support the bill; it leads me to suggest that this is something we should be talking about, probably at a later time.

I'll give you an example: I think that municipal elections should be province-wide. I think that's a way to probably encourage better participation in elections. If an election is held province-wide, it will get more attention right across the province, people will know an election is coming and people are probably a little more excited about it.

Aside from that, most of the other things in this bill are certainly worth taking a good, close look at, if not fully supporting. When it comes down to it, we may well get all members of the Legislature to support this bill because of the thrust of what's behind it.

Some of the things that motivated me to try to get here in the first place, to seek the support of the people of Scarborough Centre, were the frustration I felt as a nine-year member of originally Scarborough council and then Toronto city council; the frustration I felt about the way Toronto and other municipalities were being treated by the government of the day; frustration with the fact that we had an unwanted amalgamation thrust upon us; the frustration with the fact hundreds of millions of dollars were downloaded on the city of Toronto from the government of the day; frustration with the fact that the government failed to give Toronto the tools, the access to resources they needed to deal with this downloading; and frustration with the fact every time we went to Toronto for help, we got into a finger-pointing exercise, where it was always Toronto's fault that we had problems, where there was no recognition of responsibility from people here at Queen's Park.

So I think that times have changed, and changed for the better. Thank God we now have a Premier who gets it when it comes to Toronto, a Premier who's willing to go to bat for Toronto, a Premier who recognizes that what's good for Toronto is good for the entire province. Thank goodness we have a government in place that's been able to get a transit agreement with the federal government for over a billion dollars—unprecedented—going to Toronto. Thank goodness in the last budget we came forward with—and some of the acrimony and finger-pointing and blame we had going from one side to the other—we were able to come to an agreement with Toronto, and \$90 million flowed to Toronto for public transit in that city. Thank goodness, when it comes to things like the gas tax, we'll soon be seeing that flow through to cities across this province for public transit, something that Toronto is going to benefit from immensely, something that I think we'll all be very proud

of. Thank goodness in the last budget we moved, in funding public health, from 50% to 75%. These are all very significant changes.

The relationship between the city and the province has probably not been better for generations, but we've got more to do, and thus we're getting into discussions with the city of Toronto on a review of the City of Toronto Act. The points that are made here in this debate will certainly be taken into consideration in those discussions. But I can tell you one thing: The city of Toronto will get the tools it needs, will get access to the resources it needs to be successful as a city, to be able to compete with other cities its size around the world. And not only will Toronto benefit from that, every nook and cranny of this province will benefit from a prosperous, successful Toronto, which would not have happened when the Tories were in power but will happen under our leadership.

1140

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm pleased and privileged to be speaking on the bill. I have to say that I want to congratulate Ms Wynne, the member for Don Valley West, for bringing forward this bill. I have a great deal of respect for the ideals and the hard work Ms Wynne has done in the committee she worked for, Citizens for Local Democracy, along with many notable people in the community.

This bill, in my view, as the member for Sarnia-Lambton, not from Toronto—I'm 300 kilometres from here—symbolizes a better democracy for more responsible and accountable governance for our municipalities. As I say, Toronto in and of itself is a leader, and should be a catalyst and a protagonist for this type of autonomy throughout the province. I say this because we are in an era today where we hear over and over again about the new deals for cities. We're in a new era where yes, there is a maturity; we're in the 21st century. The 21st century in Ontario, in my view, is a new era of co-operation between and among different levels of government. There's a lot less tolerance for the Big Brother approach. There has to be a maturity, and that maturity can only evolve if there is more autonomy provided to municipalities, whether it be Toronto or other sizes of communities in this province.

I was listening to the member from Erie-Lincoln, and I have to say he must have a very short memory. When we were in this House talking about amalgamation, I remember the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time using what is termed as the "Henry VIII clause," which gives to the minister unprecedented powers so that they can dictate what should happen to municipalities. It was for the amalgamation. It was the most undemocratic process I have ever seen. I did some research on the Henry VIII clause. It actually goes against the principles of democracy in a parliamentary system.

I have to say that I appreciate the member's comments. I'm pleased that he's going to support this bill, but I have to say that we endured, with great regret, the process of amalgamation that was used in this province.

Again, they scrambled the egg and we cannot unscramble the egg. We have to deal with it as we have it today.

I believe it's important that we have this discussion about the relationship of municipalities to the other levels of government. Why? Because other countries in the world know that the hubbub of energy is at the community level. We have to have autonomy in those municipalities so that they can generate the energy and they don't feel they're always tied to another level of decision-making.

Toronto, as the largest centre in Ontario, is our economic engine. I believe it's our artistic, if you want to call it, leader. It has many amenities, and it certainly tends to lead the rest of the province just by its sheer size. That's not to say that we don't recognize that Ontario is a collective of diverse communities, municipalities, all of different sizes and makeups. Nonetheless we have to treat Toronto, by its size and as a leader, distinctly as the largest centre in Ontario.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to speak on the bill, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 1997. Certainly the comments made by the former mayor of East York, Michael Prue, and the member from Scarborough Centre, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and who served on Toronto council, must be respected and should form part of this debate in terms of what they're saying.

The vestiges of local democracy are something we all want, whatever community we come from. That's something that I think has unanimous support in this House.

The member from Scarborough Centre makes a good point, though: There have to be some provincial standards in some areas, such as his point with respect to the timing of elections for municipalities across the province. I think there were also some comments made by the member from Beaches-East York in terms of finances, certainly a very sensitive area at any time.

Term limits are also something that I think have to be looked at from a provincial perspective. The way this bill is drafted, it could give the city of Toronto the ability to set its own term limits. They could essentially set term lengths of four, eight or even 12 years. I think there have to be some standards in terms of what is in the best interests of the public and also in the best interests of the members who are being elected by the public. Who knows the likely scenario they're talking about here? Currently, the provincial standard is three years. At one time it was one year and was extended to two. Now it is three years.

I am not too comfortable in terms moving too far off in areas such as timing of elections, term limits and finances without the province being involved. Quite frankly, municipalities and municipal councils have a say in this area already. Municipal councils are directly elected by the taxpayers and may be at a stage where they could determine ward boundaries and numbers of representatives. Currently, they may have these changes made, subject to provincial approval through the Ontario

Municipal Board. When I was on city council in Barrie, we changed the ward boundaries and also the number of councillors in the city of Barrie, and it wasn't that difficult to do. So I don't think that's giving the city of Toronto greater powers than they already have in this situation.

The provisions that give the city control of election financing may result in the city restricting campaign donations and providing tax subsidies for candidates. There is already an issue in terms of the benefits that incumbents have, no matter whether it's in Toronto, in Barrie or in other areas in terms of the funding they have just because they're incumbents and also the funding they can draw because they're incumbents. There also have to be some provincial standards and some fairness to people who want to get into the elective process.

There's one thing that caught me in this bill. Most bills have a vision in terms of what they are trying to bring about, but I noticed there is no preamble in terms of the intent or vision of this particular piece of legislation. I think that's something that most people would be looking for in any piece of legislation, in terms of how you interpret such a piece of legislation. I know the courts always look at the preamble. Certainly, when you are dealing with something as far-reaching as this, which will probably have to have further review, you want a preamble or vision statement of what this is really intended to accomplish. Quite frankly, I really don't know what it intends to accomplish other than some procedural changes with respect to council, ward boundaries, voting subdivisions etc. I think we have to look at that in a very clear manner in terms of what we are trying to accomplish here. Frankly, you could have something that other municipalities or other large urban centres would also like to take out of this situation.

The city of Toronto is unique. It's very important to the economic well-being of this province. It's very important in terms of the direction it takes in a lot of areas in terms of leadership. As Mr Prue says, we should be looking at trying to deal with the vestiges of local democracy and what people feel is important for this community. If that's the intent and vision this bill has, then that's something that can be supported, certainly by me.

I would say in closing that I respect the municipal experience of the members from Beaches-East York and Scarborough Centre. I think they bring a lot to this discussion. I will certainly be looking at supporting this bill.

Mr Marchese: I do support the initiative by the member from Don Valley West and would support it going to committee, quite obviously, because that's where we need to raise not only the issues that the member from Beaches-East York talked about, but indeed many other issues that I suspect a lot of citizens of Toronto and beyond would want to raise.

1150

I support the comments made by the member for Beaches-East York about subsection 8.2(3), where it

speaks about the ability of the bylaws to override the Municipal Act. He raises the concern around so many of the issues which the bylaws would be able to override. I, like him, would be profoundly worried about some of those sections. So sending that to committee would give us an opportunity to reflect a little more clearly about those powers and whether or not we agree, whether or not she agrees, or whether or not even the minister agrees.

I would point out as well that we are not dealing at all in this bill with the problem of what kind of financial powers the city of Toronto or, indeed, any other city should have. As you know, with the downloading of many services over the eight years, at least under the legacy of the Conservative government, cities are broke. They can only rely on property taxes to be able to pay for the services they provide to their citizens in their local communities. We know the property taxes simply are not only inadequate to pay for the services that they have to provide, but also equally unfair, because it hits people disproportionately in terms of the kinds of income that certain people have versus others who are very wealthy.

So there are inequalities in the system. Cities are broke. They can't continue to rely on or beg the provinces to give them the money they need to be able to function. So we need to come up with some formula that allows cities to be able to survive on their own, without having to rely on and/or beg provinces to give them the support they need, and having to rely on governments from time to time to decide that they're going to download more and more services to the city without adequate funds and be left scrambling, having to try to find the money.

Another concern of mine that is not dealt with here is the fact that, from time to time, there is either some fraudulent activity going on during municipal elections and/or some irregularities happening in the wards by way of how proxy votes are signed and by whom—and any other kind of irregularity, financial or otherwise. How do we deal with that? In most cases, they get to the city in some form or another and get squashed. We need an enforcement mechanism and/or a person either at the city or the province who is independent and is able to deal with fraud or irregularity in some way. Without that, this bill would be very weak.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I think that the member from Don Valley East, Kathleen Wynne, has an outstanding proven record of civic service and volunteerism beyond and above anything I've seen in my 25 years of public life. She certainly has demonstrated she has a deep passion for her neighbourhood and her city, and I think this bill is a reflection of that.

I would like to mention that John Sewell is here also. He, unlike a lot of so-called leaders in the city of Toronto or in government, was not afraid to stand up and say that the megacity legislation was wrong. He had the courage to do it; others did not. My colleague from East York, Michael Prue, the former mayor, was another one who

had the courage to stand up and say it was wrong. Also, the late Frank Faubert had the courage to stand up to the former government and say it was wrong. We should remember the people who didn't have the courage, who went along with this abomination called the megacity bill of 1997.

It's been proven that it was, as we said in opposition, a financial disaster for the city of Toronto. It was a democratic disaster, and we have been proven right. It never solved anything for the city of Toronto, and this is an attempt by the member from Don Valley East to try and redress those wrongs. She has that conviction, and she is bringing forth some of her solutions. I would like to say that perhaps, in noticing my opposition, the spokesman for John Tory, the new leader of the Conservatives, should stand up in this Legislature and apologize to the people of Toronto for what his party did to the city of Toronto. That's what he should do.

We all know the City of Toronto Act, 1997, was nothing but a Trojan horse for downloading. That's why they did it. They wanted to download public health, child care and housing on the backs of local property taxpayers. That's what they did. Also, we should know there was no intention to improve democracy. It shut down democracy. Most of this bill deals with trying to redress those wrongs. Obviously, a city like Toronto should get the same rights other municipalities have. That's the main focus of this bill and that's why it should be supported.

Perhaps we should look at some of the real things that have been done so far in trying to redress those wrongs. We have uploaded public health 50% to the province. We are passing through the gas tax, which is going to help. OMB reform is coming and more local democracy. Toronto will get more choice, at the local level, on property tax assessment. The Toronto District School Board was taken over by a provincial supervisor and stripped of all its rights. The parents in this city had no rights over public education for two years under the previous regime. We gave that power back locally.

I know democracy is sometimes messy, and sometimes people in East York or York or North York used to like to be heard, but that's part of what we get paid for, to tend and nurture democracy. That is why the member for Don Valley West is saying it's part of our job to ensure democracy gets restored in Toronto and improved. This bill is a significant step in that direction. There is a lot more work to do. It by no means solves all the problems the city of Toronto has, but at least it's a step in the right direction.

The final thing I remember, in reflection, is that we had just come back from 10,000 of us marching down Yonge Street protesting the Conservative government's action and saying the megacity was going to be a disaster. The next day, you picked up a major newspaper in Toronto and there was basically no mention of the 10,000. On the front page was a big headline: "Megacity Bill Will Save the City"—I don't know—" \$5 Billion." It never saved the \$5 billion.

You should have listened to the people who marched down Yonge Street and said it was going to be a disaster. Let's fix the disaster.

The Deputy Speaker: Ms Wynne, you have two minutes to reply.

Ms Wynne: I want to thank all my colleagues in the House for their comments. It's very gratifying to hear people like the member for Beaches-East York talk about the on-the-ground issues that haven't been addressed in the last number of years because of what happened in this city and how we might repair some of that damage.

I'm absolutely thrilled that there has been an epiphany in the Progressive Conservative Party. I think Mr Tory is working his magic, because if we're going to have support for this bill, that's terrific. It's just too bad it didn't happen earlier.

The other thing I want to say is that there have been comments made about some changes that could be made to this bill. I completely accept that it's not perfect and that there could be changes. That's why we need to start this debate. There can be further debate about how to fine-tune, but the point is that we need to get going on it. I think that to have a substantial debate about what local democracy looks like in this province is a terrific thing for us to initiate as a Legislature. I'm really happy to be part of that, and I look forward to the vote thank you for the support.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

HIGHWAY MEMORIALS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): We shall deal first with ballot item number 33 standing in the name of Mr Yakabuski. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

CITY OF TORONTO AMENDMENT ACT, 2004 LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): We shall deal next with ballot item number 34.

Ms Wynne has moved second reading of Bill 120. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, this is referred to committee of the whole.

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): Mr Speaker, I'd like to refer it to the standing committee on general government.

The Deputy Speaker: Ms Wynne has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on general government. Is it agreed? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do leave the chair and the House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1200 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): Starvation funding of only 1.2% is the wrong prescription for Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington. This hospital is already considered one of the most efficient hospitals in this province, having gone through two substantive reviews, and yet they're showing a shortfall of \$8.4 million.

Dalton McGuinty just doesn't get it. A full 75% of hospital costs are allocated to salaries. The only way for hospitals to achieve the Liberal health restraint targets is by firing nurses, cutting services and closing beds.

During the last election, the Liberals accused the Tories of not spending enough on health care. In fact, our government spent 12.9% more in health spending in 2003-04, compared to the current Liberals at only 4.3%. We spent three times more. Smitherman now criticizes the Tories for years of increasing hospital funding.

Our community is outraged, and here is what Dr Ben Carruthers, chief of staff at the hospital, said, "Our doctors and nurses, who deliver care to those patients who require hospitalization, surgery, obstetrical care or specialized rehabilitation, are not prepared to reduce or curtail the medical care that is requested of them. They will not be party to deciding which services our community should do without."

Hats off to the medical staff, our board of directors and the management of Joseph Brant hospital and a community who refuses to submit to this government's restraint. The bottom line is patient care in the city of Burlington, and this government better realize that.

IRENE MURDOCH

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): On Monday, we marked Persons Day in this assembly, and among the names of the champions for the rights of women was one reluctant farm woman, Irene Murdoch.

In 1973, after divorcing James Murdoch, the Supreme Court ruled that this Alberta farm woman was not entitled to half of the ranch property that was owned by James, this in spite of the fact that for 25 years she had done more than half of the work, often single-handedly, and made a key contribution to its increased value. In the court's words, Mrs Murdoch had simply been doing "the work done by any ranch wife." The court's decision caused a national outcry that resulted in reforms to marital property laws in every province.

Until the Murdoch decision, women going through divorce had to financially contribute to the purchase of the property in order to be entitled to any equity. The Murdoch case also drew attention to the legal and social state of farm women in Canada, and was the spark that started a new era in the farm women's movement. Farm women commanded respect and recognition for their

contribution to agriculture and a role in the industry's decision-making process.

But Irene never benefited from the change to the property law. She got none of the proceeds from the sale of the couple's ranch, and her last days were spent alone, ill and in poverty.

NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENISTS WEEK

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): I'm honoured to stand before this House today in recognition of National Dental Hygienists Week, which runs from October 18 to 22.

Mr Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Smile.

Mr Flaherty: The member says, "Smile." You're right, I should.

Over the years, the role of dental hygienists has evolved. Years ago, dental hygienists were responsible for cleaning and polishing teeth and promoting good oral health. Today, dental hygienists not only perform those functions, but also provide a process of care that involves assessing condition, planning and implementing treatment, and evaluation of care programs.

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind the Premier of the promise he made to the Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association on September 29, 2003. He promised to act on the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council's recommendation to permit dental hygienists to clean patients' teeth without a dentist's order. I encourage the Premier to keep his promise and support Bill 116, which I introduced, to remove the restriction that currently prohibits dental hygienists from cleaning patients' teeth without first having to obtain a dentist's order.

This bill will allow more Ontarians to obtain affordable and accessible oral hygiene care, particularly residents in long-term-care facilities, non-ambulatory residents in rural and remote areas, and individuals without private dental insurance.

As we celebrate National Dental Hygienists Week, it is important that we acknowledge the important role that dental hygienists play in our communities, particularly with vulnerable people.

MARIE PERROTTA

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Each year in our community, the Beaches community, we choose a person to be the citizen of the year. This is the fourth year we have done so. We gathered on a very rainy and cold afternoon on Saturday to induct the newest member, Marie Perrotta. We placed her name on the walkway, and people spoke of her contributions to our community.

She is the founder of a group in the Beach called Pegasus. It has spread out, in the 10 years that she has been involved, to encompass now four communities. It is an organization that looks after developmentally challenged adults. There was none in our community when

Marie Perrotta started 10 years ago. Now, as I have said, there are four communities.

Her nominator wrote a wonderful thing, I think far better than I could say it. I'd like to read it into the record:

"It has taken Marie many years of hard work and she has overcome many obstacles that face a person trying to make the government and citizens aware of the needs of our special population. After they leave the educational system at 21, they would be forced into group homes or stay at home with their aging parents and their quality of life would be lonely with no purpose. But Marie with her years of hard work has enabled them to leave their homes each day and be bused to nearby centres for fun and companionship.

"Marie has four centres and a store in operation at this time and is the primary fundraiser. She also gives many hours as a volunteer in schools, recreation centres and wherever she is needed. Even though she is a wife and mother and her life is full, she is still very active in the community.

"She has taken the great left-outs of society and brought them into the life of the community. She has shown us the miracle of integration. The litmus test is the impact she has on this community."

My congratulations to her. The Beaches community is very well served.

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham): Today, it is with great pleasure that I rise to congratulate the Markham Public Library, whose recent nomination for this year's Angus Mowat Award of Excellence, announced earlier this week at the launch of Ontario Public Library Week.

The Markham Public Library is being recognized for its development of the Roving Information Navigator, an on-the-spot tool that assists library patrons with their searches for information and resources.

I would like to thank Minister Meilleur for coming to Unionville to launch Ontario Public Library Week. This past Monday, I had the privilege of assisting Minister Meilleur in announcing the KidsRead Ontario program. This dynamic new program allows children across Ontario to order books in both English and French cost-free from 750 titles provided by Ontario's internationally renowned children's book publishers. I believe KidsRead Ontario to be a vital service for Ontario's children. It will provide them access to resource and tools that they require in order to give them a solid foundation in writing and literacy.

Ontario's public libraries are an excellent resource for children of all economic backgrounds. They house millions of pieces of information that open up worlds of possibilities, opportunities and adventures for children. Last year alone, 69 million Ontarians visited our public libraries. This year, the Ministry of Culture will continue to ensure access through the almost \$39 million of funding to Ontario's public libraries. This is another im-

portant example of our government's commitment to improving writing and literacy skills for Ontario's children.

1340

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Confirmed sightings of the bully minister rampaging in hospital corridors continue to surface. In a Toronto Star article entitled, "What Next for 'Furious George'?" it is reported that he has gone outside his Toronto habitat and visited North Bay and Ottawa.

In North Bay, we learn from the Star, that the minister threatened officials if they persisted with a campaign for more money for their new hospital. He said he would drop that project to favour another from a hospital board that was more obedient to the king of the hospitals. Then he drove to Ottawa, where the minister read the riot act to hospital officials who dared to criticize his legislation and reportedly went nose to nose with one of them.

Today, a new threat: the hospital cafeteria workers, janitors and other support staff. King George has decreed their incomes to be too high. So while hospital administrators, nurses and janitors are now walking on eggshells, terrified to speak out, the bully minister, Mr Smitherman, says he's loving it.

To help those who have been bullied by the minister, bring your stories to our attention. We've set up an electronic bully hotline: Smithermanbulliedme@hotmail.com. It's open to all Ontarians, or if they work in the hospital system, or even to Liberal caucus colleagues. We want to hear about it, because Dalton McGuinty—he couldn't care less. Smithermanbulliedme@hotmail.com.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): It'll come as no surprise to the constituents of Perth-Middlesex that I am proud of our government. Today we're moving forward on another one of our commitments. We're adding 1,000 new police officers to forces across Ontario.

When we formed the government, we inherited an overburdened system lacking in adequate police officers. Now, we all know that the Tories talk tough on crime, but the reality is they did very little about it. Look at the facts. The number of police officers per capita declined by 8% over their tenure. The Provincial Auditor noted that 10,000 arrest warrants were left outstanding, many of them for serious violent offences. When it comes down to it, they promised to hire more police officers but never followed through. Hiring a new police officer to replace a retiring police officer just maintains the status quo.

We're doing things differently. We're making all Ontarians' safety a priority. We're changing the status quo that we inherited from the Tories. We're investing in the prevention of youth crime. We're cracking down on

guns, gangs, organized crime and marijuana grow ops. We're pushing Ottawa to strengthen dangerous offender laws. We're working hard to protect the victims of domestic violence and protecting our children from pornographers. We're getting both tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): It's certainly my pleasure to rise to take this opportunity to highlight some of the very positive changes our government is delivering in the health care sector. The McGuinty government is committed to providing Ontarians with the health care they deserve, and we are taking the right approach to ensure this is accomplished.

We have invested approximately \$1 billion since taking office to help hospitals, and we are working with them to help balance their budgets. Our government will help establish a new Ontario health protection and promotion agency and increase the independence of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. We will also immediately establish a provincial infectious disease advisory committee.

We are making significant investment to provide 21,000 more Ontarians with home care this year. We will bring 2,400 new full-time nurses into the health care sector, and we are making doctors more accessible in communities across the province. We are bringing back long-term care standards.

Our government is strengthening the public health system by taking immediate action. Ontarians can be confident in the leadership and guidance of our health minister and our Premier. The people of Ontario will see real improvement in their public health care system, and that begins from the day of the election.

NURSES

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I rise today to draw the attention of the House to some of this government's accomplishments in the health care sector. We provided funding for 2,400 full-time nursing positions. We did so because we believe nurses, far from being misplaced Hula Hoops, are actually the very heart of the health care system. We're committed to increasing the quality of working life for nurses. The \$14 million that our government has invested in safety equipment, like ceiling-mounted bed lifts, was a good start. Compare this to the record of the previous government, which fired thousands of nurses, at a cost of \$400 million. Tragically, the cumulative poor treatment caused 1,700 registered nurses to leave the profession in 2001 alone.

We're investing money in long-term care and we're making it available to 21,000 more people—a far cry from the previous government, whose senseless cuts to home care forced 115,000 Ontarians to go without care or receive it in an institution. We're also investing \$119

million in long-term care and have frozen the amount that residents of long-term-care facilities must pay—a far cry from the heartless 15% increase the previous government sought to inflict.

In one short year, our government has not only improved but is transforming health care to ensure its long-term sustainability—a far cry from the pattern of spiralling downward out of control.

ANNUAL REPORT,
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER
OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2003-04 annual report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): On Tuesday, I had the pleasure of joining the Recycling Council of Ontario here at Queen's Park to help kick off Waste Reduction Week. The Recycling Council of Ontario has long been at the forefront of waste reduction in Ontario. The council is a forceful advocate of a belief shared by the McGuinty government: that protecting our environment is fundamental to our health and way of life.

For our government, Waste Reduction Week is a time to focus on making Ontario communities safe, clean and livable. It is a time to intensify our efforts to reduce the amount of waste that goes for disposal. Everyone has an important role to play in protecting our precious land, water and air. The people of Ontario know this, and they are taking action. One way is by enthusiastically embracing the blue box. Upon taking office, I approved the blue box program plan. For the first time ever, industry is required to pay for 50% of the cost of operating the blue box program. Earlier this month, as part of the second phase of industry funding, Stewardship Ontario delivered cheques totalling more than \$4.5 million to 189 Ontario municipalities to pay 50% of the net cost of their blue box programs.

On Tuesday, I also helped launched curbside collection of compostable materials here in the city of Toronto, East York and York. The extremely successful green bin program is helping the city greatly reduce the amount of waste that it sends to a landfill. Good progress is being made in Ontario, but we have to face reality. We still generate too much waste and send it for disposal. Future population growth will put even further stresses on our waste management system.

The McGuinty government is providing the leadership that Ontario needs to be a waste diversion leader in the 21st century. We have set aggressive targets for diverting waste. We are examining a number of ways that we can improve upon Ontario's diversion rates.

1350

One area where action is needed is electric and electronic products. The scope of these products is vast, from computers and fax machines to CD players and photocopiers. Diverting these materials from disposal means preventing thousands of tonnes of metal, plastic, wiring and harmful chemicals from ending up as waste in a landfill. I intend to designate electronic waste for recycling, and I will shortly ask Waste Diversion Ontario to prepare a plan for this sector.

We are looking at streamlining the approvals process for new waste diversion technologies. We are exploring opportunities to reduce packaging and increase recycled content in products. Ontarians need to understand the bigger picture when it comes to the benefits of waste diversion. Waste diversion reduces the amount of materials being dumped in landfills, but it does much more than that: It saves the energy that's required to dispose of materials; it eliminates air emissions from trucks that transport garbage; it eliminates emissions from manufacturing; recycled products take less energy to create than raw material products; and it reduces the risk of future ground and surface water pollution.

We usually think about waste in terms of our health and environment, but waste diversion also makes sense from a business perspective. It is sustainable and productive, while waste is unsustainable and unproductive.

I want to conclude by citing some terrific examples of innovative waste reduction in Ontario.

Many of the honourable members will have received telephone calls at home from the Canadian Diabetes Association's Clothesline program, which collects used clothing and reusable household items. Most of us are so happy to help the association with its good work that we do not realize how much waste it is diverting. The numbers are quite impressive. For just the top seven cities in Ontario, Clothesline diverts more than 220,000 kilograms of material from disposal in landfill.

I have met with many other people and organizations from across Ontario who are finding new and innovative ways to reduce waste. In Ottawa, I met with Ralph Rick. He runs a company that recovers and recycles glass from restaurant wine bottles. In Niagara Falls, I saw how one company is successfully tapping into landfill gas to create clean energy for nearby industry. Next week in Toronto, I will take part in the national launch of a cell-phone recycling program. In my own riding of Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, the Land O'Lakes Communications Network is setting up the first e-waste recovery centre in eastern Ontario. Coordinator Jim MacPherson is using the experience he gained as a partner in the Computers for Schools program in Sharbot Lake, which has put more than 9,000 discarded computers back into operation.

Clearly, great work is being done in Ontario. Let us take the opportunity afforded by Waste Reduction Week to strengthen our efforts to reduce waste and protect Ontario's precious health and environment.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Responses?

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I want to thank the minister for finally recognizing waste diversion week with her statement today. It's already Thursday, and I was beginning to think the government had misplaced its calendar. The school kids were out in front of the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday of this week. By the time this shows up in my local papers—that'll be Wednesday of next week—it'll be Canada's Healthy Workplace Week.

Timeline confusions are nothing new with this minister, who told us last December in the Legislature that the government was committing to a 2005 target for the 60% waste diversion goal. Later, the minister pushed that back to 2008. That's a three-year delay. It's actually after the next election.

We certainly recognize waste diversion week. It's important. We also recognize the important steps that have been taken to help reduce impact. It was just over two years ago—two years and four months, to be exact—that the Ontario PC government set the wheels in motion to pave the way for much of the province's waste reduction direction. This minister seems content only to keep in motion the wheels on 125 tractor-trailers a day carrying GTA waste into Michigan. This is waste diversion to Michigan.

On June 14, 2002, we announced a new era in waste diversion in Ontario with the passage of the Waste Diversion Act. I sincerely hope this government doesn't think about repealing this act, like they did with the disabilities act, to give themselves some credit for a new direction.

The Waste Diversion Act was an essential piece of legislation to promote not only recycling but also reduction and reuse of waste, and to establish the permanent non-government corporation called Waste Diversion Ontario, again to develop, implement and fund these kinds of diversion programs. I must underline the importance of this step, as it set in stone that this present government maintain a commitment to reduce the impact on our environment through waste diversion.

That's why it was so great to see all the schoolchildren out in front of Queen's Park on Tuesday morning for the launch of Waste Reduction Week. They beat the minister by a few days. Children will be vital to the future success of any programs this government may come up with.

I'll also mention the Junkyard Symphony. They were out there on Tuesday morning. Some of us heard them at about 7 o'clock, spreading their message through junkyard-inspired tunes and junkyard-inspired instruments.

As we know, this is also an important week for waste diversion in the city of Toronto: the launch of the green box organic waste diversion program. This has been in the works for quite some time.

The minister mentioned e-waste. I suggest the minister tour the Noranda plant in Toronto. They recycle computers.

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: Been there, done that.

Mr Barrett: So we've both been there. That's great.

As the minister will know, they recycle cellphones, computers and photocopy machines. Noranda is in the business of metals. Through this plant they recover aluminum, steel and copper.

I'll mention that in this essential step toward reaching this 60% waste diversion goal, I continue to have concerns about the minister's shifting timelines. Last December it was 2005 and this year it's 2008, and we see no actual financial plan to reach that goal.

I will mention, as I did before, that the waste crisis continues to draw closer at the Sarnia-Windsor-Michigan border: the very real possibility of 125 tractor-trailer loads of garbage being turned away. Presidential candidate John Kerry has taken the position: "We shouldn't import trash from other countries. I plan to review this issue in the first 120 days of my presidency." It's 12 days till the US federal election. Add 120, Minister, and you've got 132 days to do something about those 125 tractor-trailer loads of Toronto waste. I hope it's not just to have them start dumping it in London or the Halton region.

I remind the government that it's a laudable goal to divert 60%. Don't forget about the other 40%.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My heavens, Minister, is that all there is today: the recycling of old announcements and intentions? Nothing introduced today to move us forward—absolutely nothing.

You've made proclamations for 60% waste diversion, but you have failed to introduce the simplest measures today to achieve that goal, and this on the day when the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario came out and specifically referred to the one billion aluminum cans that are entering landfills, not the blue boxes, and also the industrial, commercial and institutional programs that are supposed to be regulated by the ministry—to have it go there—but they're not enforcing their own laws.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario was very clear on that. Aluminum is one of the most easily recyclable materials. The Environmental Commissioner is echoing what I, and others, have been saying for a long time: You need a deposit-refund system when it comes to keeping those cans out of landfills. The other thing the commissioner said is that the blue box program is in jeopardy because those cans aren't going there. They are worth \$1,800, and he said that without that funding for the blue box, the program is actually in jeopardy.

1400

The minister says she's going to ask for an electronic waste bill to be put in place—ask, after a year. We've been talking about that. It's a major problem. I'm sure the member for St Catharines would agree with me on this. It's a whole year later and she hasn't even asked them to do it yet.

I have a private member's bill here called An Act to ensure that the producers of electronic equipment retain

responsibility when their products become waste. This bill has been on the books for a while. It's copied after some of the most successful bills in the world, and the minister refuses to deal with it. She's just asking now to have a bill produced?

The other problem is around composting programs. Yes, there are finally some experimental programs in place, but we have to separate—we all know this now—the wet from the dry. My riding just started this program and we're all enthusiastic about it, but we need it all across the province—now.

We have a landfill crisis. Nobody wants incineration, for good reasons, or landfill—

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Except John Tory.

Ms Churley: Except John Tory, that's true, although the Liberals have always been in favour of it, except Jim Bradley. The best approach to take, and we're so far behind, is to get comprehensive programs across the province now to separate the wet from the dry, and to do much more in terms of refillable bottles—liquor bottles, wine bottles, pop bottles, all those kinds of things—to reduce the waste and keep it as dry and clean as possible so you don't have leachate happen with what's left that's put in the garbage dump. Nothing today about any of that.

The Environmental Commissioner today came out with a damning report on this government's record on the environment. He talked about the fact that they are breaking their own laws. We know they've been breaking their own promises, tons of them—how many? I can't even count any more—but now we find out that this Liberal government is breaking its own laws. That's a pretty serious accusation.

I think the most complimentary thing the Environmental Commissioner could say about this government today, and I would not take heart from this, is that it wasn't all bad news. "In fact, there's some room for optimism.... The government is beginning to move forward on some of the issues that we have been reporting on...." "Beginning to move forward on some of the issues"—that's about the closest he could come to saying this government is doing the right thing on the environment.

He goes into great detail about some of the problems in terms of breaking their own laws. He talks about, for instance, being deeply concerned about the fate of all forests throughout the province and that the government is actually making matters worse. That's the Ministry of Natural Resources.

He talks about the fact that mercury is still spewing out of our coal plants. There is some concern, as we well know, that even though the government says they're going to close down the coal plants by 2007—do you know what the ministry has said in terms of mercury? That there is actually no proof the mercury we have that is poisoning our wildlife is coming from coal plants. What nonsense; we know it is. We want a commitment to shut those plants down, not more drivel.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I understand that former member Brad Clark is in the public gallery, and we want to welcome him here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CLASS SIZE

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Education. You have been the Minister of Education now for one full year, and prior to that you were the education critic.

Minister, could you please tell the Legislature what is the measurement date that elementary schools across this province use to set the classroom sizes for the balance of the year, and could you also inform the Legislature of the date on which those numbers are reported to your ministry?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I'm happy that the member opposite is asking technical questions in the House. The boards will do their population reports, as he knows, twice a year: once at the end of October and once again in April. Those serve as dates in which they will serve for the population that they're funded for. As well, there's a class-size report this year that will be available in December of this year, I'm happy to inform the House and the member opposite.

We're working with all of the schools because they have some particularly interesting challenges this year because they're reducing class sizes. They're actually paying close attention to the needs of individual students. And let me tell you, what we're finding is that, yes, of course, because we have many boards—and we recognize, distinct from the government that went before us, that you can't have a one-size-fits-all solution. But, boy, are people enthusiastic in the school boards, in the classrooms and in the principals' offices to make this work.

Mr Klees: Minister, your credibility is sliding with your stakeholders, with parents and with principals right across this province. You have just correctly informed the Legislature that the actual numbers for class sizes aren't available until the end of October. You didn't answer my question about when those are reported to your ministry. They're not reported until the end of November.

Can you tell this House and the people of Ontario how, then, you and the Premier could stage a photo op in the first week of September, claiming reduced class sizes in 1,300 classes across this province, when you had no information about what those actual class sizes could be? Could you inform us how you can make a claim like that?

Hon Mr Kennedy: I think what's probably apparent, even before my answer, is that the only thing falling in

this province is the size of classes for primary kids. In point of fact, had the member opposite—I want to invite him, if he would like to be briefed on the subject—asked us, he would know what we require. Because when we give out dollars, every dollar matters; every dollar has to produce a good result. So the \$90 million that this Premier and this finance minister cited to go toward these young children required plans. As the member should have known, every board had to tell us specifically, in advance, how many classes would benefit, where would they be putting their particular dollars, how would kids benefit, and only when we received those plans did they receive the dollars from the ministry.

So I say to you, again, we're very glad to report that 1,300 schools have seen class-size reductions. We don't know why the members opposite are against it, but it's the right thing. It's what our students need.

Mr Klees: Here's what we're against: misleading the public. That's what we're against. The fact—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

Mr Klees: The fact of the matter is, the minister knows full well that what is actually happening in the classrooms is not what he and the Premier represented.

We have real people with us here today: Lionel and Wendy Teed, along with Patrick, who is in grade 3 in the Millgrove school. That classroom, Mr Minister, increased from 17 in the first week of September to 28 today—28.

There are calls from parents right across this province to your office, which you are not returning, simply trying to get an explanation from you as to why you would represent in public one thing when the reality is something else.

Could you today explain to the Teeds why their child is in a class of 28, and will you also agree to meet with them following question period, because you've ignored their calls thus far? Will you agree to meet with them and give them an explanation today?

1410

Hon Mr Kennedy: Indeed, I think there may be an apology in order. It really is a fact that the last government ignored the needs of students in this province for so long that—we said this in our election campaign and we said it as we came in—it takes time to clean up after such a big Tory mess as we have in our education system.

I would say directly to the parents who are here and to a student who is here from Millgrove school, if any parents don't receive class size reductions this year, they are still receiving the benefits of \$854 million worth of instruction improvements or the improvements for training teachers that have taken place. This year, 8,000 teachers were trained who didn't get it before. They'll be glad to know that that money is there, in Millgrove school, that you and your colleagues put into private schools and that we instead have given to their kids.

Further, they have these benefits and what they will see in the months coming up—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is for the Premier, the self-styled education Premier in Ontario. You made a promise, more than a year ago now, promise number 13: "We will make sure our schools are safe so students can concentrate on learning." You've failed. You've broken your promise. We do not have mandatory screening of volunteers in our schools.

There is a particular situation in Barrie where a teacher who was found guilty of professional misconduct by the Ontario College of Teachers is volunteering in Johnson Street Public School. May I remind you that this same teacher, according to the *Globe and Mail*, has been placed on the child abuse register. This individual admitted to writing 64 inappropriate letters to a student. In these letters, she referred to the 13-year-old boy student as a "hottie" and a "big stud." She wrote, "There can never be another honey for me." She even went so far as to sign to some letters, "Love, your woman."

When are you going to require mandatory screening of volunteers in the schools of Ontario, as you promised?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): To the Minister of Education.

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): It is interesting what a change in seating will do for someone's perspective. The member opposite asking the question was part of a government that turned down Liberal amendments for the outcome of the Robins report. I want to tell this House that we will be bringing forward measures to require background screening for volunteers and others in the schools. We will have more to say about that shortly.

What I want to say today to the member opposite is that he raises a situation that is in the media, but I think he also understands well that there was a criminal trial held, or at least a trial held, and a finding was made in that trial. The member opposite may know what that finding is. But I would say that we don't make comment on that on this side of the House. It is our job to ensure the safety of all the students in schools and we're going to do a much better job than was done by the government before.

Mr Flaherty: A finding of professional misconduct by the Ontario College of Teachers, which is responsible for regulating teachers, as you should know—you're the Minister of Education and you're supposed to be accountable for the safety of children in our schools. You talk about cameras and all these other things. What about people who have not been screened volunteering in the schools?

I did ask you the question. I asked you the question five months ago today in this Legislature, on June 21—exactly five months ago—and you said, "It is the outlook of this government that everyone who comes in contact with children should be screened...."

So we have the Premier's promise number 13, we have your commitment in this House to the members of this Legislature five months ago, and you have done

nothing. When are you going to bring the legislation to this House to require mandatory screening of volunteers to protect the children in our schools?

Hon Mr Kennedy: If the member and his colleagues who voted down my amendments to that effect would now support them, I'd be happy with his expeditious assistance to bring those measures to the House and to see if we can get the arrangement of the third party. I'd be happy to do it as quickly as possible.

What I would like from the member opposite—I won't ask for consistency—is genuine concern in terms of where we are going to be able to move forward for student safety in this province. We've heard from his colleague sitting on the bench there talking about how he doesn't want us to move forward in terms of securing against intruders, and now we hear that you might be interested in some of these measures. From this side of the House, we'd be very happy to have their co-operation as quickly as possible to do the things we proposed to them in government that they turned down and that fit another part of the list of things that we have to do in this new government. We're here, prepared to do it. Can I have your agreement today that you'll stand in support of them, that you won't, as you did before, stop them so they can't be there as measures that would be helping students of this province?

Mr Flaherty: We will co-operate. Would you please bring the amendment to the Education Act in today? We can do it this afternoon, for we'll co-operate first reading, second reading and third reading. Come on, Minister. Bring it in. You promised on June 21. We're looking forward to seeing it this afternoon. If you need a little time to prepare it, I'll help you over the weekend. We can bring it in on Monday, if you're prepared to do that. I'd be happy to do that.

Lisa Deline is here from Barrie. It's because of parents like Lisa who protest these outrageous situations, who are concerned about the safety of children in our schools, that this kind of issue gets brought forward. She persisted. She spoke to your office, to your press secretary the other day, on October 19. Do you know what she's told by your office, Minister? She's told that her concern is on the pile to be managed, that you don't intend to do anything. You want to manage the people of our province, rather than deal with these important issues. Will you bring forward the legislation either this afternoon or next week? We're ready.

Hon Mr Kennedy: Again, if the member opposite is going to raise issues of children's safety, and if he's going to talk specifically of parents, then he has an obligation, we all know in this House, to be accurate. He knows that screening and police checks on the backgrounds of the situation he's referring to would not apply. I hope he's not holding it out mistakenly or misleadingly. The Ontario College of Teachers, as he realizes, covers teachers. The person in question is no longer teaching. So what I see from the member opposite—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. Minister, you had some unparliamentary language there. Could you just withdraw.

Hon Mr Kennedy: If there's anything unparliamentary, I withdraw it in terms of the previous language. What I say to the member opposite, however, is that he has an obligation to put forward to the people who are affected or are having concerns, and we will meet that—I will say that we have amendments ready to go. We will depend on the co-operation of the member opposite that we couldn't get when he was in the government. For all those many long years, they dragged out the legislation, they dragged out the response—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, every day brings another bad story about your bully boy health minister. Instead of helping hospitals serve their communities, furious George has been out there intimidating and bullying them again. Now, he's trying to blackmail hospitals into silence. Today, the Toronto Star reports that your bully boy health minister threatened to cancel a hospital project in North Bay if people there lobbied for more provincial funding. Premier, do you approve of this policy of using financial blackmail to silence Ontario's hospitals?

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Let me just warn the members here that there are some very unparliamentary words, calling all the members—

Interjection.

The Speaker: There has been some very unparliamentary language. I'm going to caution you, especially since we're all honourable members here. I don't like the way this has been going for the last couple of days. So I want you to refrain from calling other members in these unparliamentary ways. I'm going to warn members from now on on that matter. Minister.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): This is more of the same in terms of the allegations made by members of the opposition. I reject those. I have confidence in my Minister of Health. As I said yesterday, he brings a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and passion to his responsibilities.

What we are about to undertake is something that is significant. It represents a real transformation in our health care. We're talking about ensuring that we get value for patients and taxpayers alike in return for this additional investment, the most money we've ever put into hospitals in the history of this province. In order to do that, we have to change the way some things take place in our hospitals. That's not an easy thing to do. The person who is leading the charge on behalf of this government, but more importantly on behalf of Ontario patients, is Mr Smitherman, and he's doing a fabulous job.

1420

Mr Hampton: It certainly is change when the Minister of Health goes around the province telling hospitals and hospital boards, "If you don't shut up, you might lose your hospital project." That is certainly change. I think the people of Ontario are fortunate that the mayor of East Ferris township has had the courage to come forward and confirm to the Star that your health minister threatened to cancel North Bay's hospital project if the supporters of the hospital didn't shut up.

Premier, is this what you meant by "choose change"? Is this your new hospital policy, your health minister telling hospital boards and hospital volunteers to shut up and, if they don't keep quiet, they could lose the financing for their hospital project?

Hon Mr McGuinty: These allegations and this innuendo have been made by either unnamed sources—we have a particular name here, but I just thought this partisan representation was made on behalf of somebody. I'm sure Mr Hampton would be interested in knowing that this mayor of East Ferris appeared in an ad for the Conservative Party. That might be of passing interest to the NDP. It might be of some passing interest to the Conservative members as well. I think it introduces an element of truth into this debate.

Mr Hampton: Here's the change: Because he may have identified with the Conservative Party on an issue or two, suddenly, according to the Premier, he's a liar. Is that the change?

It's not just North Bay. People in Hamilton are wondering why their hospital project is suddenly on hold. The people of Woodstock are wondering what they did to offend the Minister of Health because suddenly their hospital project is on hold. The citizens of Richmond Hill are afraid that maybe they did something to offend the Minister of Health because suddenly their hospital project is on hold. The reporter from the Kenora Daily Miner and News called me yesterday and wanted to know why Kenora's hospital project is on hold. In fact, 30 hospital construction projects somehow are suddenly on hold.

What is this, Premier? It looks like the Minister of Health goes around the province and says, "You better get in line with the McGuinty policy, or else." Do you have any other explanation, Premier, because we'd like to hear it?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member may be interested in learning that there are close to 100 communities in the province today that are anxious to build or expand a hospital. The problem is that, on their watch, they built no hospitals. On the watch of this former government, they promised all kinds of hospitals but left us no money. That's why we find ourselves in this situation. That's why we are so determined to make sure we're getting value for the investments we're making in health care today.

The Speaker: New question?

Mr Hampton: To the Premier: You might want to check your facts, but I don't think it would make any difference to you because you've already got a reputation

for saying one thing before an election and then completely changing the story after the election.

Here is the reality: You have succeeded in creating a crisis now for our hospitals. You've got your minister going out there and bullying hospital administrators, threatening hospital boards. When he doesn't have time to do that, he says, "Well, we've got to cut the wages of the lowest-paid workers in the hospital system."

Premier, I looked at your budget again. You're getting \$825 million of new money from the federal government, you've got \$2 billion in contingency reserves and you've got the new health tax. It adds up to close to \$4 billion. Can you tell us, why are you going out there and threatening hospitals, saying, "We're not going to this, we're not going to approve your project," when you're sitting on close to \$4 billion that you say must be spent on health?

Hon Mr McGuinty: That must be the new math. Maybe the minister has introduced something I'm not aware of, but that's not something with which we are familiar on this side of the House.

We're putting more money into hospitals than ever before. In return for that, we are insisting that that new money—in a way that gets results for Ontario families and patients. For example, we are insisting on 36,000 new cardiac procedures every year, we're insisting on 9,000 more cataract procedures, we're insisting on 2,300 more hip and knee replacements, and we're insisting that we hire more full-time nurses.

Outside hospitals, we're insisting on bringing home care to 100,000 more Ontarians. We're talking about hiring thousands more people to work in our nursing homes, including 600 new full-time nurses. We're going to ensure our seniors have at least two baths a week. If the member wants to know where the money is going, that's where the money is going.

Mr Hampton: People have heard your empty promises over and over again. What they're seeing, for example in Sault Ste Marie, is 40 nurses going out the door. They wonder where the nurses are going to be to provide these health services. In North Bay, if anyone dares to talk about funding for their hospital project, they're told, "You talk any more, you could lose it." People have heard enough of the empty promises. People want to see peace and constructive activity in their hospitals. What you're doing is conducting a campaign of attack and fear against our hospitals. When are you going to use the money you've got available to sit down and work constructively with our hospitals? They want to move forward on progressive change, but you can't do it by attacking and intimidating them. When are you going to work with them constructively instead of attacking them?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I know the Minister of Health is eager to get in on this.

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's interesting now to know that the policy of the NDP is to get everybody together for a big group singing of Kumbaya. I wonder what was ongoing

when you brought forward the social contract. Was that the mentality you were operating on then?

Let me say very clearly with respect to the issue in North Bay, which the honourable member wishes to raise, that it's true I went to North Bay on Father's Day. I flew there from Stratford with a couple of my staff members. What I took the opportunity to do that day was to make a point, and I did it very, very directly because I felt the people of that community deserved a very honest answer to the situation around the funding of hospital capital. What was clear was that some individuals in that community felt like that community should be involved in attempting to leverage a higher percentage of funding for their hospital. What I clearly told them on that day was that that strategy would not work, that we would not be changing the formula and that continued insistence on that would have the result of compromising the nature of the hospital project. I did that directly. I believe that's what that local community deserved, and I make no apology for that.

Mr Hampton: I think people in the community beg to differ with the interpretation. You call your activity exuberant and energetic; other people out there find it intimidating. It's not just one now; it's more than one. It's not just one hospital; it's not just one hospital administrator. You're developing a reputation around the province.

I say this to the Premier: In your rhetoric you claim that you want to move forward in terms of a progressive health care agenda. But how do you expect to move forward on a progressive health care agenda when what we've seen from the health care minister is intimidating, bullying, and yesterday, threatening to go after the wages of the lowest-paid workers in the health care system? Tell me, how do you expect to do anything constructive when so far what we've heard is a minister who likes the media attention from his bullying, his intimidation and his threatening?

1430

Hon Mr Smitherman: Unlike the honourable member, I am involved in a substantial debate about the future of health care in the province of Ontario. I make no apology whatsoever for going to the community of North Bay and telling them very honestly the situation facing—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Nepean-Carleton, stop interrupting the minister when he is speaking.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Although I appreciate the help from members here, I think I can handle it myself. I want some order in this place.

Hon George Smitherman: Don't worry, Mr Speaker, I am not going to let sideshow Bob distract me from the work I'm doing on behalf of Ontario's patients.

The issue that I think is important to say to the honourable member, with respect to costs in Ontario's hospitals, is that we make a simple, principal point: We want to dedicate every precious penny that's available to patient care. Ontario hospitals have been asked, there-

fore, to engage in a seven-step process that is designed to make sure we carve out all administrative, non-clinical costs. We're at the first stage of that process. That's where Ontario hospitals are focused with us. We have an 18-month time frame in which to get hospitals in balance. Fifty are already there. We are making considerable progress, and we'll continue to work through these on a case-by-case basis.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Premier. I am going read to you from an editorial that appeared today in one of the regional papers: "The residents of the region can only hope the minister has learned to be careful about pressuring the boards."

Can you imagine in your wildest dreams which of your ministers this article is talking about? You might think it's the Minister of Health. Well, it's not; it's the Minister of Education. This is an article that appeared in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, and it's talking about his handling of the clawback of some \$5 million for special education in their board for children with special needs. It's your Minister of Education who is playing games with them, has effectively, and did effectively, threaten them to either spend the money or send it back. They spent the money, and he has now sent in inspectors to find out how they spent it, and they still don't know what is happening.

Premier, will you deal with your Minister of Education and tell him to clarify this matter for the Kitchener-Waterloo district board so they can get on with their special education budget?

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Premier?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Education.

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I'm very happy once again to clarify for the member opposite. This is a hard concept, I know, but we are working in co-operation. We are actually working with the board.

The board in Kitchener-Waterloo made a certain interpretation of special education policy and spent \$5 million at the end of the year on certain things. They agreed, by board resolution, to sit down and talk to us. We have had several meetings with them. Those meetings have been of a very, very co-operative tone. Our staffs have met, and we have a further discussion to have. There may be a few members of the board who feel differently, but by and large the board is doing what everyone in education needs to do: make the extra effort, try to find a different way, change the channel from the conflict that went on with the member's party and find a way to put the kids first.

In this case, it's about how to manage a very large increase in funding. One hundred million dollars more than boards requested last year is out there helping kids. We're going to find the best way to agree on how those kids are going to benefit, and Kitchener-Waterloo has agreed to work with us on that.

Mr Klees: The minister can give us that rhetoric here, and it may look good in Hansard, but in the real world out there, not only in Kitchener-Waterloo—Minister, I have letters here from Halton Catholic District School Board, Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and from virtually every board in this province. They are saying exactly the same thing. By the way, the Premier himself said you have mishandled this file.

Will you today make a commitment to this Legislature and to district school boards right across this province to ensure that they receive the necessary funding, that you will stop trying to claw back money that has already been transferred to these school boards for special needs in this province? Don't be glib about it; get with the program. Be the minister and demonstrate your commitment to children in this province who have special needs to ensure that these boards have the necessary funding.

Hon Mr Kennedy: The member opposite sat in a government for five years that required boards to document the needs of the most vulnerable kids in this province, required medical examinations and required the best teachers in the province to leave their classrooms and sit in the backrooms and fill in paperwork. For five years, year after year after year, they said no. They gave no extra money. That gallery was full of kids who couldn't get their education.

I want to tell you that even at the end of their mandate, when they decided they were finally going to be forced to provide funding—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I have two members here who have used unparliamentary language, and I'm going to ask both members to withdraw. I'm going to ask the member for Oak Ridges and the member for Whitby-Ajax.

Interjection.

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): I withdraw.

Hon Mr Kennedy: This is a very hard and trying time for the opposition party. They don't understand that we're actually governing in this province. We're actually doing the harder job of working out relationships with people. In their particular approach, if they didn't like what a school board was doing, they took it over. If they didn't like what a hospital board was doing, they took it over. They didn't know how to arrive at solutions, how to make sure that the patients and students in this province were put first. And it does take time. After the experience of that government, it takes time to change the channel. I'm pleased to report to the people of Ontario that the channel is being changed.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Premier. The Environmental Commissioner came out with his report today, and he said that you are breaking your own laws and policies. For example, your government is letting toxic substances flow through our sewage treatment plants and into our lakes

and rivers. His report claims that in 2002, 258 kilograms of arsenic flowed into Lake Ontario via Toronto's sewage treatment plants, and 2,545 kilograms of lead flowed through Hamilton's sewers into Lake Ontario. He said that until the mid-1990s the government took an active role in promoting tough municipal sewer bylaws but the Liberals, like the Tories, do nothing while tonnes of lead, mercury and arsenic seep into our lakes and rivers.

Premier, will you finally act to ensure that municipal sewer use bylaws are in effect, reflect current environmental standards and are enforced across Ontario? In other words, will you do your job?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of the Environment.

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to respond and remind the honourable member that in fact this government is doing its job. My colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, has forged a memorandum of understanding. This is a framework document that we will use to address issues, just as this one has been identified by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

Obviously, we need to work with our municipal partners to have them understand why it is very important that we do have bylaws that prevent poisons and toxins from getting into our wastewater systems. We now, thanks to the leadership of this Premier and this government, have a vehicle than can make that happen.

Ms Churley: I believe the minister is saying that the commissioner got it wrong today. We'll check to see who is right.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier why he was not opposing the annex agreement that would allow the eight Great Lakes states to divert unlimited water from the Great Lakes water basin that we all share. Today I got an answer. The Environmental Commissioner answered that question; it's because the McGuinty Liberals are doing the same thing. He was referring to an issue I raised here before, and that is the big pipe.

Minister, you broke your moratorium on water taking when you issued a water-taking permit for the pipe a few weeks ago. It diverts an unprecedented 66 billion litres of groundwater from the complex that feeds into the Great Lakes basin for the purposes of servicing sprawl.

So I'm going to ask you, Minister, after the commissioner said that allowing the big pipe to go ahead limits your ability to criticize the US, will you listen to the words of the Environmental Commissioner and rescind this water-taking permit today?

1440

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: The honourable member is all over the map in terms of what her question is. First it's with the Great Lakes annex, then it's with water-taking permits and then it's with the big pipe.

I have made it very clear publicly with regard to the big pipe that this government takes health and safety

issues within the community very seriously. I know the member opposite has said that a warning from the medical officer of health is a red herring. Well, we don't consider warnings from the medical officer of health a red herring. One other government turned its back on a medical officer of health and there were very serious consequences. We are acting responsibly.

I can tell you about the commitment of this government to the environment. We have increased the operating budget of the Ministry of the Environment by 12%. We have hired more water inspectors to ensure that our water is safe. We are closing coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario. We are cracking down on hazardous waste. We are improving air quality standards. We are going to make polluters pay when they pollute our water. So I would suggest that the honourable member maybe pay some attention to the work this government has been doing.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Ontario recently marked the 25th anniversary of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Despite a quarter-century of efforts to make workplaces safer, we read in the papers and see on television almost every night how people are injured or even killed on the job. Minister, this affects the quality of life of those who are injured and their families immensely, and we really have to do something about it. Minister, what are you going to do to improve the health and safety of Ontario workers?

Hon Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour): I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question. I'd like to also thank the member for his tireless efforts in making sure that this government is pursuing healthier and safer workplaces.

There is an enormous problem in spite of the fact that business, labour and government, to some extent, have made enormous progress over the years. There's an enormous problem because there are still 300,000 workplace accidents every year. So what did we do?

First, we brought together experts in business and labour with the minister's health and safety action groups in construction, health and manufacturing to get their advice on how to make the system better. The first thing they recommended was that we improve enforcement. So we're hiring 200 health and safety inspectors, the first 100 by November and the second 100 by February. Our goal is to reduce workplace accidents by 20% by the year 2008—a laudable goal.

Mr Duguid: In supplementary, over the years, I've had the privilege to meet and become friends with a constituent of mine whose life and health were permanently altered by a workplace accident. Since that time, he has tirelessly championed the cause of injured workers, dedicating his life to seeking improvements from the government. I'm sure my friend would like to know if there are other things the ministry is doing about work-

place injuries, particularly in the area of occupational disease.

Hon Mr Bentley: I have travelled the province and I've spoken to many injured workers, people whose lives have been altered forever by workplace accidents. They make the compelling case that we always need to do more. So let me tell the honourable member what else we've been doing over the past several months.

First of all, we brought in a system to regularly update the occupational exposure limits, which are the limits set so that workers are not unduly exposed to hazardous chemicals. They weren't being updated regularly. We brought in a system so that now, every year, workers will benefit from the best scientific and medical evidence. But that's not all.

Working with the member from Sarnia-Lambton, earlier in the year we made an important announcement in Sarnia, which made sure that the occupational health clinic in Sarnia was given permanent status and stable funding. That will protect and assist workers who have been afflicted with occupational disease. But that's not all.

We've made regulatory changes with multi-point suspended scaffolding, wood pole climbing—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Ms Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): My question today is for the Minister of Education. All across the province children's lives are being disrupted because of your government not providing the proper supports for local school boards. Your government has made massive cuts in some of the rural and Catholic school boards. These cuts affect people's lives. They affect people like Denise Barrett, from the Durham District School Board. Does it make any sense for an older sibling to get a ride in a bus while their younger sibling cannot be transported even though there are surplus seats, thus leaving a four-year-old behind on the sidewalk?

These cuts create problems in places like Chatham Kent school board, where they've had to adopt a multi-tiered school and bus schedule. Because of this, the high school students are picked up from school and start their day earlier than the younger siblings. These cuts have created problems in my own riding of Haliburton-Victoria-Brock. I spoke in the spring session about the problems faced by the Carden and Dalton area. I'd like an answer. They've sent their children to Simcoe area schools for generations.

Arbitrary boundaries are being set by bureaucrats, barriers that prevent parents from sending their children to their community schools. Why are you forcing these choices on school boards? Why are you making it harder for working families to get their children safely off to school and back again? Why are you forcing school boards to go to ridiculous lengths to satisfy your set of rules?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): The House and the public and indeed the parents in the boards just named—there's one thing those boards have in common with all the boards across this province: Their transportation funding went up this year. We improved transportation funding by 5% this year, starting—I know this is a new member who doesn't bear the full responsibility—to make up for some of the damage done by her party when it was in government. So a 5% increase, \$32 million, is a good start. We've also put forward some plans on how transportation can be improved. Every board received at least a 2% increase. Some received as much as a 12% increase to start helping them to do better.

We agreed there should be a first duty on the part of boards to make sure kids are transported safely. There have been incidents this week that don't point to any blame but that remind us we have that duty in this House. We believe our funding is there to do that. We are in dialogue with all the boards. I know it's sometimes a difficult concept, but we're actually not making any changes in transportation without first talking to school boards. We are actually working with them very closely on how transportation in this province can be done even better than it is today. All the boards got more money this year than they did last year.

Ms Scott: It is a concern for safety for children. I'm glad he's consulting with the school boards, because the complaints are many. Later today we'll be debating Bill 73, dealing with children's safety. Minister, safety does not begin when a child gets on a school bus. There is a bus stop located in the riding of my colleague Norm Miller that is unsafe. It's at the corner of Bailey Street and Harris Street in Port Carling. A local parent has even gone so far as to have an audit done showing this is not a safe place to put a bus stop. Why are you forcing school boards to make choices that put children's safety at risk?

Minister, Garfield Dunlop and I wrote to you on behalf of Carden-Dalton in March. It took five months to get an answer. We have written you last week to sit down with the two school boards involved and resolve this issue for the children's safety. Will you meet with the Trillium Lakelands school board and the Simcoe school board?

Hon Mr Kennedy: There is an effort underway right now working with boards on transportation. They are being very helpful. In fact, they helped design a new transportation funding formula that is having a lot of attention around the province, as it should. Most other governments put out their funding formulas and then talk to the people that are affected. We're doing that a year ahead of time, and we will do that with safety as a paramount concern, I want to assure the member opposite.

I would take this moment to invite them to support the bus safety bill we have coming forward this afternoon. I would expect to have the support of all the members of the House. I remember sitting exactly in her position and hearing time after time how Mr Hoy, a member of this

House, brought forward bus safety legislation, over and over again, and could not get the agreement of her party when in government.

We take those responsibilities very seriously. I look for agreement with all members to make sure our students are transported safely every day to school.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a question for the Premier. Premier, you broke your promise to the people of Ontario to cut auto insurance rates, but more important, you broke my car. This spring, I got my auto insurance bill and it didn't go down 20% like you promised it would. It went up a thousand bucks. So I had to park my Pontiac Sunbird outside, and I told you, "That car's staying there until the rates come down." The problem is, Premier, the rates didn't come down. The only thing that came down was a branch that fell on the roof of my car. So I say to you, Premier, my car's wrecked. They towed it away. It's gone to Car Heaven.

I say to you, Premier, why'd you break your promise to the people of Ontario, but more important, why'd you break my car?

1450

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order.

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I recall making a number of promises, but none of those included not breaking the member's car.

Speaker, I'm sure that there is some serious—perhaps there is not. I'll look to the supplementary.

Mr Bisson: I had to do a little investigation. I talked to some people around this Legislature, and it is rumoured—now, I can't prove this; I'm not saying it's me, but it's rumoured—"We saw some guy," somebody reported to me, "last week, on the weekend, slinking around in behind the trees in the east parking lot," and that person, remarkably, looked like you. They said he was a tall guy, kind of dumb-looking. Oh, no; that's not nice. I take that back. It's all in fun. But what's more important, Speaker, is that this guy was walking around with one of them saws, you know, like the type you cut trees with, and they saw the guy climb up the tree, and he partially cut the branch, waiting for it to fall down on my car.

I say again to the Premier, why'd you break my car?

The Speaker: Premier, you've got a second chance.

Hon Mr McGuinty: This is surely a performance worthy of the press gallery party, and perhaps it is at least an audition. But on behalf of our government and on behalf of Ontarians, 12 million-strong, let me offer my deepest condolences to the member opposite on the demise of his beloved vehicle and my every assurance that we will do as much as we can to assist him in his search for a replacement.

AIR QUALITY

Ms Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Today the Environmental Commissioner's report was released, and unlike in previous years, this year progress was actually made.

However, in his report, the Environmental Commissioner highlights his concerns with Ontario's air standards. He says specifically, "Many of Ontario's air standards were established over 20 years ago ... these standards are clearly dated and may not be adequately protective." He also believes that your ministry's science tools for regulating air emissions from industry are woefully outdated. Minister, what are we doing to address his concerns?

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to receive the question from my colleague, and I encourage all members of the House to read the document very carefully. This government takes the report of the Environmental Commissioner very seriously. We see it as an opportunity and as a guide as we move forward with our plan for the environment.

I think it's important to point out as well that the Environmental Commissioner would have completed his study of the work of the government about May or June of this year, so some of the good announcements that our government has made and the good initiatives that we now have underway were predated by the conclusion of his report.

I am very happy to say to the honourable member that on June 22, our government announced the five-point action plan for cleaner air in Ontario. It will toughen the limits on nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide. It will extend the limits to six more industrial sectors, it will monitor 29 additional carcinogens and it will adopt the US EPA monitoring dispersion model, which is what the Environmental Commissioner has really directed us to do here.

Ms Matthews: Although we have come so far in just a year, it's clear there is still work to be done to repair the damage to the environment caused by the previous government. The report included some recommendations on where the government can go from here. Minister, what does your ministry intend to do with those recommendations?

Hon Mrs Dombrowsky: Again, as I explained earlier in the first part of the answer, because of the timing of the end of his report, our government has already initiated actions on a number of the recommendations—the 14 that he brought to our attention. I'm happy to say that we have already implemented the Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality. This will be the body to which some of the concerns he's addressed in this report will be directed.

We've also established the experts panel on the Environmental Assessment Act. The commissioner identified where the Environmental Assessment Act was not actually providing for the need for transparency, accessi-

bility and accountability on the part of the Ministry of the Environment. I expect the experts panel to report by the end of this year, and I expect that the valid issues that have been raised by the Environmental Commissioner will be addressed by that panel in that report.

PER DIEM FUNDED AGENCIES

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Today in the House, we're joined by quite a few members of the Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth. The minister would be aware that they represent about 97 agencies with 4,000 highly trained child and youth workers, who are providing 24/7 care to some of the most frail and vulnerable children. These are children who have been abused and children who are self-abusing, children with developmental disabilities and children who are medically fragile. They are the only lifeline to their quality of living in this province when parents can no longer cope and provide their care.

Minister, your recent provincial budget held out the promise that these agencies would receive some of the 3% operational increase. In fact, even in the lock-up and in the press releases there was an implication that these agencies would be eligible. Being the minister responsible for the Human Rights Code in this province, why have you specifically put out a funding program that discriminates against some children based on your non-ability to transfer these funds to these residential centres?

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me the opportunity to clarify exactly what did happen. The 3% increase did go to the transfer agencies, the agencies that receive funds directly from the Ontario government. It was the first time for such an increase in over a decade—much-needed monies.

We are aware of the pressures in the other organizations as well. It's a new ministry. In fact, the budget of the new ministry is six months old. We are reviewing all of our programs on how to better address the pressures in the system, but this first increase in 10 years did go to those agencies that have a direct funding arrangement with the government.

Mr Jackson: Minister, your facts are incorrect on two fronts. First of all, this is not the first increase in years. In fact, this is the first time in Ontario's history that any government has differentiated and discriminated against this group of workers. In the past, pay equity dollars flowed equally to the entire sector. Staff retention dollars flowed. Retrofit and fire safety dollars all flowed. Even the social contract made sure there was no discrimination in this funding model. You are the first minister and the first government to discriminate against these treatment centres and their workers. More importantly, you are discriminating against the families and the children they serve.

Minister, you held out the point during the budget that they would be covered and now you're suggesting they won't.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Question.

Mr Jackson: I have several children in my community whom your ministry refers to these agencies. You, Minister, pay them direct. We used to call them the "minister's children."

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Jackson: Minister, you do fund them directly. Fund these properly and—

The Speaker: Thank you. Minister.

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: Let me clarify something. It's true you didn't discriminate, because you gave no increases to anybody. That's how you didn't discriminate. This is the first increase in over a decade for these. I'm very well aware of the pressures. I met with the association earlier in the mandate, and we are looking at the programs and how we will better address those changes.

1500

ASSISTANCE TO DISABLED

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Madam Minister, last week I asked the Minister of Finance a detailed question about the elimination of the Ontario sales tax rebate program for people with disabilities and its financial impact on a young family by the name of Chenier. Your government's own Web site contained improper and outdated information that led people to apply for sales tax rebates that you now say no longer exist. I asked the minister to refund the rebate, given your admission that the Web site was wrong. Your own Liberal member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell has written an almost identical letter asking for the same thing. The minister responded to my request by calling my office to let me know that the Web site has now been updated. Well, that's not good enough for the Cheniers, nor is it good enough for me, nor should it be good enough for you.

In light of these revelations, will you do the right thing for this family? Will you apply the refund for those people who got erroneous, wrong, completely bad information from your Web site? Further to this, will you extend the deadline so that people who have relied on this information won't lose out on the rebate?

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I know that you are aware, as an MPP who is intimately involved in these issues with your own constituents—we have spoken repeatedly with his office on many issues regarding social services, and we're happy to do that. In this case, you know that we did roll over the tax credit that was applied through the Ministry of Finance and moved it over to Community and Social Services, working with children's services. For the first time, we're able to provide assistance to families for

mobility, not just for adults but for children. In that regard, it really was a tremendous event and probably fairly historic that we have ministries that are prepared to work together and really help people who truly need the help.

I appreciate that as programs change we have to do a good job to inform people, and I hope we can do better that way.

Mr Prue: I'd like to quote from the letter that was sent to the Honourable Greg Sorbara from Jean-Marc Lalonde, MPP for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. It reads, in part—this is dated September 27:

"After thorough research on the Ministry of Finance's Web site, Mr Chenier purchased a new van to transport his child. He then found out that the tax refund program had been cancelled two weeks prior to his acquisition. Mr Chenier states that there is no clear mention of this in the Ministry of Finance's Web page and that the Web site should be properly updated.

"...Therefore, on behalf of Mr Chenier, I would appreciate any help that you may be able to offer and I thank you for your co-operation..."

I'm asking the same thing that your own member on that side of the House is asking: Will you extend the deadline, and will you refund the sales tax to the disabled and their families who have been victims of your government's misinformation?

Hon Ms Pupatello: As you know, this MPP is well aware that we look at individual cases all the time. My ministry office works closely with his on innumerable issues, and this is but one.

I can tell you that when we change the program and move it from a tax credit into this kind of program so that children and adults can benefit, four times the number of people will benefit. It is an income-tested program. It is meant to help people who are most in need.

Where we can be helpful for individual cases, we are prepared to do that. This may well be one. I am happy to look specifically at this issue. If there is a way we can help, we are prepared to do that—as we have done on many occasions, as this MPP knows. We're happy to work with members of the House when it comes to helping those who are most vulnerable. We have completely changed our attitude in this government. We believe that our government should be here to help the people who are most vulnerable, and we are always happy to look at each individual case.

CLASS SIZE

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education, although I must preface my question with a comment. I find interesting, if not amusing, the previous questions from a government which took \$2 billion out of education and commissioned a report that told them they shouldn't have done it and to put it back in, to find that they have a sudden overwhelming interest in class size. As I said, it's interesting, if not amusing.

My question—because this is an important issue in my constituency of Etobicoke Centre and around the province—there are classes that exceed the 20 limit and there are parents concerned about those primary classes. Let's set the rhetoric aside and talk about what it is we are doing to help these classes and help parents understand what's going on in the classes.

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Indeed we are, as mentioned earlier in this session, reducing class sizes for students across the province. Our goal is very straightforward. It's not a board average, it's not a device to avoid responsibility in the way that some people characterized the previous government, but in fact an actual cap on class sizes. You'll be able to walk into schools, do a head count and tell whether this is in effect.

We have, this year, been able to reach 38% of schools, but this is a big problem and had some years in development. To the parents in the other 62% of the schools, we recognize that that's the other part of the equation. They too have already seen benefits in terms of teacher training, better cleaning and better resources available, and we will work very hard to make sure they get the benefit of class size just as quickly as possible.

We've always said this would be a multi-year initiative. It is getting installed even quicker than we thought, but we are going to take another couple of years to make sure every student in the primary grades benefits.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm asking for unanimous consent to pass second and third reading of Bill 29, An Act to ensure that the producers of electronic equipment retain responsibility when their products become waste. Can I have unanimous consent for that today?

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent? I didn't hear unanimous consent.

PETITIONS

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm presenting a petition. I was asked to do so by my colleague from Whitby-Ajax. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has failed to ensure that students are protected from individuals whose past behaviours have directly harmed children; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has chosen to ignore the children's aid society's recommendation that certain individuals not work with children; and

"Whereas the introduction of a volunteer into the school system must not be solely at the discretion of the principal; and

"Whereas the Liberal government promised to ensure that school boards provide strong local accountability and decision-making;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the Education Act to place restrictions on the eligibility of persons who act as volunteers in schools, and to include as a formal requirement that volunteers be subject to the approval of the school board and parent council."

I'm pleased to add my name to this.

PER DIEM FUNDED AGENCIES

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of 1,385 people, a few of whom are here today to hear this petition being read out. It reads:

"Petition to Premier McGuinty to honour commitments made to all social service agencies in the 2004 provincial budget.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over 4,000 vulnerable children, youth and adults are provided with high-quality services in residential care and treatment homes in the province of Ontario, including those individuals who are medically fragile, developmentally handicapped, autistic, physically abused, neglected, conduct-disordered, young offenders, and emotionally disturbed; and

"Whereas over 4,000 child and youth workers are dedicated in their profession to work with vulnerable children, youth and adults in the provision of an accepting, safe, supportive, therapeutic environment; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget promised \$38 million to children's mental health services or otherwise a 3% operational increase to those agencies who have not received an increase in several years; and

"Whereas the government has excluded the 93 agencies and more who serve this vulnerable population under a funding structure referred to as 'per diem funded agencies'; and

"Whereas, by excluding these children of the province and the dedicated staff who serve them from the 3% increase promised in the 2004 budget, agencies will close down, thereby handicapping government with respect to the delivery of service and costing the government far more by placing those hard-to-serve clients in more costly facilities,

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

"That the Parliament of Ontario do the right thing, help and assist the lives of the many, many vulnerable people in Ontario and include per diem agencies (Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth) in the 2004-05 provincial budget. Keep your promise and commit to the 3% increase in staff and client funding. The Parliament of Ontario should recognize that the clients and staff are all citizens of Ontario and should not be penalized by virtue of where they reside or where they may be placed."

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

1510

Mr Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge): I have a petition here signed by some of my constituents and others.

“Petition to Premier McGuinty to honour commitments made to all social service agencies in the 2004 provincial budget.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 4,000 vulnerable children, youth and adults are provided with high-quality services and residential care in treatment homes in the province of Ontario, including those individuals who are medically fragile, developmentally handicapped, autistic, physically abused, neglected, conduct-disordered, young offenders and emotionally disturbed; and

“Whereas over 4,000 children and youth workers are dedicated in their profession to work with vulnerable children, youth and adults in the provision of an accepting, safe, supportive, therapeutic environment; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s 2004 budget promised \$38 million to children’s mental health services or otherwise a 3% operational increase to those agencies who have not received an increase in several years; and

“Whereas the government has excluded the 93 agencies and more who serve this vulnerable population under a funding structure referred to as ‘per diem funded agencies’; and

“Whereas by excluding those children of the province and the dedicated staff who serve them from the 3% increase promised in the 2004 budget, agencies will close down, thereby handicapping government with respect to the delivery of services and costing the government far more by placing those hard-to-serve clients in more costly facilities;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario do the right thing, help and assist the lives of the many, many vulnerable people in Ontario and include per diem agencies (Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth) in the 2004-05 provincial budget. Keep your promise and commit to the 3% increase in staff and client funding. The Parliament of Ontario should recognize that the clients and staff are all citizens of Ontario and should not be penalized by virtue of where they reside or where they may be placed.”

HEALTH CARE

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition signed by hundred of my residents which reads as follows:

“Whereas the Liberal government has announced in their budget that they are delisting key health services such as routine eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services,

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

“To reverse the delisting of eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services and restore funding for these important and necessary services.”

I affix my name in full support.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas,

“The elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

CHILDREN’S HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are approximately 23,000 children and youth in Simcoe county and York region who have special needs; and

“Whereas approximately 6,000 of these children have multiple special needs that require a range of core rehabilitation services; and

“Whereas children with multiple special needs (and their families) throughout the province access ongoing rehabilitation services that are critical for their development at children’s treatment centres in their area; and

“Whereas there is no children’s treatment centre in Simcoe county or York region. For families that can travel, the closest services are in Toronto; and

“Whereas Simcoe county and York region is the only area left in the entire province that does not have access to children’s treatment centre services in their own area;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to release the funding for the children’s treatment centre in Simcoe county and York region so that core rehabilitation services can be delivered to the children and youth in Simcoe county and York region.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that has been sent to me by Colette and Roland Demers of Sudbury, Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government is cutting provincial funding for essential health care services like optometry, physiotherapy and chiropractic care;

“Whereas this privatization of health care services will force Ontarians to pay out-of-pocket for essential health care;

“Whereas Ontarians already pay for health care through their taxes and will be forced to pay even more through the government’s new regressive health tax;

“Whereas the Liberals promised during the election that they would not cut or privatize health care services in Ontario;

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

“We demand the McGuinty Liberal government keep its promises and guarantee adequate provincial funding for critical health services like eye, physiotherapy and chiropractic care.”

I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to this.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative of Ontario.

“Re: support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan:

“Whereas the elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Whereas those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Whereas the elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“Whereas there was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I table this petition with page Arif.

MEAT PROCESSING ON FARMS

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition signed by a great number of residents in the riding of Leeds-Grenville, ably represented by my good friend Mr Runciman. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas changes in the Health Protection and Promotion Act, effective September 1, 2004, now prohibit farmers killing cattle on their own farms for their own use from taking these animals to licensed butchers for custom cutting, wrapping and freezing; and

“Whereas these changes will prove restrictive and costly for farmers raising livestock for their own use; and

“Whereas the new regulation appears to create a double standard between wild game and cattle;

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

“We request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario rescind the new regulations and work with the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture to find options that will not unfairly penalize farmers who produce meat for their own use.”

OPTOMETRISTS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition regarding optometry services, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member’s bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

“Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

“Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

“Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

“Therefore” we, the undersigned, “support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and” we “urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill.”

I agree with the petitioners, and I’ve signed this as well.

IMMIGRANTS’ SKILLS

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly from a group of parents in the Lisgar area of Mississauga. It reads:

“Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

1520

“Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professional and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

“Whereas Ontario, its businesses, its people and its institutions badly need the professional, managerial and technical skills that many newcomers to Canada have and want to use;

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

“That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario’s professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry, or re-entry, of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce.”

I absolutely agree with this petition and I’m asking Norah to carry it.

PER DIEM FUNDED AGENCIES

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 4,000 vulnerable children, youth and adults are provided with high-quality services in residential care and treatment homes in the province of Ontario, including those individuals who are medically fragile, developmentally handicapped, autistic, physically abused, neglected, conduct disordered, young offenders and emotionally disturbed; and

“Whereas over 4,000 child and youth workers are dedicated in their profession to work with vulnerable children, youth and adults in the provision of an accepting, safe, supportive therapeutic environment; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s 2004 budget promised \$38 million to children’s mental health services, or otherwise a 3% operational increase to those agencies who have not received an increase; and

“Whereas the government has excluded the 93 agencies and more who serve this vulnerable population under a funding structure referred to as per diem funded agencies; and

“Whereas by excluding those children of the province and the dedicated staff who serve them from the 3% increase promised in the 2004 budget, agencies will close down, thereby handicapping government with respect to the delivery of services and costing the government far more by placing these hard-to-serve clients in more costly facilities,

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario do the right thing, help and assist the lives of the many, many vulnerable people in Ontario and include per diem agencies,” in particular the Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth, “in the 2004-05 provincial budget. Keep your promise and commit to the 3% increase in staff and client funding. The Parliament of Ontario should recognize that the clients and staff are all citizens of Ontario and should not be penalized by virtue of where they reside or where they may be placed.”

This petition has my full support and signature.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Pursuant to standing order 55, I rise to give the Legislature the business of the House for next week:

On Monday, October 25, in the afternoon it will be Bill 96; in the evening, Bills 18, 25, 63, 86 and 82;

Tuesday, October 26, in the afternoon, Bill 82; in the evening, Bills 18, 25, 63, 86 and 96;

Wednesday, October 27, in the afternoon, Bill 84; in the evening, Bills 18, 25, 63, 86, 82 and 96;

On Thursday, October 28, in the afternoon, Bill 60; in the evening, Bills 18, 25, 63, 86, 82 and 96.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**HIGHWAY TRAFFIC STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY), 2004**

**LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT
DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(SÉCURITÉ DES ENFANTS
ET DES JEUNES)**

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 1, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 73, An Act to enhance the safety of children and youth on Ontario’s roads / Projet de loi 73, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des enfants et des jeunes sur les routes de l’Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Continuing debate, Mr Bisson.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Somebody sent me a note. Whoever did, I couldn’t read it. Please send it back to me because I couldn’t make it out. I don’t know who sent that.

But that has nothing to do with the debate, I want to assure you. This is the debate about Bill 73. It’s not about my car.

Mr Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): You have to get a car before you get a car seat.

Mr Bisson: No, no. We dealt with that matter adequately in question period. We're dealing with Bill 73; it's not about my car.

I want to say at the outset that I had an opportunity, I guess last spring, to make a few comments on this bill when I took the floor as we were ending the day. I want to remind people that this particular bill deals with the safety of children. It's called An Act to enhance the safety of children and youth on Ontario's roads, and it deals with a number of things. For example, one is mandatory car seats for children under a certain age and size.

Generally, there's some stuff in here that, quite frankly, we can support. I know this kind of stuff has been the subject of much debate in various private members' bills over the years, and we've had an opportunity to debate some of that. But I think this goes beyond that, and for that reason there needs to be a little bit more debate in regard to a couple of things.

I just want to go through a couple of points. The first one is on the explanatory note: "New section 57.1.1 authorizes police officers and other enforcement officers to demand identification from passengers in a vehicle driven by a novice driver in order to determine whether the novice driver is contravening a condition or restriction imposed on novice drivers by regulation." I'm wondering why we have to have that in legislation. I would like somebody to clarify that point. It's always been my understanding that police officers have the right to ask a driver for his or her licence. At that point they can determine if there are any restrictions on the graduated licence: if the person is not supposed to be driving after dark, if they have to have 0% intake of alcohol. All those things are described on the licence, and I always thought that police officers had that right.

Whenever I see these kinds of things showing up in legislation, I wonder why we're doing it. One of my complaints, and I think some of the members who have been around here for a while may bear this out, is that sometimes some of the legislation we draft is written in a way that is pretty darned difficult for a regular person out there to understand. When you get language like we've got in section 57, I think it makes it a little bit more difficult to understand. On that particular section, I think the police already have the authority to do that, and I would like to know why we have to have this in this legislation.

The other thing on restrictions on the novice driver is, why do we need to have special legislative authority to take a look at the person who is the licensed driver with the novice driver? Again, I assume the police have the authority to do that already, because they've been doing it for years. It would be interesting to see why that's in there.

Then, under section 106—this is one that I agree with, but there's a problem with it. I think we need to talk this through and get it into committee so we can figure out how to do this in a way that doesn't penalize grandparents; that's what I'm really worried about with this

particular clause, and you'll understand why in a minute. It says, "Under current subsection 106(7), a child passenger who weighs less than 23 kilograms must occupy a position where there is a seat belt." OK, everybody agrees. "This is repealed, leaving the requirements respecting child seating and restraint systems to be set out in the regulations." It goes on, and I could read some more, but what it basically says is that you have to have a car seat in your car if you go to pick up any child who's less than 23 kilograms in weight.

I'm not a grandparent yet, and I don't think my daughters, at 22 and 27, are planning any children at this point. But at one point I imagine I'll be a grandparent—I hope I am, like everybody else. Nobody wants to have a situation where children can be put in danger—

Mr Qaadri: You have to get a car before you get a car seat.

Mr Bisson: That's a good point: I'd have to have a car before I get a car seat. That's very witty. I never thought of that. I guess a Ford truck doesn't count—that's another story.

Anyway, nobody disagrees that we need to do things to make our children safe in cars, as well as any other occupants who are in the cars. But the effect of that particular section is this: The grandparent who is being called at the last minute to go and pick up a granddaughter, or a grandson at a hockey practice, because mom or dad can't be there because of some occurrence, is going to be required to have a car seat in their car. What happens if the grandparents are not normally the people who pick up the child? Do they run off to Canadian Tire or any other store that may be out there and pick up a car seat and have it—

1530

Interjection: Wal-Mart.

Mr Bisson: No, I'm not referring them to Wal-Mart, I want you to know.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Canadian Tire then.

Mr Bisson: Canadian Tire is a great place to go. My favourite shopping is at Canadian Tire, but that's for another debate.

Mr Kormos: I'm partial to George's hardware.

Mr Bisson: George's hardware in Welland? I've been there with you—really good selection. People should go in and check it out. But that's for another debate, not this one.

Of course, you can't forget Canada Glass, which I brought you to. You'll love the selection. Gilles Bélanger runs a great place up on Wilson, but that's for the third debate.

My point is this: The grandparent gets a call. The child calls the parent and says, "Mom, Jeez, I can't go over to pick up your granddaughter. She's in figure skating. Something just happened. I've got to go and pick up John at the airport. Something else has gone on. Can you go pick her up, please, at her skating practice?" So the grandparent gets in the car, drives over to pick up the child, puts the child in the car, puts the child in a seat

belt, but technically could be charged under this section of the bill for not having a car seat.

It raises a whole bunch of issues. Should grandparents who regularly drive grandchildren take the responsibility to put in a car seat? Some people would argue yes, that would be a good idea. I would argue we should encourage people to do that, but to make a law like that, I'm not quite sure what the purpose is. Are we trying to boost the car seat industry or something? I don't know.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: This is where I'm going. The point I'm making is that I don't think we should make that a requirement for somebody who is an occasional driver who picks up a child and drives them from point A to point B. Yes, we have laws in this province that say people need to be behind seat belts. I understand the argument. There have been enough studies done, some very good studies, where we have determined that seat belts on infants could be pretty darned dangerous, probably more dangerous than we realize. That's the reason this section of the bill is there.

I think we need to go to committee and get some lawyers and others to come before us, and those people who may be grandparents or others affected, to talk a little bit about whether we want to force grandparents or other people to be obligated to have a car seat in their car when going to pick up a child over the weight of 23 kilograms.

It raises another thing. I know this is a really fine line, and I know in legislation we have to pick—can somebody grab that? I just knocked over my legislation. The legislation has fallen on the floor of the House, Mr Speaker. What does that mean?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): For a price.

Mr Bisson: For a price? OK, what do you want? Yes, you can speak. Not a problem. In fact, you can have House duty this afternoon, if you want it.

We need to have a discussion in committee about the prospect of having a mandatory requirement to have booster seats inside your car; I think it is a bit beyond.

If we were to have a law that says that, as a parent or person in custody of a child as a regular caregiver, you have to provide that in your vehicle. I could understand that. But again, I don't know the legality. I'd like to hear some lawyers' view about that provision of the bill.

I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to talk about another very important part of busing, and that is the new formula this government has put out when it comes to busing in Ontario.

Currently, the way it works, or up until this fall, is there is a policy of the government of Ontario that all four school boards in your area, the French public and Catholic and the English public and Catholic, receive dollars from the Ministry of Education. Those dollars are earmarked for busing so that your children can be bused to schools. We have, over the years, asked boards, and boards have complied, to work together to pool their

transportation dollars so that we have an in-common busing policy for all school boards in your area.

Each school board gets these dollars. They pool them together and collectively they run their busing service. I think that makes ultimate sense. For example, the city of Timmins was the very first place in the province, many years ago before the Tories enacted this policy, which I agree with, to have in-common busing. Before government ever made it mandatory, the Roman Catholic separate school board and the public board in the city of Timmins had been doing this for some years. So the Tory government came along and one of the good things they did—I have problems with many things they did, but this one I agreed with—was they said we should follow that practice across the province so that we have in-common busing policies for all school boards in one region.

The effect of that was that, let's say, for example, the English Catholic board didn't get quite enough money in the formula to cover their busing cost and the French Catholic board may have got more. In fact, that's what happens in our particular school situation. The French Catholic board is getting a surplus in their money and the English Catholic board is getting less. They're able to cross-subsidize each other so that busing policies are the same for each board. That's fine; it makes sense. It encourages them to work together.

The new busing policy is going to stop that. Some school boards are going to be big losers. For example, the English Catholic board in our community is losing about 40% of their budget when it comes to transportation, while the French Catholic system is actually going to get more. But the effect is that it is going to be very difficult for the French Catholic board, which has a surplus, to dip into their own funds in order to make up the lost subsidy they were getting by way of the 40% that used to be in the budget for the English Catholic board.

The effect is it may not only make a disadvantage when it comes to busing policies in common in our communities, but it will stop school boards from co-operating, because why would the French Catholic board use their operating dollars to subsidize transportation for the English Catholic board? So you could end up at the end of the day with busing policies that are particular to each of the boards. And then one board that happens to have a formula that doesn't give them a good advantage—they lose money—could be in a situation where they don't bus children as much or as well as their competitor board, in this case the English Catholic system, thus losing students and making a spiral when it comes to busing policy.

I just wanted to raise that and say that the government should rethink that particular policy, because I think it was a wrong one.

Back to this bill again, under section 207. I am just going to go through the explanatory note. I was actually reading the legislation. It says, "Under section 207, the owner of a vehicle may be charged with and convicted of an offence even though the owner was not driving the vehicle when the offence was committed."

If you remember, we've had this debate in the House before. I remember the Liberals voting against that specific provision that was found in what they called photo radar back in the 1990-95 Parliament under Bob Rae. If you remember, our government had introduced photo radar. The Liberals and Tories were opposed to it, but one of the big things they were opposed to and made big hay on and, quite frankly, won votes in the election over, is this whole notion that you could lend your car to somebody who goes speeding down the highway and gets a speeding ticket, and the owner of the car gets the ticket because it's the car that's ticketed, not the driver.

Now, in this legislation, this has to do with the booster seats and the belt requirements that are found in this legislation. You take your car that's properly equipped to drive your children who are 23 kilograms and over and you say, "Mom, take my car, go pick up the kids. I can't make it. The keys are in the drawer when you go in the house." Mom comes over to the house, grabs the keys, gets in the car, drives down to the hockey rink, picks up her granddaughter who's in figure skating and, all of a sudden, driving back, the child doesn't put the belt on and the grandparent doesn't make a thing of it or whatever—they're going to ticket the car. They're going to ticket me as the parent. In fact, it wasn't me; I have all the safety provisions inside my car. It's the responsibility of the person I lent the car to, as far as I'm concerned, to make sure the belts are on. What this particular legislation is saying is that we are going to ticket the car.

Again, we need to have a bit of discussion around that, because I think that is a problem. I hope I'm interpreting this wrong, but I don't think I am. I just want people to know that's it.

It is also associated, under section 207, with the issue of going around a school bus when the lights are flashing. Again, this is synonymous to what happened under photo radar. Currently, if a person passes a school bus when the red lights are flashing, they can be charged and given a fine. Section 207 basically says that if I lend my car to my neighbour and my neighbour takes off and passes a school bus with flashing lights, they will ticket the car, which means to say I, as the owner, will be responsible.

I guess the argument could be made that I should have been more careful about who I lent my car to and it's up to me to collect from the person who got the ticket. One is, it will count against my driver's abstract on the car itself, because the insurance will look at my abstract when it comes to determining the price of my insurance. If my car was involved in an incident in which it was charged with having failed to stop behind a school bus with flashing lights and I wasn't even the driver, it's going to be my abstract that's going to be affected. Why should my insurance go up because I lent my car to my buddy or my son or whoever it might be? I don't have a son but if I did, it would be a son. Why in heck—

1540

Mr Qaadri: There's still time.

Mr Bisson: I can tell you, it ain't going to happen.

My daughters wouldn't do that; that's why I said that. My daughters are very responsible drivers. Both Julie and Natalie would not pass a school bus. They're better drivers than their father. That's why I said if I had a son, he'd be as bad as me. But I wouldn't pass a school bus either.

My point is, the difficulty is you're putting the person who owns the car in a position of being responsible for something he or she didn't do that was caused by another driver. I'm just saying that's wrong. We shouldn't be doing that.

The other example is a bit of a far-fetched one, but it could happen. Somebody steals your car, hot-wires the car, takes off—

Mr Qaadri: Call the police.

Mr Bisson: Call the police, fine, but here's the problem. I call the police. The police say, "OK, we're going to do an investigation. We'll find out where your car has gone, sir, and when we find it, we'll let you know." Two hours later, they call me back and they say, "We just found your car. It's in a ditch. They just ran over a kid, and they did that while passing a school bus with flashing lights." Whose driver's abstract is that going to be tied to? I called the cops. It's mine. I own the car. That's the difficulty with that.

I think we need to refer this thing to committee in order to make sure the owner of the car would not be penalized for something he or she did not do.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): What about the car? Should the car be penalized?

Mr Bisson: My car got penalized, I've got to tell you. That's a whole other story. It was in question period today that we finally resolved the case of the missing roof.

Anyway, I'm just saying we need to look at this bill in committee when it comes to section 207 to make sure we don't put ourselves in the position of penalizing the owner of a car for the actions of somebody who might have stolen the car or taken the car even with permission. We should be going after drivers.

The other part, when we stop to think about it, is what is the deterrent to crime? The deterrent is the fear of getting caught. That's the one thing we do know. If I'm a bad driver and I've borrowed somebody else's car and I know I can pass a school bus and not be charged—in fact, my buddy who I borrowed the car from is going to get charged—what deterrent is there for me as a bad driver not to do that? I think what you need to do is charge the driver.

If you want to have an investigation and say, "Mr Bisson, we have the plates. Your car was involved in an incident. A school bus driver reported that the car illegally passed the bus when the lights were flashing. If you don't turn over who the heck has borrowed your car, we're going to charge you," maybe that's a different thing. But at the end of the day, you should be charging the person who actually did the driving. That's the way you should do it.

I'd be interested in looking at an amendment that deals with the failure of the owner of the car to co-operate with

the police. If I decide I don't want to turn over information that it was my daughter or my neighbour or whoever who drove the car, then that's a whole different matter that we can debate in committee and figure out if that's the best way to do it. I just don't want to go down a road that says at the end of the day that we are not going to have a deterrent for the actual driver.

I think if you look at statistics—and this is really the interesting part—when it comes to accidents, especially in the cases of high-speed chases, you will be really surprised to see to what degree the cars that are involved were not driven by owners. That surprised me when I saw that some years ago. More times than not, they're hot-wired. They're cars that have been stolen, especially in the case of somebody going for a joyride and getting caught and then being involved in a high-speed chase. I forget what the percentages were, but it was a very high percentage of cars involved in high-speed chases as a result of somebody who decided to go for a joyride and hot-wired a car. Again, I come back to this provision of the legislation. The effect of that would be that the person who hot-wired and joy-rode the car could get off with having contravened the Highway Traffic Act and not the person who was actually the driver.

Obviously, I wouldn't know who stole my car, so it would be pretty hard for me to co-operate with the police and give the name, because I don't know who the heck stole it, but in many other cases where you've lent your car, there should be a requirement that you actually co-operate with the police in the investigation by turning over the name.

It goes on to say there are new subsections 175(19) through (24) that “allow for distinctions between charges laid against drivers and charges laid against owners for failing to stop for a school bus to be made in the government's computer systems. New subsections 175(25) to (28) allow for different methods of service to be prescribed for service on the owner of the vehicle for the offence of failing to stop for a school bus.”

Again, it's one of those things where, when we get into writing legislation, I wish we could write these things a little more clearly. I've been reading legislation for some time, and when I saw that, I originally thought it meant this subsection deals with what I just talked about, which is not holding the driver responsible for something that wasn't their fault. But as I read it some more, I said to myself, well, I'm not quite sure that's what they're getting at. That's why I think this particular bill needs to go off to committee, in order to deal with that particular section.

Then, section 7 of the bill “is amended to provide that if an owner convicted of the offence of failing to stop for a school bus with its overhead red signal-lights flashing fails to pay the fine imposed on the conviction, the owner's vehicle permit may not be validated or a new permit issued until the fine is paid.”

Here's the effect: Somebody stole my car. I parked it at Queen's Park and a tree fell on it—no, no; that's another story. Somebody steals my car, they go out and

pass a school bus, and a ticket is issued. I say to the police, “Hey, listen, it wasn't me. I'm not paying that ticket; no bloody way. Somebody stole my car.” They say, “Fine. Don't pay the ticket. We'll see you in court.” Meanwhile, I go to renew the plate sticker on my car and the Ministry of Transportation is going to say, “We're not renewing because there's an outstanding ticket that you haven't paid,” because currently, as you know, they can hold your permit up for renewal if you don't pay for traffic violations. The effect of that is that I could be held liable for a traffic violation I didn't cause. I don't think that's right. Again, I think it goes back to what I said: We need to be able to deal with that.

Après ça, on regarde que:

«L'article 12 prévoit actuellement que lorsqu'une instance relative à une infraction prévue par n'importe quelle loi est introduite par voie d'avis d'infraction, les mesures ou les résultats prévus dans cette loi en cas de déclaration de culpabilité ne s'appliquent pas, sauf quelques exceptions précises. Parmi ces exceptions figurent deux dispositions du Code de la route. L'article 12 est modifié afin d'établir que l'ensemble du Code de la route constitue une exception à la règle générale.»

That's a heck of a mouthful. I had to read that in French, because I first read it in English and I didn't know what it meant. Then I read it in French and I still don't know what it means. I wish somebody would explain to me exactly what we are getting at. Again, that's the reason we need to go to committee. I really don't know what we're trying to get at with some of this stuff. I looked at that and read it a couple of times, and I said to myself, “I don't know. What are they really getting at?” Because what they are saying is that “Among the exceptions are two provisions of the Highway Traffic Act. Section 12 is amended to set out all of the Highway Traffic Act as an exception to the general rule.”

I think what they were getting at is, this particular amendment about ticketing cars and not ticketing drivers stands out in stark contrast to whatever other provisions are in the Highway Traffic Act. They're saying this will stand out as an exception to the rule; that's what they're basically getting at. That's sort of the way I read it.

It seems to me that you should try to make a law that has the same rules for everybody when it comes to the particular law, and with the same principle in the bill itself. What this particular bill is going to do when it comes to the provision of ticketing the owner is that it's going to stand in stark contrast to other sections of the Highway Traffic Act. So you've got a situation where everywhere else in the Highway Traffic Act you have to ticket the individual, but the only place in the Highway Traffic Act where you don't ticket the individual is in the stuff that deals with car seats and with passing buses when the red lights are flashing. I think it takes the Highway Traffic Act, stands it up on its head and makes it so that you have a schism in the legislation that says, “In all cases but these two, this is the general rule”—except for these two particular rules. Then, “Section 69 is amended in order to give effect to the permit denial

authorized by amendments made in this bill to section 7 of the Highway Traffic Act.” That’s much the same as what I just talked about. Those are some of the points that I wanted to raise in this particular debate when it comes to the bill.

1550

I think that the bill should go to committee. I generally support what we’re trying to do here; I guess I should put that on the record. It would be unfair to say we don’t support this bill and this is a terrible bill and we’re going to jump up and down and oppose it. No. I think that what we’re trying to do is a good thing. The principle is that we want to make sure we do a couple of things. One is that we take the infraction of people trying to pass a school bus with flashing red lights as a very serious offence and say that should not be permitted and we have to have some kind of a law that’s severe enough to deter somebody from doing it. As I said earlier, it’s always the fear of getting caught that stops people from breaking the law. If people know they’re not going to get caught, there’s an impunity to breaking the law. If people fear they may get caught, they’re less likely to perform the act of breaking the law.

My problem with the bill is that we’re saying, in some cases, there’s impunity. In some cases you have drivers who, because they’re not the owner of the vehicle, will basically be scot-free from being charged. I think we need to make clear that we charge the driver. Like I was saying, my suggestion is—and I don’t even know if it’s a good one, which is why I want to get to committee; I’m not clear in my own mind—that maybe what we need to do is say that the only time we charge the car is when we have not been able to identify the driver because the person sped by. Therefore, let’s have a law that says it is incumbent upon the owner of the car to be co-operative with the police in their investigation to determine who was actually the driver who broke the law, and that if the person doesn’t co-operate, there are rules in law to deal with that and the person can be charged accordingly.

It would be wrong, for example, for a driver of a car who lends the car to his brother-in-law to say, “I’m not going to tell who it is, because I don’t want my brother-in-law getting a ticket.” There has to be some mechanism to force the owner of the car who lent it to come clean on who he or she lent the car to.

Conversely, I don’t support the idea of ticketing the car. I had the same problems with photo radar. I just want to put that on record. I supported generally the principle of photo radar, but I never supported the principle of ticketing the car. I thought that, even for our government, wasn’t the right way to go, because you could end up as somebody whose car has been stolen and be responsible for what was a breach of the Highway Traffic Act by somebody who stole the car and you have no knowledge of and never gave permission to drive your car.

I also want to say that on the issue of booster seats, again, on that particular section of the bill, I’ve got no difficulty. We know that over the years, not that many years ago, it was not law and mandatory that people had

to wear seat belts. I remember at the time the big debate in Ontario when seat belt laws were introduced in this province. I think it was done by the Bill Davis government, if I remember correctly. I stand to be corrected if I’m wrong. People just railed against that. It was the big debate in the late 1970s. “My God, they’re going to make me wear a seat belt.” People were just mortified by the idea.

It was the right thing to do. The government knew by way of study that where we force people to wear seat belts, the fear of getting a ticket for not wearing a seat belt was a big enough deterrent and people started to buckle up. And in co-operation with a whole bunch of advertising, people did start buckling up. As a result, we find now that people survive collisions far more frequently than we did in the past.

In fact, I was involved in a collision some years ago with my sister-in-law. I think it was in the 1980s. I was driving a pretty big station wagon at the time. There was black ice on the road, and a woman coming around the corner on a curve in the highway lost control of her vehicle. We were both doing about 60 miles per hour. The amazing thing about that accident is her car—she was driving a small compact of some type—was totally demolished, and how that woman lived, I have no idea. The car was basically sliced in half; the engine was in the ditch and the battery was somewhere else. The only seat left was where the woman was sitting, and what saved her was wearing her belt. If the woman who was driving the oncoming car that hit me had not been wearing her belt, for sure, she would not be here today. Both my sister-in-law and I walked out of that without a scratch, and the reason was we were wearing belts.

I say that because it was just about the time that it was being drilled in our heads that we had to wear seat belts. The law had been around for a while. I was one of those resistant people saying, “I’m not going to put on seat belts. That’s not cool. That’s not macho. Ain’t going to happen to me. I’m a great driver. I’ll never get into an accident.” For whatever reason, that day, after watching those commercials over and over again, my sister-in-law Gail gets into the car and all of a sudden I said to her, “Listen, Gail, buckle up.” She said, “No, I don’t buckle up. You don’t buckle up. What are you talking about?” We got into this argument. Finally, I sort of insisted and we both ended up putting our belts on.

Imagine that. Two people who never buckle up got into an argument about buckling up. We weren’t five minutes down the highway and we got into that collision. My point is that we know these kinds of laws can save lives. I’m a beneficiary of that particular law. I don’t know if I would have been killed, but I could have been harmed, if not killed, and how the woman in the oncoming compact car walked away from that is still an amazing thing in my own mind.

Generally, I support the idea of making booster seats mandatory for kids over 23 kilograms. I understand the logic for doing it. I support it. I think we need to figure out how we can make this law such that it is an encour-

agement for people to comply with the law so that our children can be made safer. We do know the reality is that infants involved in motor vehicle accidents with seat belts are more likely to be injured by wearing a belt because it's improperly put above them. They're too small and the belt basically could be more of a danger to them because of their size, and the physical design of the belt is not made for that infant. So the booster seat makes some sense for children over 23 kilograms.

It's the same thing as the argument we got into about car seats. Mom used to get in the car and hold the child in her arm. She would have her seat belt on and she'd be going down the road. That's how we used to protect kids at one time, until we found out a lot of children lost their lives. Mom was fine because she had a belt on, but the child was a projectile once they hit the oncoming vehicle or whatever it was they hit. The poor child would be hurt or die.

We made car seats mandatory. Again, some people complained but that was the right thing to do. So I don't object to the car booster. That's not a bad idea. I just want to make sure that in doing this we deal with the issue of who gets charged in the event there is an infraction. As I said, I made that particular recommendation about maybe trying to find some way to get the owner of the car to co-operate with the police investigation in the event a ticket has to be issued as a result of the car driving away and just getting the licence number.

This brings me to the other point, which is high-speed chases. I would be remiss in not commenting on that, because we know it's a situation that we get far too often in our cities and towns across this province and across this great nation where there is a high-speed chase, and as a result, someone is killed. Often it isn't the driver of the car or police officer; far too often it's a pedestrian or some other person in an oncoming car or somebody else on the road at the time. One of the things we have to do to reduce that is give police officers the tools they need to apprehend the person who broke, in this case, the Highway Traffic Act, in a way that doesn't force them to get into a high-speed chase.

I understand the logic for saying we want to be able to give the bus driver the ability to take the plate number, or the police officer who happens to see it the opportunity to get the plate number so it doesn't force the police officer to engage in a high-speed chase. Currently, what could happen is the police officer can see a really bad driver pass a school bus with flashing lights and almost hit a child. The police officer gets mad, as any other human being would, takes off after the driver, and all of a sudden it ends up as a high-speed chase. Before you know it, the thing has ratcheted up till you've got two speeding cars chasing around in some town, city or country road somewhere in Ontario and somebody could be killed.

1600

For the safety of everybody involved, it would make sense to give the police officers the ability, through this law, to allow them to simply take the plate number. They

say, "I put my flashing lights on. I took off after him. The car started to speed, I sped up and it was apparent to me this was going to be a high-speed chase. I was not comfortable with the high-speed chase as a police officer because it could have gotten out of hand and allowed an accident to happen; therefore, I've just got the plate number and we'll chase down the car a little bit later."

In the event, in the case that they go back to the owner of the car and it wasn't the owner who was driving, there needs to be some mechanism to be able to say, "All right. Either you co-operate with the police investigation or else." I think that's a way of dealing with it. And if the person is dumb enough, as the owner of the car, to say, "I'm not turning over my irresponsible brother-in-law who borrowed my car," so be it; I guess you deserve whatever the heck you get. But I think most responsible people would say, "I'd be glad to give you the name. That son of a gun always borrows my car and I've been trying to get him to stop. This is a good way." There's a bit of humour in that, I guess, somewhere.

The only other thing I wanted to comment on was the last section of the bill. I forget what the section is. It was the amendments to the Provincial Offences Act. There's a section in here, and I hope I've got the right one here, that says, "If section 7 of the Highway Traffic Act authorizes an order or direction under this section that any permit under that act not be validated or issued"—and I talked about this a little while ago—"because payment of a fine is in default, a person designated by the regulations who is satisfied that payment of a fine is in default shall direct that until the fine is paid,

"(a) validation of any permit held by the person who has defaulted be refused; and

"(b) issuance of any permit to the person who has defaulted be refused."

I've already dealt with that in my comments earlier. I thought it was something else. No, I guess I have dealt with that. I made a note to myself to make sure to make comments on that, but I notice I got it in the explanatory notes.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity of having participated in this debate. I think I've made my points very clear. I see my good friends are here. They all want to participate in debate, I'm sure. Everybody has something to say about this bill that is very important, and I look forward to comments on this particular debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Joseph N. Tascona): Questions and comments?

Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): I'm pleased to stand and talk about Bill 73, An Act to enhance the safety of children and youth on Ontario's roads. I want to take the time that I have to highlight three key features of this legislation and why I'm proud to support it.

First of all is the new proposed subsection 106(7), which makes booster seats mandatory for children between 18 kilograms and 36 kilograms. Those are children who are too small for regular car seats and it extends to them the protection of a booster seat. Also something

that my friend across the aisle has talked about is the fact that this legislation extends the need for grandparents, caregivers and other providers to put their children in booster seats or car seats. The facts are, as Transport Canada statistics tell us, that we will reduce the injury to children by 75% by putting them in booster seats, and that children who use seat belts instead of booster seats are 3.5 times more likely to suffer significant risk for injury.

I want to talk for a few minutes about the prospect of grandparents and the extension to grandparents. I think of my own parents, who regularly shuffle my sister's children around. If you think about the fact that a grandparent obviously loves their grandchild so very much, what this legislation is about is informing those people who want nothing but the best for the children they're looking after about the risks they are placing children in if they do not put them in these protective mechanisms. We do have new studies and statistics and we do know the risks.

I also want to talk for a quick second about new section 57.1.1, which talks about the restrictions on teenage drivers carrying other teenage passengers. This legislation is about informing people about the risks that exist and the fact that young drivers are more at risk when they have passengers with them.

So it's an important piece of legislation to change behaviour in this province and I'm very proud to support it.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair wishes to bring to the House's attention that today is the birthday of the member from Scarborough Southwest, Lorenzo Berardinetti.

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Let's do the birthday song.

The Acting Speaker: We'll leave that to Mr Ouellette from Oshawa, who is the next speaker.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I very much want to get further into this debate. I want to make a couple of comments for the member for Timmins-James Bay. Some of the areas that can be addressed in regard to loaning the vehicle: I know that Durham Regional Police, along with a number of other forces—I should congratulate all of those; it's their police appreciation night tonight—inform the insurance companies of misbehaviour by drivers, and the insurance companies get very active. Those individuals are very concerned about their insurance rates, and that's one way to address that issue very effectively.

Another point I want to bring out is that we're dealing with a lot of grey areas here. For example, this morning I was volunteering at a local school. I was working on the Kiss and Ride. What do you do when all of a sudden a taxi full of kids shows up? That's what happened this morning. A taxi full of kids showed up—no booster seats. What's going to take place with those individuals? How do they get to school? How is it going to be dealt with? I'm not really sure, but my intention is to bring up some of the grey areas.

Some of the areas that I think need to be addressed as well: I coach and manage a hockey team. What's going to happen about the buses with the hockey team that we take to various games throughout other parts of the province? When we take those kids out and put them on a bus, they're going to be in those weight and age categories, those kids I work with. Are they now going to have booster seats, and how is that going to play out?

Another one I wanted to make sure I got on the record was that I had a parent approach me who had some strong concerns about this legislation. Her concern was that her daughter is going to have to have a booster seat in the way the legislation is written right now. The difficulty is that the daughter is old enough to drive now. This daughter is going to fall inside that weight category. She's just an individual who is a very small, petite person who is going to have to wear a booster seat while she's driving in the car.

Those are some of the things I hope the government will be able to bring forward, as the member from Timmins-James Bay mentioned, through the committee process, and we can get some answers to them.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I was listening to the member from Timmins-James Bay, and he referred that we should not make this mandatory, but let me tell you that we are committed to the safety of our kids. By not having this bill in place at the present time, it has created, in 2002, 149 deaths on the highway. We just have to think of what happened in Quebec, of this daycare lady who took out eight of their kids and seven of them got killed because they were not tied with a seat belt.

When I look at it, 149 kids were killed on the highway in 2002 and the cost of those booster seats would be in the area of \$40 to \$150. It depends whether you buy a Volkswagen versus a Cadillac. So it's up to the parents, if they can't afford to pay \$150. But at the present time, why are we going up to the age of eight years or 80 pounds? It's because it shows at the present time that seat belts would not give protection to those kids. The seat belt could affect the organs of the child, so the booster seat would make sure the child doesn't get injured.

To refer to the insurance, like he said, at the present time the bus driver will be able to give the licence plate to the police. The police will do the investigation and, don't be afraid, it won't affect your demerit points on that or your insurance. But the police will make an investigation and find out who was driving the car. If it is a rented car, if it is a car that has been stolen, then the owner of the car won't be affected. But you can rest assured there would be a proper investigation.

Mr Hudak: I thank my colleagues in the third party for an opportunity to comment on Bill 73 and the remarks of the member from Timmins-James Bay, which I thought were excellent.

We're making these remarks, and members in the assembly know that today is International Credit Union Day. The thing about the 6,000 people who work for the credit unions is that 80% of those jobs are outside the

GTA, and 39,000 small and medium-sized businesses are part of the credit unions. All members here know that credit unions and caisses populaires—

Mr Qaadri: It's not "cash populaire."

Mr Hudak: —caisses populaires provide well-paying, senior positions in many smaller Ontario communities, making a direct contribution of some \$375 million.

Interjection.

1610

Mr Hudak: The member asks, "Do they use booster seats and seat belts for the children?" I think the members of les caisses populaires and credit unions, as we celebrate International Credit Union Day, do their best to obey the law, but you have to think that for these particular individuals, heavily burdened on a financial level with the punishing new McGuinty health care tax of \$1,000, enforcing this law for children up to eight years old can be expensive, especially for a two-car family with grandparents, aunts and uncles and other caregivers.

It just shows the general approach, their loss of staying in touch with average working families in the province and the increasing financial burden—hydro costs, insurance rates, among others—and a bit of an approach by this government that Dalton McGuinty knows best, a bit of a nanny-state approach: how they take care of their children up to eight years old and transport them, the eradication of every gummi bear across the province of Ontario in the education system—

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Girl Guide cookies.

Mr Hudak: No more Girl Guide cookies. There will be cameras in the schools to ensure that not one Girl Guide cookie will be eaten. There's the ban on pit bulls, and, of course, to protect all of us from our own enjoyment of sushi, the health minister prioritizing the banning of sushi in the province of Ontario. You wonder if the priorities truly match those of working families.

The Acting Speaker: In response, the member from Timmins-James Bay.

Mr Bisson: I agree the caisses populaires and the credit unions of Ontario do everything they can to comply with all the laws, and yes, they have do have lots of cash at the caisses populaires.

I just want to say to my good friend the member from Prescott-Russell that I never said, and don't profess to say, we don't believe this should be mandatory; that's not the point.

Le point que j'ai fait, monsieur Lalonde, simplement dit est que oui, on a besoin d'avoir des lois qui peuvent protéger nos enfants, pareillement à ce que j'ai dit quand on a introduit des lois pour rendre obligatoires les ceintures dans les automobiles. Il y a beaucoup de monde qui y sont opposés, mais à la fin de la journée c'était l'affaire parfaitement correcte, la réponse que le gouvernement avait besoin de donner à une situation qui était très sérieuse.

Mais quand ça vient à ce projet de loi, je dis oui, je suis d'accord avec le projet de loi. Je pense que c'est important qu'on donne les outils nécessaires à la police et aux conducteurs d'autobus de tout de suite être capables

de rapporter une plaque d'immatriculation d'une personne qui a passé un autobus. Je pense que c'est très important.

Le seul point que je fait, c'est qu'il y a des complications quand on donne la contravention à l'automobile. Ça veut dire que la personne à qui appartient l'automobile peut être mise dans une situation d'être responsable pour quelque chose qu'elle n'a jamais fait. C'est possible qu'on ne le sait pas, si c'est un char qui a été volé. Comment tu t'organises avec ça? C'est ça le point que je fais.

Quand ça vient à la question de ce qu'on appelle les « booster seats » et de les rendre obligatoires dans les automobiles, je suis d'accord avec vous. C'est une bonne idée, oui. Mais encore, j'ai soulevé la question : pourquoi est-ce que grand-maman ou mon oncle, qui d'habitude ne ramasse pas les enfants, devrait être tout d'un coup dans une situation d'avoir une contravention pour aller ramasser les enfants, quand ce n'est pas normalement elle ou lui qui le fait, c'est d'habitude maman ou papa? C'est tout ce que j'ai dit.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Scarborough Centre.

Mr Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I'll be sharing my time with the member for Etobicoke North. I'm just going to go through the initiatives in this bill one at a time and talk about my support for them, and see how far I will be able to get in my five minutes.

I want to begin with the proposal to make booster seats mandatory for preschool and primary grade students between 18 kilograms and 36 kilograms with a standing height less than 145 centimetres or a maximum age of eight years. That's a bit of a mouthful. But I have to tell you, my kid is on the edge of that. He is eight years old. He's a little boy and has just, probably in the last couple of weeks, couple of months, gone over the weight standard. So I recognize when people say that it's tough to put an eight-year-old in those seats. It is tough. He didn't want to sit in the booster seat when I told him he had to.

I have to tell you, I stopped using the booster seat about a year ago because none of his friends were in them. When we tabled this legislation originally, he was still under the weight. I thought about it, read the material on it and said, "You know what? It's just not worth taking the risk." So I made him go back into it. He didn't mind, as long as I hid it from his friends, and he sat in it.

Now he's over the weight. He plays hockey now with nine-year-olds, and he's an eight-year-old. If one of them ever caught him going to the hockey rink with it, I'm sure he'd be razzed, but again, the point is, what's more important: him taking a little bit of razzing, or the peace of mind of knowing that he's going to be safer and sounder when you're driving in your car?

The statistics that just riveted me were the fact that children using seat belts of that size were 3.5 times more likely to suffer serious injury; four times more likely to suffer a head injury. Sorry; I don't want to subject my kid to those odds. I'd rather risk him being a little bit

unnerved or a little bit embarrassed by the fact that he has to sit in one of these seats than risk him having a head injury or a serious injury.

The fact that it reduces the risk of injury or death by 75%, according to Transport Canada, is significant. The fact that 149 children and young children were killed on the roads in 2002 really gives you pause for thought. So as I said, I recognize that these standards will be difficult, for those kids who are on the age—to get their kids to sit in those seats, but it's worth the effort. It's really worth the effort.

Extending the seat requirements to other vehicles, like caregivers and grandparents—having just gone through that car seat and car booster seat period with my own parents, yes, it's a pain in the butt for grandparents to have to either shift the car seats or get a car seat or have a car seat that they can put into their car and, in some cases, leave it there, but as my colleague from Etobicoke-Lakeshore said, grandparents love their kids dearly, and no grandparent is going to want to put their kids' health, safety or life at risk. So it's something that's worth doing. For the sake of a \$30 cost—maybe a little more, maybe a little less—it's worth the price. It's worth the cost.

There are people who talk about these situations where people are stranded out there, emergency situations—I mean, come on. We've got to have common sense. There are emergencies. We've got to be reasonable about this, and I'm sure that that happens. Sometimes your flasher might go out in the back of your car on your way home from work one day. It doesn't mean you're always going to get fined just because your flasher's out. There's reasonableness in the law. So I think it's something that, while it's a pain for grandparents, is something that's certainly worth the cost.

I look at it from my own personal experience too with a child. I've been tempted many times, and I've got to admit there have been times when I thought about running into a store really quick when he's back strapped into his car seat, locking the doors and running back out to get him so I don't have to disturb him. Just think of your child as all the money in the world you could ever earn. If you had a paper bag of money sitting in your car, would you just leave it in your front seat with the window down? No, you wouldn't. So you shouldn't think of a child as the same thing. A child is the most valuable thing in your life. It's more valuable, generally speaking, than your own life. So it's something that you should treasure, something that you have to hold dear, something that you have to ensure is protected at all turns, at all costs.

With regard to the bus safety initiatives, I really want to commend the minister for moving quickly on that. My time's running out. The automatic arm, making that mandatory—great move. The idea of putting the \$2,000 maximum fine on the back of the bus: People will think twice before they pass a bus because of that. The idea of allowing bus drivers to be able to report those who do pass buses with their lights flashing will help ensure that we have full enforcement.

I'll now pass it over to my colleague from Etobicoke North.

Mr Qaadri: I have a number of remarks to make, but I'd like to just begin by referencing the remarks made by the MPP from Timmins-James Bay, Mr Bisson. I think if anything can be concluded from his remarks—first of all, we'd like to salute him for actually coming forth to speak on a bill that deals with safety and motor vehicles all at the same time. In this time of post-traumatic stress that he must be suffering, I think that's very worthy. But I think if there's anything to be concluded from Mr Bisson's remarks, it is that he should probably at no point in the future ever be the driver of any automobile, certainly with passengers and, I would suggest to him, out of respect for himself.

Now, to speak specifically about the bill here, Bill 73, I think ultimately it's about the safety of our children.

1620

Mr Klees: Who writes this stuff?

Mr Qaadri: This is actually coming extemporaneously, to the MPP from Oak Ridges, unlike some of his own speeches that he just executed across the province.

In any case, I would like to say that, first of all, ultimately the studies, the institutes and the boards of safety are telling us that the number one cause of death in young children, unfortunately to this day, occurs in motor vehicles. I would like to speak specifically, and I would say passionately, about this issue not only as an MPP but also as a father and a doctor, because ultimately this is about the proper restraint that we must offer our children in motor vehicles, whether it's a car seat, a seat belt or a booster seat. Of course, the specifics of that are what this bill is talking about.

I'm reminded, for example, about a case we had of a patient, a five-and-a-half-year-old child. This happened about two and a half years ago. I think his estimated weight was probably about 50 pounds or so: just an average child who was actually not in a booster seat, as is being now recommended and being mandated and legislated by this particular bill, but just held by a seat belt.

As a physician I can say that, anatomically, a seat belt is just not made for kids of that age. For example, the upper belt may cross the neck area and the lower belt may cross the abdominal area. This young fellow involved in a motor vehicle accident basically ended up having a near-death experience, in fact a full rupture of the spleen. Eventually he was taken care of surgically, but it was a very traumatic condition and a traumatic experience for everyone involved.

It's precisely for this case and for others that unfortunately are even more tragic—for example, that may even lead to paralysis, paralyzation, in a number of kids—that the Ontario Medical Association, a worthy group if ever there was one, supports this particular bill. I quote from the OMA: "Booster seats save lives and prevent injury. No child of an appropriate age should be in an automobile without one." I think those of us who are entrusted with the care of kids and their families can

therefore speak very highly and in great support of this particular bill.

The other thing I'd like to mention is that, as has been raised in this House, the rollout of this bill by the Ministry of Transportation and in turn by the government of Ontario is actually being done in a staggered, slow and easy, measured way and with some applied intelligence, if you will. There is, for example, a one-year lead time. This will allow all the various communities and concerned stakeholders, the parents themselves, to learn about it, the children to adjust. Perhaps even schools will have programs to bring this to everyone's attention. Really, it's following the jurisdictions in Canada—Quebec, for example, and other provinces—that actually have this kind of legislation in force already.

With the limited time as well, one of the last adjustments we're making to the Highway Traffic Act in this particular bill is the idea of ensuring safety for buses. When drivers see the flashing lights, there will be other physical mechanisms—for example, safety crossing arms and warning signs about the fines involved—because unfortunately still to this day, there are a number of children who are involved in accidents with drivers not paying attention to the existing laws and passing buses that are flashing because they've just stopped to let off kids.

Finalement, ce projet de loi est une initiative très importante pour protéger nos enfants, qui sont ce qu'on a de plus précieux, our most precious resource, and to protect it is what this bill is all about.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I'm pleased to get up and make comments on the remarks of the members from Scarborough Centre and Etobicoke North. Particularly, I found it interesting that there was an analogy given by the member for Scarborough Centre around the value of children. I can tell you that, as a mother, the value of children is not something—

Mr Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): Scarborough Southwest.

Ms Horwath: Scarborough Southwest, I'm sorry. Is it Southwest or Centre?

Mr Duguid: Centre.

Ms Horwath: So I was right. Thanks, Mr Peterson, but I was right and you were wrong. No offence to the member.

Anyway, as a mother, I can tell you that I would agree in regard to the fact that there is no material value that you can put on children. Even to suggest that the child's value is akin to a sack of dollars is actually far off the mark. In fact, the value of children is something that can't be in any way affiliated with any kind of material object or amount of money.

As Mr Bisson said, and as we get further into this discussion, we will likely be supporting many parts of this bill, but we do believe there are some things in it that need to be cleaned up. We look forward to it being in committee.

As far as Dr Qaadri's remarks, the member from Etobicoke North, I'm not sure why those remarks began with a bit of an attack on my colleague Mr Bisson—

Mr Qaadri: It was a sympathy attack.

Ms Horwath: Oh, it was a sympathy attack? OK, that's fine. But nonetheless, I think these members have both raised the issues of the effect that this legislation can possibly have on the safety of children. Again, my son is not only a student who takes the school bus, but he has recently become a school bus patroller. So I look forward to the few changes we might possibly see. I think the members are describing a very positive move in all aspects of the legislation.

Mr Peterson: It's absolutely wonderful to rise on such a wonderful, interesting bill as the safety of our children. Of course, in children's planning, we have to do long-range planning.

It's very important that you note that today is not only the birthday of Lorenzo Berardinetti, but it's also the second-week anniversary of his wedding to wonderful Michelle Holland from Chatham, Ontario. Now I, being from southwestern Ontario, know where Chatham is, and this is a wonderful integration of the wonderful parts of Ontario that's happening.

They were married in Assisi, Italy, two weeks ago. The bride was wearing white and the groom was wearing a morning suit. This was not a morning suit spelled "our" but spelled "or," because he was extremely happy on this day. So it's wonderful not only to recognize his birthday and their wedding, but we know he will be using seat belts for his kids, probably next year. It's wonderful to acknowledge this today.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member from Halton.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): On behalf of my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, I just wanted to draw the House's attention to a number of people locally who did a considerable amount of work and essentially introduced the concept of booster seat legislation to the province of Ontario. Much of this work was done during the era of transportation minister Norm Sterling.

This group met with Minister Sterling and, as I mentioned, they did so much work. I'd like to mention some of the people's names: OPP Constable Mark Foster of the Simcoe detachment; Karin Marks from Haldimand-Norfolk REACH; much of this was also driven by Joanne Alessi—she is with the injury prevention unit of the Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit; and also Kim Henzy of the community action program for children.

At that time, as opposition members may recall, the government of the day had introduced this bill for first reading. I was checking with a more recent Minister of Transportation, Frank Klees, who could not recall the opposition at that time pushing for this. I was involved with the local people in my riding. I don't recall the official opposition at that time, the Liberal opposition, calling for this.

As we know, an election came along and, regrettably, much of this work didn't move forward. There were some kinks to work out of it. Mr Klees had pointed out some of the problems around cost and the practicality of something like this. I truly hope that the government doesn't ram this through without thinking it through.

1630

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Scarborough Centre in reply.

Mr Duguid: I want to thank the members for Etobicoke North, Hamilton East, Mississauga South and Halton for contributing to this debate and for their comments.

In my concluding comments, I want to touch just a little bit on the proposal to limit the number of teenagers that young novice drivers can carry. I believe it's up to six months into their graduated licence procedure that they can't carry other teenage passengers in the car. We've just seen too many groups of teenagers, just learning to drive, going out, hitting those highways, not being experienced enough to handle the conditions and young people getting injured or killed. I think this is a very effective way to try to lessen that and reduce the number of young people who are killed, and save lives in the meantime.

I also want to touch on again, as I did at the end of my comments, some of the school bus safety provisions. I think it's very important that when we've had up to, I think it was, 12 kids that have been killed by their own school buses between around 1988 and 2001, this will be one way to ensure that doesn't happen. As a father whose son does use the school bus at least once a day, sometimes twice a day, depending on whether I can drop him off at school or at his before-and-after-school daycare, I've got to tell you that when I look at that and when you hear about these incidents, it absolutely terrifies you. When you take your kid to daycare or take your kid to school, you want to assume that they're safe. With these provisions, we will be able to have a little more comfort that our young people throughout the province are going to be safer when they head off to school.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Simcoe-Grey.

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): As the lead speaker, I'm going to inform the table that I'm going to take the full hour, although I've been fretting for about the last hour, wondering how I'm going to speak for a full hour on Bill 73, An Act to enhance the safety of children and youth on Ontario's roads. It was introduced by the transportation minister, Mr Takhar, on May 4, 2004.

It is a pleasure to join this debate as the new transportation critic for the Ontario PC Party. I've reviewed the media on this from when it was announced in May. I think most of it's fairly positive. I think what the government is trying to do is fairly positive. It has been pointed out by some of my colleagues on all sides of the House, though, that there are some concerns about the bill and that we would like to see it go to committee. I gather from hearing from some of the government mem-

bers that it probably is going to committee, but I haven't heard that for sure. So perhaps at the end of this hour, in response to questions and answers, someone from the government could indicate whether this actually is going to committee, because people may have concerns.

I know Mr Klees, the former transportation minister when we were last in government, indicated some concerns about the costs of the booster seats and some concerns—one of them was quite funny. In an exchange he had with Mr Takhar in this House, in terms of the new graduated licence requirements coming in, where only one 19-year-old is allowed in the car, I think Mr Klees one day said in here, "What if there are four 19-year-olds walking along the highway in the middle of a snowstorm and Mr Takhar's son is driving by," who we were pretending is in a graduated driving phase, "what would he do? Would he leave three of them at the side of the road?" I think the joke was, we thought the Liberals had a no-child-left-behind ideology, and clearly this bill has some problems in that regard.

First of all, before I give the viewing audience at home an overview once again of what exactly this bill does—and that's really important, because later I'll talk about an e-mail I received from a constituent who phoned four OPP detachments to try to figure out what the current rules are about booster seats. She wanted to know, if grandparents, for example, or your neighbour might be giving your child a lift to soccer practice or something, whether or not today you had to have a child in a booster seat, and if so, what are the regulations around that.

Apparently there is huge confusion. In August, four OPP detachments couldn't explain to my constituent what the frigging highway rules are now. So this bill may go a long way, I hope, and I hope there will be an advertising or public awareness campaign, not only about the school bus aspect of this bill but about the booster seats. I'm not a parent, but I have 14 nephews and nieces and I've had to put a few of them in booster seats and, I tell you, you need a PhD to operate some of these booster seats to do it properly. Education on that front is needed.

Before I give the summary again, I do want to say right now I'm supposed to be at the Recycling Council of Ontario, which is holding their awards dinner in my riding. I'm supposed to be speaking there, actually, and I'm not sure the people of the Recycling Council of Ontario give a hoot whether I'm here. I think I'm supposed to be there. I'll try to get there about 7 or 8 o'clock tonight. I want to thank Mary Munoch and the Adjala-Tosorontio Ratepayers' Association, who have done a terrific job—

Interjection.

Mr Wilson: They'll see it on the repeat on Sunday, I guess—who have done a terrific job of, first of all, recycling and diverting waste from the waste stream in Adjala-Tosorontio township. They're going to receive an award tonight, recognized by the provincial organization as leaders.

They've had a two-bag limit on their garbage for a couple years now and they've encouraged Simcoe county

to adopt that for January 1 of this year. The county looks like it's going to do that, with some exceptions in terms of, you might be able to buy a sticker or a band for some extra bags. Otherwise, I think it's going to do a lot toward encouraging people to recycle and divert waste from our landfill sites.

So I want to thank Mary Munoch, Leta Hall, Patricia O'Leary and all those great people down in Adjala-Tosorontio, and I want to congratulate them for the award they will receive this evening from the Recycling Council of Ontario.

Bill 73 covers three main areas: mandatory booster seats, safer school buses and new passenger restrictions for young drivers at the G2 level of their graduated driving licence regime.

In the area of booster seats, forward-facing booster seats will be required for children who are too big for a child car seat but too small to be protected by a seat belt. This includes preschool to primary grade children weighing between 18 kilograms and 36 kilograms—that's 40 to 80 pounds—with a standing height of less than 145 centimetres—that's four feet 10 inches—or a maximum age of eight years.

Demerit points will be applied to drivers who misuse or fail to use infant or toddler car seats or booster seats. I think that's really important. If it takes demerit points, then personally I agree with it. Fines aren't necessarily working at the moment. Demerit points kind of hit you a little harder than a fine, especially if you have money. You don't worry about the fine, and that's one of the reasons I was opposed to photo radar. But demerit points will hit everybody, rich or poor. It's important because we all drive along the highways every day and see kids who are not even in seat belts.

It's hard to believe in this day and age that kids would still be standing up in the backseats of SUVs and station wagons. It's hard to believe. Parents, God love them, go to great lengths to make sure their children are protected at school and at home and then for some reason many people get in the car and they don't properly secure their children. The statistics are completely awful in terms of the number of children killed each year. I think it is 20% of the accidents in the province involve children or 20% of the fatalities. I'd have to check that exactly, but it's something like that.

With respect to school bus safety, the bill will require all new school buses to "include a safety crossing arm to prevent children from walking into the bus driver's blind spot at the front of the bus." You certainly see those now on many of the buses. It will now be mandatory for all school buses.

"All school buses will have decals indicating a maximum \$2,000 fine for a first offence of passing a stopped school bus with flashing overhead lights," or red lights, as we used to call them.

"Vehicle owners may be charged if the vehicles are reported to have illegally passed a stopped school bus."

I know one of the reasons we want this bill to go to committee is that some people have a problem with that,

and I'm not sure I have totally made up my mind. It would make a school bus driver the police officer, as it were, in terms of reporting the offence. I know there is a statistic that the ministry has put out that says a recent Transport Canada survey found that one in three Canadian school bus drivers surveyed saw at least one vehicle illegally pass a stopped school bus every day. That tells you it is not a rare occurrence, and it is happening more often than it should.

1640

To me, it is just a cardinal rule. It was drilled into myself when I was 16, getting my licence in a rural, small-town area where we have lots of school buses. In fact, my high school, Banting Memorial High School in Alliston, used to have 72 school buses lined up every morning and every afternoon, and they probably have that many today. The fact of the matter is that it was really drilled into our heads not to ever pass a school bus and to stay well back, but apparently a lot of people need to be reminded of that. If this bill helps to improve safety and save the lives of children—I know Mr Pat Hoy, as a result of a death in his family, was very much pushing that as a member of the government but as a member of the Liberal opposition for years too.

On the graduated licence front, which is something that I think the NDP introduced in 1994, we made some changes. It had originated in this House as a private member's bill by David Turnbull. I can't remember which riding David had—Willowdale, I guess. David, when we were sitting in this House somewhere between 1990 and 1994, had introduced a private member's bill to bring in the graduated licence program.

As an MPP, I've got to admit that since that's come in I haven't had too many young people come to me and tell me they have a problem with it. In fact, we all go to our high schools every year as these young people are at that age and getting their licences, and I have had no one bring it up; I think one person. They usually bring up the fact that they can't get appropriate service from the Ministry of Transportation when they are going to get their driver's licence and that it takes too long to get an appointment and all those problems, but I haven't heard much. Maybe I'm wrong, and maybe I'll get a flood of e-mails and calls from people viewing this now that have problems with the graduated system, but I haven't seen or heard much wrong from the young people that are affected themselves.

Statistically, it seems to be helping. We seem to be having, at least in what I saw reported last year and the year before, fewer accidents among young people, because they are gradually gaining the full privilege of driving on our highways and roadways rather than being thrust right into it right away without the experience. But anyway, this bill will make some minor changes to that system.

It says:

"Currently, the number of passengers permitted in a vehicle driven by a G2 driver is limited to the number of working seat belts.

“A new regulation” that will be established under this act “would restrict the number of passengers that young G2 drivers, aged 19 and under, can carry.” It will restrict the number of those passengers aged 19 and under.

“For the first six months, these drivers could carry one passenger aged 19 and under.”

It goes back to the story about Frank Klees and Mr Takhar and their rather humorous exchange in this House about leaving three of the teenagers on the roadway in the middle of a snowstorm because you can only pick up one. There may be other examples; that was a rather humorous exchange. There may be other problems in this that I'm not thinking of, and again, that's why we need to bring it to committee and hear from the public at large.

“For the balance of their time in G2, or until the driver turns 20, these drivers could carry up to three passengers aged 19 and under.” That is the last six months, I believe, of the G2 period. They will be allowed to pick up all the teenagers at the side of the road in the scenario that was brought forward in this House.

“These restrictions would not apply if the G2 driver is accompanied by a fully licenced driver with at least four years driving experience or if the passengers are family members, regardless of age”—a little bit of common sense there.

It says here from the ministry's notes that “An analysis of Ontario collision records for 2002 shows that G2 drivers aged 19 and under who carry passengers aged 19 and under are about three times more likely to be involved in a fatal or injury collision than G2 drivers aged 19 and under who carry passengers aged 20 and over.”

Now that's a little complicated, but I think it refers to the carnage we often see, unfortunately, over long weekends etc. At the end of the weekend, we find ourselves reading or hearing through the media that a group of teenagers were in a car, that alcohol was involved and they ended up in a ditch and died. We've had that happen in all our ridings far too often.

This is a provision that some young people may be offended by, but it's a provision to make sure there is somebody with some driving experience in the car if there is going to be a number of teenagers in the car, or that the number of teenagers in the car is limited if there isn't somebody with greater driving experience in that car.

I don't think there are a lot of problems with this bill. I think most people in Ontario would say these are necessary or acceptable amendments to the way things currently are. But I think people are going to want to comment on it, particularly with respect to booster seats. Maybe we should be calling upon car manufacturers—you get all kinds of options in your car now—to maybe have a permanent seat for children that's properly designed. It would really help those of us who aren't particularly mechanically inclined to figure out how booster seats are to be properly installed in cars. I hear this all the time in my own family. Every one of my family members, and there are about five of them and

they are all parents, has complained at one time or another about the difficulty in making sure the child is secured properly in a booster seat. Kids hate them. I know that from experience.

I also received an e-mail when this issue was first announced—actually it was a little after that, on August 4—from Michael Jacobs, who is the editor of the *Springwater News*, a newspaper in Elmvale, in my riding. He had an e-mail exchange with one of my staff, Dave Prisco. He starts off his e-mail by asking, “Is the government going to move forward with this law?” We responded by saying that when it came up, as it is today, we'd be sure to let him know and to raise his concerns. He wants to do a story on it, I guess, or maybe an editorial.

The first thing he asked was that he'd like to clarify when this takes effect. I'm not sure when this will be proclaimed, so maybe in the two-minute response somebody on the government side could fill me in on exactly when this will come into effect. I know it's in my notes somewhere; I just haven't got there yet.

He said, “I would like to comment that I think it is ‘cruel and unnecessary punishment’ putting a little kid in a car seat. The poor kid cries and cries but by law you have to leave him/her there to cry some more if you are traveling down the road. Basically, if you left Toronto with your child, and you were heading to Ottawa, for example, you imprison the child for four, five hours. If I did that in my house, I'd be charged with child abuse.”

I've seen examples of this myself. Many of the kids do not like the seats.

Another aspect is the size factor, and he's referring to the 40 to 80 pounds: “I have a buddy marrying a girl who probably only weighs 80 pounds, and they're both small.” I guess he's implying that if you're not of large stature like myself, do you have to be in a booster seat under this law? I hope that's just humour, but it is one aspect of the law that perhaps we haven't thought of.

Finally, he says, “Tonight, I received an e-mail”—this is Michael Jacobs receiving an e-mail, which compounds the problem. I won't go through it all, except I'll mention again that I believe this particular e-mail was from a lady who phoned the Barrie OPP, the Barrie city police, the Huronia West OPP and the Midland OPP to try to find out what the current rules were. Under this bill it clarifies that it's between 40 and 80 pounds that you have to put the child in a booster seat, I believe. This is a lady trying to find out what the current rules are, the whole point really being that she then phoned the driver's licence office in Barrie and she still got no answer on what the current law was. So with this new law and some proper notification, advertising and public education, maybe we can clarify that.

1650

I'll tell you, I'm going to have a difficult time talking about this for an hour, so anybody who wants to send me any notes, chip in. Send me an e-mail on my BlackBerry, which I think somebody stole. Then I'd be able to carry on.

Let me read some of the media, because I did find some of that quite interesting. The Hamilton Spectator, the day after this bill was announced, May 5, 2004—Lee Prokaska is the writer of this story and he says:

“Cracking down on drivers who don’t stop for school buses when required by law is a good move on the part of the provincial government.

“At this point, police can’t lay a charge if they don’t know who was driving a vehicle that fails to stop. The province wants changes to allow charges against the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop.

“Some will argue that’s not fair to vehicle owners, who shouldn’t be held responsible for the actions of other drivers. That argument doesn’t wash on red-light cameras, photo radar or tolls, so we don’t accept it in this case.”

That’s the opinion of Mr Prokaska.

“Too many cars breeze by the yellow buses, despite the red roof lights blinking, the stop sign sticking out the side and the yellow arm extended.

“It’s possible some drivers, distracted and in a hurry, just don’t notice in time to stop. That can’t be said of all drivers.

“Anecdotally, bus drivers often remark on drivers who pull out and around a loading or unloading bus, clearly in too much of a hurry to worry about the safety of children.”

Again, it talks about Transport Canada. It says: “Transport Canada surveyed 340 bus drivers in 2001 and one in three saw at least one vehicle illegally pass a stopped school bus every day.

“Given that an estimated 800,000 children ride school buses daily in Ontario, traffic safety is a huge issue. We’re talking about our kids. We’re talking about getting them to school and home again safely. We should be unequivocal in insisting on adherence to the law.

“The penalties in Ontario are among the stiffest in the country—a maximum \$2,000 fine and six demerit points for a first offence and a maximum \$4,000 fine, six demerit points and possible imprisonment for subsequent offences.

“But if those stiff penalties can’t be enforced effectively, they won’t deter scofflaws. If vehicle owners start getting hit with fines, the message will sink in with them and they’ll be sure to pass it on to whomever they allow to drive their cars: Stop for the sake of the kids or it will cost you.”

That’s a commentary from the Hamilton Spectator.

I’ve got a few more here. An article that was critical of the bill was done by Connie Woodcock on May 5. It was an editorial, I guess, by Connie Woodcock, in the Toronto Sun, May 5, 2004. It says:

“Liberal governments love social engineering. A nip here, a tuck there, all in the name of building a better community.

“Of course, when you don’t have much money, you can’t do the big things—like fixing the health care system or providing low-income housing or giving the school system more cash.

“But you can do the little things—things that don’t cost anything but the price of a new law.

“The Ontario government yesterday unveiled its plan to amend the Highway Traffic Act to—among other things—toughen seatbelt laws, which on the surface doesn’t sound like a bad thing. Who can be against tougher seatbelt laws?”

Again, this is from Connie Woodcock of the Toronto Sun, May 5.

“It wants to make”—“it” being the government—“appropriate car seats mandatory for everyone who transports children, the only exceptions being taxis, emergency vehicles and out-of-province visitors. If you’re caught without them, you’ll get two demerit points.

“The law as it stands requires only parents to provide appropriate restraints for their children in the family vehicle. The new version will also make booster seats mandatory for children eight and under who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds.

“It sounds reasonable at first. But what are they really saying? By making appropriate restraints mandatory for everyone transporting a child, they’re making it impossible for parents to have a neighbour pick up a child in an emergency.”

Under the subtitle:

“Emergencies happen

“If you’re a parent, you know that emergencies happen frequently when Mom and Dad both work. Children get sick at school, they need a ride to soccer practice, they have to be picked up from daycare at exactly the right time. Sometimes, you have to ask someone for help.

“What makes a taxi safer than, say, the family van?”

“As for mandatory booster seats, come on. A 13-year-old could weigh 80 pounds or less. So why stop at age eight?”

“The argument for booster seats is that if you’re under 80 pounds, the seat belt crosses your throat instead of your chest. Well, duh. That’s exactly where it catches me. I’ve often wondered what will happen in an accident. Will I be squished by the air bag or merely have my neck broken?” I guess Connie isn’t as tall as I am.

She goes on to say, “And if, as the government claims, children wearing seat belts are 3.5 times more likely to be injured than children in booster seats, why aren’t restraints of some kind required on school buses?”

“Back in the 1990s, the province attempted to make bicycle helmets mandatory for everyone. It didn’t matter if you had 30 years of experience or if you never went further than the corner store; you’d still have to wear one.

“The public outcry was immediate. The government backed down.

“It’s almost laughable, especially if you remember pre-seat belt Ontario. My family used to jam five or six kids into the back of the car to go to the beach. One of my favourite childhood activities was to jounce down the road in the back of my grandfather’s truck, and we kids used to fight over who would get to ride on the top of the hay wagon or on the tractor’s fender.”

She ends by saying, “How did we ever survive?”

Well, she's right. But times have also changed, is what I would add, especially in terms of growing up in a small-town rural area. My father owned a pickup truck for many years. We had a family farm and have a family farm in Colgan, Ontario. I rode on the fender myself many a time with my uncle, Paul Keogh. I would prefer to ride on the hay wagon but we usually had to do the haying, which meant forking it up. We weren't a wealthy farm. We didn't have these big round balers. There were 40-pound or 60-pound bales. We would only be eight, nine, 10, 11 years old. But that's what you did; you helped out.

I'd say, times have changed, though. With gridlock, I know if I want to get to Toronto for an 8 o'clock meeting or an 8:30-in-the-morning meeting, I have to be leaving Barrie by pretty close to 5:30 or a quarter to 6, particularly in the wintertime. I'm astounded that just about every six months the rush-hour traffic jam seems to be moving further up. You seem to have to stop further up. It's almost getting to be Bradford where you have to slow down to get into Toronto now. On a good day, if you leave it too late to leave in the morning, between 7 and 9 in the morning you're stopped at King Road, anyway, and then you'll be jammed up again at Wonderland. This is going southbound on the 400, I should say. Then of course you'll be totally stopped at the interchange of the 400 and 401. Then you want to go eastbound on the 401 to get to Avenue Road or some north-south, because there is no good north-south road in Toronto to get from the 401 down to Queen's Park. You either have to take Avenue Road, Dufferin Street, Yonge Street or something like that. Anyway, it's becoming more and more of a nightmare.

What I would say in relation to this bill and Ms Woodcock's arguments is, the old days are gone. There are just far more cars and trucks on the road. Unfortunately, tougher laws are required to make sure that people respect each other on the road and, in the case of this bill, to make sure that they respect their children and they are properly buckled up, no longer riding on the fenders or on top of the hay wagons. We shouldn't even be doing that.

Farm accidents are going through the roof too. We had two very severe ones in my riding this summer. We had a terrible one—I'm sure Mr Elton Hall wouldn't mind me mentioning it. He's a walking medical miracle right now. He lives in Adjala, just outside of Alliston. He nearly died. I guess it was two or three years ago that we thought we were going to lose him. He broke ribs and just about every bone you could in your body. That was a farm accident; no one's fault. I'm sure Elton was doing everything right, but we have a lot of farm accidents.

1700

The other thing I would say in terms of being critical of this bill, that I could find, anyway—I just have to find it here. There is a Toronto Sun editorial, also on May 5, that says, "This Law is a Bus(t)." They've got brackets around the "t" to add to "bus."

"The McGuinty Liberals just don't get it.

"First they mused publicly about bringing back photo radar to bring in the cash they say they say they so badly need to begin to balance their books.

"That idea was furiously shot down—along with other non-starters (so far, at least) like the so-called 'fat tax' on meals under \$4, the tax on lottery winnings, etc.

"And rightly so. Photo radar is a bad idea because it's a blatant cash grab dressed up as public safety policy.

"But now, incredibly, the Liberals are going down the very same bad road with their proposed amendments to the Highway Traffic Act.

"As Sun Queen's Park reporter Alan Findlay first reported yesterday, the Grits are now going to charge owners of vehicles that illegally pass school buses—regardless of who was actually driving the offending car.

"The fines will be steep, as they already are for drivers who are caught committing this offence—up to \$2,000. Liberals say this is all for our own safety, to send the message, as one of them told Findlay, 'that this kind of reckless behaviour will not be tolerated on Ontario's roads.'

"All well and good. No one's advocating passing school buses here, nor would we advocate speeding, whether or not photo radar was in place. Both are dangerous and deadly.

"But therein lies the problem and the dishonesty with this type of law. If passing a stopped school bus, red flashing lights and all, is such a serious violation—and we agree it is—it should be subject not just to fines against whoever owns the car, but to real penalties like demerit points. (These can only be imposed if the owner is proven to be the driver.)

"As with photo radar, fines may deter some people, but they give those who can afford them a free pass—if you have the cash, feel free to sail on by that school bus.

"Transportation Minister Harinder Takhar, along with Chatham-Kent Liberal MPP Pat Hoy, who first proposed this fine as a private member's bill, may have good intentions. Their other proposals to make children safer around school buses are proof of that.

"But just because four other province and a handful of US states have opted to slap this type of fine on vehicle owners—even if they're innocent—doesn't make it right.

"It's an unfair punishment that we doubt would stand up to a challenge in court. More to the point, it's a sign of a cash-hungry government that's willing to invoke children to justify fudging on democratic principles. Shame."

So a fairly strong editorial against this one aspect of Bill 73 from the Toronto Sun on May 5. That's their opinion.

Again, this bill should go to committee so that all of these opinions can be aired.

I'm going to talk a little bit about some transportation issues, since this is a transportation bill—there's one other thing I want to do too. I'm going to do some transportation issues in my riding that I raised in this House, many of them on several occasions. I'd like to do that during the next half hour or so.

I do want to put on the record a note from my constituency assistant, Joy Parks. She has had a discussion with Cathy. I don't know Cathy's last name, but she works in the lawyer's office next to my constituency office in Collingwood at 50 Hume Street. She dropped in to explain to my constituency assistant. She says that the problem is that she not only has to drop off the children—I guess she works full-time and is lucky to have her mother care for her children during the day—but also unload the car seats. Her mother then must place the car seats into her vehicle if she wants to run errands with the children. The other option is to purchase car seats for each child to be used in her mother's car, or switch vehicles every morning. Cathy cannot afford to purchase another set of car seats, so every morning she drops the children and her car off to her mother, and then her mother takes her to work.

So this bill isn't going to help Cathy. It is something that needs to be talked about, though, in terms of what you do if it's the grandparents or, as we said before, the neighbour doing you a favour and taking your child, perhaps along with their own, to soccer or hockey practice or something. Do they all have to have the proper booster seats for these young children? Do they all have to have the proper child seats for these young children? I suspect the government will stay firm on this issue, but we still should hear from people like Cathy, who was good enough to take the time to come into my office in Collingwood and let us know her views just recently. The memo is dated October 21—today.

There are some huge issues, obviously, with respect to highway redevelopment in my riding. I've been quite angry about it. I just want to find my note here. The Ministry of Transportation and the Liberal government have done a huge disservice to my riding. I would hope it's not because they didn't win my riding and there isn't a government member there.

Four years ago, Ernie Eves as Treasurer—finance minister of the province—approved \$28 million for a realignment of Highway 26 between Stayner and Collingwood. As it is, phase 1 is less than seven kilometres, so it's not a big deal. It's a new road that would parallel the old Highway 26. So we passed the money. The Ministry of Transportation, when we were in government, did a very good job of polling the public. It took three years to buy the land. Certainly in phase 1 there were just over 100 property owners. Two of those property owners just settled recently. They would have been at the end of the phase in terms of how this highway is being built. The highway got started two years ago and by this year should have been substantially finished. We should have been driving on it either near the end of 2004 or the beginning of spring 2005.

Something funny happened. We had an election. Within a month of that election you guys stopped building the highway. You even took away the outhouses that the construction crew used; the construction crew is gone. You've got a not-even-half-built highway; you've got about a one-third-built highway. The clearing's done

for about four of the 6.8 kilometres. The roadbed is in for about two or three kilometres—no pavement, just gravel-topped, packed down. I don't know all my construction lingo, but you've got a half-built highway. It needs, I think, three more interchanges put in, a couple of bridges—a fair amount of work.

The point is, you're playing politics with this highway when the fact of the matter is, over 400 people have been injured since 1988, and almost 200 deaths since 1988, on the old strip of highway. It's a very busy piece of highway. You've got a lot of factories in Collingwood. When there's a shift change, the highway's jammed up between Collingwood and Stayner as everyone's trying to go south, if they live south. You have at least a million visitors on long weekends on that stretch of highway: half a million in Collingwood and half a million in Wasaga Beach. It's very busy.

I don't have all my stats, but I think there are 135 driveways on to the old stretch of road, so it's dangerous. There are people backing in and turning, so we were putting an expressway or the beginning of a bypass around Collingwood in phase 1.

I don't know how you can do that. I've asked Mr Takhar. We've had petitions, and I'm going to read some nasty letters from my constituents about this in a minute, totally crapping on the Liberals for what you've done. It's such a petty thing. You will never get re-elected—sorry, you've never been elected since Confederation in that part of the province and you never will in my lifetime. Your chances are going—if they ever were any good, I don't know, but they're certainly going downhill as a result of this partisan, political, absolutely lowest trick I've ever heard of in my life. This is a safety issue.

I bring it up to Mr Takhar, and he's a bright man. He's got a PhD, apparently. I wish he'd use his bloody noggin and understand that someone's going to get killed. The current mayor of Collingwood told me one day—I know he told me, but I can't remember the number. I think it was six or eight people he knew since he grew up in Collingwood, whom he's known over the years, who were killed on the old stretch of the highway. They're personal friends. You meet one fellow, who happens to be the mayor, and a good mayor, Terry Geddes, a nice fellow. He knows six to eight people personally, killed—not maimed, not injured, which would be bad enough—on the highway. You can almost talk to anyone in town who has lived there 20 or 30 years, the old families, many of them, there for 200 years, but anyone who has been there for a period of time will know someone who has been killed on the old stretch of the highway.

1710

I don't know how to get you guys to wake up. I have no idea. Morally, I don't know how you could do it. Secondly, I don't see how you're saving any money. This money was booked four years ago. When the ministry has been interviewed—by the way, you've silenced all the bureaucrats. If you phone the Owen Sound office of the Ministry of Transportation—which Bill Murdoch stopped talking to years ago and which I've stopped

talking to—we are not allowed to talk to them any more, but even when we were, I stopped talking to them because they're not the best office in the world. If you phone the London regional office, you're told, without any embarrassment, "We're not allowed to talk to you, Mr Wilson. You must phone the minister's office."

We were accused of doing that, but I don't really think we ever did it. I've heard it with my own ears, "It's arrogant Mike Harris and centralized government." You're actually doing it. It isn't just something the unions made up in their Days of Action as part of crapping all over us, or you guys made up in this House. You're actually doing it. You're actually silencing the bureaucrats, who love to build new highways. They would like to get going with this. Bill 73, which is a transportation bill, gives me the perfect opportunity to drive home these very critical safety transportation issues.

From Mr Takhar, the only answer I get, and I get it from Mr Caplan too, the minister of—I'm supposed to use their titles—public infrastructure something, is, "Everything is on hold." I'm telling you, for safety's sake, you shouldn't have this as part of your overall review of the province. Mr Bartolucci is here from the north.

Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): You wouldn't know what part because you've never been there.

Mr Wilson: We spent almost a billion dollars on roads in northern Ontario, and if you want to have a tit for tat that would be great. That will keep me going for 20 minutes. The fact of the matter is, you used to complain about safety issues on Highway 69, quite correctly. We tried to respond in a big way by constructing that highway, beginning at both ends to try to get it done within a decade or so.

Hon Mr Bartolucci: No, you didn't. That's the problem.

Mr Wilson: We did.

Hon Mr Bartolucci: You didn't.

Mr Wilson: We did. I've driven on it. I don't understand. You drive on it all the time. I've driven on it. I've seen the lanes.

Interjection.

Mr Wilson: Mr Speaker, I can't hear myself think. Could you tell the honourable member to have some respect about the safety issue where people have died on a highway, where they've done the absolute most immoral thing I've ever seen, which is to cancel a little strip of road, all because I guess a Conservative member got elected? Shame on you. You were elected to serve all the people of Ontario.

For the last 50 or 60 years, the Ontario PC Party has been the government in this province, and we served all the people. My predecessors and Bill Davis and Frank Miller all took great pride in serving all the people. I can remember being an assistant to George McCague, who was Chairman of Management Board for, I don't know, about 12 or 13 years. I worked for him for six before I was elected. George used to take great pride in helping

Bob Nixon get a sewage treatment plant or a water treatment plant for his riding. I remember that as a very good example. He used to take great pride in the camaraderie we used to have in this place, where you'd help each other. Yes, there are partisan days and partisan issues, but when it's a safety issue, I get nothing but arrogance from Mr Takhar, who is a bright man. I'm told he is a nice man. I get worse from Mr Caplan, absolutely worse: "It's all under review." That's terrible.

The second safety issue that I've brought up, and I should bring it up, that I've brought to the attention of this House and the ministers and the Premier, through petitions, through letters, through questions in this House, is the need for a traffic light at the entrance of the Nottawasaga Inn and Highway 89. We had two people killed there two years ago, both young employees of the Nottawasaga Inn, and they were coming to work.

Honda employs 4,000 people just down the road from this T, the intersection of the driveway of the Nottawasaga Inn, which by the way has behind it 500 or 600 homes, beautiful, called Green Briar; further on the property is Briar Hill. Anyway, a lot of people in this House would be very familiar with the Nottawasaga Inn, a five-star resort in my riding. The government does a lot of conferences there. It's a four-star resort in my riding. It's the highest rating, I think.

The fact of the matter is that Frank Klees, the member for Oak Ridges, as transportation minister in June of last year, well before the election, came to the riding. He had studied the issue, had asked the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Transportation to look at the issue. The engineers agreed. They came with their charts and their maps, and we did a dog and pony show, as you might call it. Frank made the announcement. We explained. Frank, a smart minister, allowed the engineers to explain to the public. We had the 12 presidents of the 12 condominium associations of Green Briar there, along with some other residents and the owner of the Nottawasaga Inn, Lou Biffis, and some other guests. It all made sense of what exactly needed to be done at this piece of road on Highway 89 in front of the Nottawasaga Inn.

So it was approved. Frank had the money for it. We announced it. We got kudos. There was great expectation when your government came in that this would be a no-brainer, that you would put these lights up. I tell you, you can wait 22 minutes. I waited 18 minutes one day. My mother tells me she waited about 20 minutes trying to get on to Highway 89 at this particular section, or either end, a kilometre or two. My parents live probably about four kilometres down the road from this particular intersection, just in Alliston. The whole highway is jammed up. If you come over Sharp's Hill, when Honda gets out, 4,000 cars are on the highway and they're all going toward Angus, Barrie or Toronto, to where they live. Believe it or not, people commute from Toronto to work at Honda.

It isn't just Honda. Alliston is a booming place. We've never had a recession in Alliston in the 14 years I've been the member because we have all kinds of great big

companies, and they all get out around 3:15 or 4 o'clock. Honda is doing practically 24/7 shifts now. We built, Mike Harris did, a big \$68-million bypass around Alliston to accommodate all the truck traffic. We now have a big truck bypass around Alliston. It's worked out great—never had a complaint from the downtown merchants, so bypasses do work if you do it right. People are still shopping in Alliston, it's as busy as ever, and about 120 trucks an hour go on this road.

My point is that we had the thing approved. It was well before the election. It wasn't political. It's another safety issue. We need traffic lights so that the residents of Green Briar, mostly retired people—it's a retirement community. Thousands of people live there and someone is going to get killed. Two years ago two people got killed. Someone is going to get killed again. I personally lose my patience coming out of this convention centre and hotel. But you have no choice. To turn in either direction is difficult, particularly at those times of day when the plants are getting out and the highway is extremely busy.

Anyway, I get nothing but these form letters from Mr Takhar telling me that the traffic counts aren't high enough. His latest one was that they did traffic counts this June, a year after the announcement, and they say they don't justify it. These are the same engineers. I don't know what you've done to them, but these are the same good bureaucrats, really, who shouldn't be political one way or the other, who a year before were quite proud to come to the Nottawasaga Inn and explain to everyone why we needed these traffic lights.

1720

The fact of the matter is, it's a little embarrassing having to spend 20 minutes in traffic lights and a road in this place—we should have other issues—but you've cancelled these projects. The politics of it is, don't cancel them. Your candidate Mark Redmond, who lost rather badly to me in the last election, promised he would pursue these issues, particularly Highway 26. We had seven all-candidates' meetings, and these were top-of-mind issues for the people of the riding. You're making a liar out of your candidate. You're making him look bad. He's a former mayor of one of the townships in my riding, in Grey county. I assume you may want to run again some day. Well, you've pretty well annihilated his chances or any Liberal candidate's chances, because these are safety issues and people take them very seriously. They worry about them. We've had several hundred names on petitions from the people of Green Briar, asking for stoplights.

So my plea today is, before I have a sit-in in the middle of that highway, which I'm planning on doing before it gets too wintry—and it will, believe me, be a big story. I'm giving you a head's up. I am quite capable of doing it, and have done several things like that in my 14 years, which is why I have one of the largest pluralities in Canadian history and have had in three elections—because I'm not putting up with it. So you can take this as a threat. You can take this as whatever—and

by the way, I'm sure I'll get a few thousand senior citizens from Green Briar and Alliston who, when the golf course is closed—because there is a beautiful 45-hole golf course at this location where we need the lights also. I'm sure when they're not golfing, in about a month from now, they would be happy to join me in a massive protest in the middle of the highway. If I hold that highway up, I tell you, you're going to have—well, you're going to have a police problem, but you're also going to have an enormous media story because it's a vital east-west artery. It's the only east-west central Ontario artery, and you won't put any bloody stoplights on it. Just crazy. Just absolutely crazy.

Mr Klees: Unbelievable.

Mr Wilson: Unbelievable. It was a no-brainer, wasn't it, Frank, when we looked at it? And you can't do it.

By the way, don't believe me. Before you silenced the Owen Sound office, which deals with this part of the province, the Alliston Herald got hold of it, right after the lights were cancelled. I don't know the exact date of it. The bureaucrat that answers the phone says, "Oh, yeah, and we've set aside \$80,000 for those lights," and the owner of the Nottawasaga Inn was going to pay his portion, even though he doesn't have to. He was going to pay a portion also, quite willingly.

This was even after you got into office. We know what I'm saying is true because one of the bureaucrats did let slip out that we even have the money for these lights. But you cancelled it. It's embarrassing to have to get up and talk about these things. It's really shameful, actually.

I want to talk about something that we did, that I do regret. I'm probably speaking out of school, but on another transportation issue, I would really beg the government to consider some of these highways that we "downloaded." There's one in particular in my riding. I think we did the right thing in terms of Who Does What, and we gave taxation room, spending room to municipalities. We also gave, I think, three years' maintenance to little chunks of these former provincial highways, and we set up some pretty sensible criteria.

The one I want to point out is Highway 90 between Barrie and Angus, or Base Borden and Angus. It's a terrible stretch of road. It's a safety issue too, because it's very long and straight. There are almost no curves on most of it until you get near Barrie, and people speed on it. When all the factories in Barrie get out, people go to Angus, and at 4 o'clock or so each day you've got several thousand people coming out of Canadian Forces Base Borden going to their homes in Barrie and the surrounding area. So it's a traffic jam mess.

It fit our criteria perfectly. It is a local road. It starts at Barrie and ends at CFB Borden, or Angus, so it's very much a local road serving local needs. It's not a major north-south or east-west provincial highway. So it made sense, and we did give \$20 million or so to Simcoe county council at the time to maintain that piece of road.

Mr Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): You downloaded all those roads.

Mr Wilson: I'm being perfectly honest here; I agree. I asked our ministers and they turned me down. I've asked this government to look at it, and you've turned me down. I'm asking you to look at it again. I'm not really asking as much as Dave Guergis, the mayor of Essa township, and the people he represents are.

They really just don't have enough money to keep up. Either we have to get back into—and this is what Ernie Eves told me one day when he was Premier; he said, "I think we'll try and get back into the road grant business" you know, when we used to do 50-50. I think we do 90-10 on connecting links and small towns still, on those projects, but we probably should get into the unconditional road grant business again, which is the way we handled these things in the past. We don't necessarily have to own the road, but we do have to give some money to municipalities for upkeep and maintenance and upgrades of these roads.

I mentioned Highway 90; it is getting torn up pretty well. I think the county has decided this year they will do a study on it, but the county of Simcoe is having a difficult time, as I'm sure many municipalities are, maintaining these pretty busy highways.

I want to talk about the speed limit on highway—by the way, before I finish Highway 26, I want to go back. I want to read from Wayne Noble, president of Howard Noble Insurance Ltd. They have offices in Alliston, Barrie, Collingwood, Stayner, Elmvale, Owen Sound and Meaford, so they're pretty big insurance brokers and they're very, very nice people. Wayne Noble is the son of Howard Noble, who started Noble Insurance. They are very reputable, wonderful insurance brokers in my riding, Joe Tascona's riding and Bill Murdoch's riding. It says:

"August 31, 2004

"Honourable Dalton McGuinty

"I cannot believe that our democratic process has been reduced to this level.

"Your government has cut off funding for a bypass on Highway 26 between Stayner and Collingwood because this riding did not elect a Liberal member to our provincial government in the last election."

I didn't even talk to Wayne Noble about this letter; it just appeared one day.

Mr Klees: I approved that.

Mr Wilson: Exactly. Mr Klees, when he was minister, approved that, and we were building it.

Interjection.

Mr Wilson: Lou, the point is that we were building it. You stopped it. No one can even believe it.

You know, the day the construction crew left in the middle of the summer, I went out there. I got so many calls that I drove from Toronto. I was at meetings down here and I drove back up to the riding in the middle of the afternoon. People were standing out there in the middle of what roadway is there, the half-finished roadway, just standing there with a bunch of reporters. The New VR was there, which is the biggest TV thing we have in our area, and the local print media people were there. We were all just standing there. We couldn't believe it. We

were all staring at this unfinished road going to nowhere, watching them actually remove—it's funny—the out-houses that the construction crews—that was the last thing to leave. They were going back to Ken Winter, who rents those out in my area, in the Singhampton area. It's a crappy business, but I'm sure it's good.

The fact of the matter is it was just an unbelievable moment. I didn't think I ever would see it in my life. I bring it to the government's attention in a very nice way, and they just tell me to bugger off, to get out of here, they couldn't care less.

Someone is going to die. I hate to say it. I have a degree in theology, and I would hate to say that it will be on your head, but it will be on your head—that and Highway 89. And forget about ever getting elected. There will have to be another Confederation of Canada before you ever get elected in that riding, if you keep this nonsense up. It has been Conservative provincially ever since Confederation. We have let her slip federally a few times, but I'm sure this isn't going to help any federal Liberal candidate either, if you want to get down to politics.

Anyway, I've been mutilating poor Mr Noble's letter.

"The engineers, police and numerous studies agree that Highway 26, as it exists now, is the most dangerous stretch of highway in this area. It has an extraordinary number of driveways, lanes and access points. It has been the scene of an untold number of accidents and many deaths over the years"—and Wayne has lived in the Collingwood area all of his life.

"I firmly hope no one else is injured on this highway before you restore the funding to complete this much-needed bypass."

That is Wayne Noble, president of Howard Noble Insurance Ltd.

So there you have one of the biggest brokers in my area, who would know first-hand about all the accident records, would know the stories behind those accidents because of the claims, unprompted, making a plea to the government.

The council in New Tecumseh also wanted me to mention their support for the traffic lights. It is such a big issue—I never, ever in 14 years—it is the first time I actually wrote a council and asked them to study the issue just in case Frank Klees and I were wrong or something and we didn't need traffic lights.

1730

It was the best service I have ever seen. Within a week they had passed a council resolution unanimously. They had a petition going. As soon as they found out that the lights Mr Klees had announced were cancelled, they were amazing, so I do want to thank the council of the town of New Tecumseth for their support on this issue.

In fact, former mayor Larry Keogh, just before the last municipal elections, wrote in a letter that they actually went out and counted the cars coming out of Nottawasaga Inn, and they counted the time. I recall his letter. I read it into the record here on a previous occasion. At any given time, there could be 14 to 20 cars lined up trying to get on to Highway 89 to go east or west.

There is a letter to the editor from Allamby, if I could just find it here somewhere. Bear with me; you have been for an hour so far. Here it is, Alliston Herald, September 1, 2004: "Lights Outside the Inn Are a Safety Issue for Us All." In the minute and a half I have left:

"Some weeks ago the Herald carried an article concerning the need for a traffic light to serve the residents of Green Briar and clients using the facilities of the Nottawasaga Inn in accessing Highway 89 safely.

"The matter is still under discussion by all parties involved but little progress is being made, mainly due to bureaucratic tunnel vision."

What he means by "under discussion" is that after it was cancelled, we're now discussing trying to get the lights back up.

"The issue of the need for a traffic light at the location in question is a no-brainer even for government officials and one must wonder if there is a political motive for their foot-dragging. All levels of government tell us that they are completely supportive when it comes to the issue of safety for pedestrian, automotive and other modes of travel. This issue is all about safety and may I be so presumptuous as to make a case for the traffic light based on common sense."

At the end he says, "Is the government going to wait until it learns of a serious traffic accident that took the lives of innocent children, their parents, grandparents or all of the above before spending a few thousand dollars to put lights in place at this dangerous location? This spot where vulnerable souls have to play Russian roulette with traffic on Highway 89 travelling in excess of 100 kilometres per hour?"

"Let common sense prevail.

"T.D. Allamby,

"Alliston."

Thank you, Mr Allamby—I believe it is Mr Allamby—for a very common sense letter. It was a little longer than what I read into the record.

I want to once again plead with the government to deal with these safety issues in my riding, to get back to me in a timely way and stop ignoring the need just because there is a Conservative member in that riding.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms Horwath: I want to congratulate Mr Wilson for his excellent leadoff for his party on this bill. I have to say that the member from Simcoe-Grey really was very creative in his discussion of the bill. I learned a lot from that process—

Interjection.

Ms Horwath: He learned it from Gilles—particularly bringing into the debate some of the e-mails he received on the particular piece of this bill as well as the news clippings. I thought that was very interesting.

I have to let you know that Lee Prokaska from the Hamilton Spectator is, in fact, Ms Prokaska. I think you referred to a Mr Prokaska, so Lee, on your behalf I am correcting that so that we know it's Ms Prokaska.

The follow-up, then, the last half an hour or so about some of the particular road safety issues and some of the

frustrations he has had in his own riding was a little bit off topic maybe, but certainly of interest to the people of Simcoe-Grey.

Nonetheless, I think it is interesting that Mr Wilson talked about the fact that kids don't like car seats. In fact, they don't. Children don't tend to like them, but often-times, when it comes to children, we as adults have to make sure we are doing the things that we know are appropriate for them.

I look forward to spending some time, myself, on the discussion of this legislation. I'll be doing that later on tonight, I believe, or maybe in a very few minutes, but I think that I'll skip the e-mails, news clippings and those kinds of things because, quite frankly, I think I'll be able to speak for 20 minutes on the substantive pieces of the bill, and look forward to doing that.

Mr Lalonde: I just want to bring up some information for the member from Simcoe-Grey. When he refers to a lady he knows of whose weight is less than 80 pounds, he doesn't have to worry about it, because it's up to the age of eight. If you are nine, 10 or 20 and your weight is less than 80 pounds, you don't have to have a booster seat.

But let me tell you that the MTO has also started to have discussions with car manufacturers in Ontario to have the possibility of having what we call a child-seat fastener. At the present time, we do have some cars or vans that are equipped with that steel bar behind the car seat to which you can tie those child car seats. This is under discussion, and I'm pretty sure that with the passing of Bill 73, manufacturers in Ontario would exercise our recommendation.

Also, when we refer to the \$2,000 that the car owners will be charged for having someone pass a school bus that has its red light on, definitely, as I said previously, the investigation will be carried out if we find out that the car had been stolen or if the car was rented. Then we will find out who was the driver if it is possible. But the owner of the vehicle doesn't have anything to worry about.

Let me come back to the car seat. I have a grandson who is three weeks old, and I'd be extremely happy to buy a child car seat so I would have him to drive around the area.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The grandson's name is Joshua.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Halton.

Mr Barrett: Thank you, Speaker, and I'll point out for the second time this afternoon that my riding is Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, not Halton.

I concur with our member from—and I'd better get my ridings correct now—Hamilton East. It was an excellent presentation and also a creative presentation by our transportation critic, the member for Simcoe-Grey.

I mentioned the work that local people in my area did on this issue: the OPP, the health unit and an organization called Haldimand-Norfolk REACH. Much of their work was done with the Toronto prevention council on child seat belt issues. It was based in Hamilton and, as we know, the incorrect use or non-use of child restraints was

and continues to be a safety issue. At that time, Transport Canada estimated that 33% of the child seats were being used incorrectly; some estimates went as high as 82%.

So with the deliberations with these various organizations—there was another group, the injury prevention program of the Waterloo region community health department. Working with those groups and local people, there was a wide array of statistics. We've heard a lot of the data about the injury statistics—head injuries and abdominal injuries. One thing that came forward at that time, apart from the request for legislation, was the need for further education, further prevention strategies, and information strategies beyond merely passing a law.

1740

The Acting Speaker: My apologies to the member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

Mr Barrett: Thank you.

The Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member from Timmins-James Bay.

Mr Bisson: Here I am. I am so glad, Mr Speaker, that you never mix up the name of my riding because it would be kind of hard. Timmins-James Bay is one of the ones you can remember so easily. Why? Because James Bay is this great big body of water up in northern Ontario. Did you know in my riding—

Mr Qaadri: Like the member?

Mr Bisson: That was not very nice. I'm deeply hurt by the member, but anyway I'll let it go by.

I can say to you, Mr Speaker, that in my riding I can boast of having both black bears and polar bears. I can boast of having whales and seals in my riding, which I do. Most people don't recognize that because James Bay is salt water, along with Hudson Bay, which is the other part of my riding. So Timmins-James Bay would be pretty hard to mix up if you always remember it's where all the polar bears are. By the way, them polar bears, you've got to be careful because they're pretty mean, nasty bears if you walk up on one. Anybody ever see a polar bear up live, out in the bush? Anybody see one? Oh, yes, he would know. My friend over here, Mr Peterson, would know. They're not these warm, cuddly things that you think they are. They're a nice animal. They're majestic, but God, they're huge.

I've got tell you this story. I know it's unrelated to this, but I have to tell you. A friend of mine up in Attawapiskat was out on the spring hunt this year and decided to take a snow machine and go further along the river to check on a buddy of his. He gets to his buddy's camp, his buddy's gone and there's a polar bear between him, his Ski-Doo and his buddy's camp, and he doesn't have his gun with him.

It was a heck of a story. The guy finally made it back to his snow machine. He says, "I cranked on that thing I don't know how many times. It always goes on the first crank. What happens when I get there? I crank, it won't start. I crank, it won't start. I'm cursing and kicking this machine in Cree. I'm doing everything I can. Finally, I get it going. I run with my machine and I run across my

buddy because he had gone to my camp without his gun because he had seen the bear and left it in his camp."

There were two guys without a gun with a polar bear in their camps. Some other time I'll tell you how the story ended.

The Acting Speaker: Interesting. A reply from the member from Simcoe-Grey.

Mr Wilson: That was the member from Timmins-James Bay. That was about as on topic as I was on topic.

I appreciate your indulgence. It is a transportation bill. It deals with children in cars, bus safety and a few other issues. I thought it was very important and I appreciate the indulgence of the House to deal with these other really important transportation issues in my riding. Thank you to the NDP member for speaking and my colleague for speaking. I appreciate the information from the government side, M. Lalonde.

I will end by again saying that I hope someone from the government side, particularly the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Public Infrastructure, would get back to me in a positive way about these safety issues in my riding. They're not going to go away. You're going to get bad media out of them, bad press out of them. People already think badly about your government in terms of breaking 231 promises. They should be mentioning that you also undid a lot of the good we were doing, like building a new piece of Highway 26, like installing traffic lights on Highway 89 in front of the Nottawasaga Inn.

The fact of the matter is, to just do across-the-board cancellation of all these projects in Conservative members' ridings is, I think, immoral. It's certainly wrong. It's not the proud tradition of this province. It's not the tradition even of your party when Mr Peterson was in office. I was an assistant here in those days, and I don't remember too many low-handed things like this happening that were brought to the floor of the House. People were fair. Camaraderie was good. We were all here to work for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

These are major safety issues. I can't stress that enough. I look forward to the government getting back to me and finally giving us a positive response, given that I know that these issues I've brought up were fully funded, properly announced and were done for the benefit of the people of this province.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Horwath: It being almost 6 of the clock, I would recommend that the House adjourn.

The Acting Speaker: Are you moving adjournment of the House?

Ms Horwath: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: Ms Horwath has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry? It's agreed? OK.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 pm this evening.

The House adjourned at 1745.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon / L'hon Marie (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative		
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)		
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)		
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Eves, Ernie (PC) Leader of the opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
		Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Zimmer, David (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Pupatello, Hon / L'hon Sandra (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sault Ste Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York North / York-Nord	Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Cordiano, Hon / L'hon Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement		Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L) Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St Catharines	Bradley, Hon / L'hon James J. (L) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St Paul's	Bryant, Hon / L'hon Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		

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

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

CONTENTS

Thursday 21 October 2004

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Highway memorials

Mr Yakabuski	3609, 3615
Mr Bartolucci	3610
Mr Sterling	3610
Mr Prue	3611
Mrs Sandals	3612
Mr Runciman	3612
Mr Marchese	3612
Mrs Cansfield	3613
Mr Miller	3613
Mr Wilkinson	3614
Ms Scott	3614
Mr Tascona	3615
Agreed to	3624

City of Toronto Amendment Act, 2004, Bill 120, Ms Wynne

Ms Wynne	3615, 3624
Mr Hudak	3617
Mr Prue	3619
Mr Duguid	3620
Ms Di Cocco	3621
Mr Tascona	3622
Mr Marchese	3622
Mr Colle	3623
Agreed to	3624

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Hospital funding

Mr Jackson	3624
------------------	------

Irene Murdoch

Mrs Van Bommel	3624
----------------------	------

National Dental Hygienists Week

Mr Flaherty	3625
-------------------	------

Marie Perrotta

Mr Prue	3625
---------------	------

Markham Public Library

Mr Wong	3625
---------------	------

Ministerial conduct

Mr Hudak	3626
----------------	------

Police officers

Mr Wilkinson	3626
--------------------	------

Health care

Mrs Mitchell	3626
--------------------	------

Nurses

Mr McMeekin	3626
-------------------	------

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Waste Reduction Week

Mrs Dombrowsky	3627
Mr Barrett	3628
Ms Churley	3628

ORAL QUESTIONS

Class size

Mr Klees	3629
Mr Kennedy	3629, 3639
Mrs Cansfield	3638

Student safety

Mr Flaherty	3630
Mr Kennedy	3630

Hospital funding

Mr Hampton	3631, 3632
Mr McGuinty	3631, 3632
Mr Smitherman	3632

Students with special needs

Mr Klees	3633
Mr Kennedy	3633

Environmental protection

Ms Churley	3634
Mrs Dombrowsky	3634

Workplace safety

Mr Duguid	3635
Mr Bentley	3635

School bus safety

Ms Scott	3635
Mr Kennedy	3636

Automobile insurance

Mr Bisson	3636
Mr McGuinty	3636

Air quality

Ms Matthews	3637
Mrs Dombrowsky	3637

Per diem funded agencies

Mr Jackson	3637
Mrs Bountrogianni	3637

Assistance to disabled

Mr Prue	3638
Ms Papatello	3638

PETITIONS

Student safety

Mr Klees	3639
----------------	------

Per diem funded agencies

Ms Churley	3639
Mr Arthurs	3640
Mr Jackson	3642

Health care

Mr Ouellette	3640
--------------------	------

Chiropractic services

Mr McMeekin	3640
Mr Qaadri	3641

Children's health services

Mrs Munro	3640
-----------------	------

Health care services

Ms Martel	3641
-----------------	------

Meat processing on farms

Mr Hardeman	3641
-------------------	------

Optometrists

Ms Martel	3641
-----------------	------

Immigrants' skills

Mr Delaney	3641
------------------	------

SECOND READINGS

Highway Traffic Statute Law Amendment Act (Child and Youth Safety), 2004, Bill 73, Mr Takhar

Mr Bisson	3642, 3650, 3663
Ms Broten	3648
Mr Ouellette	3649
Mr Lalonde	3649, 3662
Mr Hudak	3649
Mr Duguid	3650, 3653
Mr Qaadri	3651
Ms Horwath	3652, 3662
Mr Peterson	3652
Mr Barrett	3652, 3662
Mr Wilson	3653, 3663
Debate deemed adjourned	3663

OTHER BUSINESS

Annual report, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario

The Speaker	3627
-------------------	------

Visitor

The Speaker	3629
-------------------	------

Business of the House

Mr Phillips	3642
-------------------	------

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeu­di 21 octobre 2004

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur la cité de Toronto,

projet de loi 120, M ^{me} Wynne Adoptée	3624
---	------

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2004 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le Code de la route (sécurité des enfants et des jeunes), projet de loi 73, M. Takhar

M. Bisson	3650
Débat présumé ajourné	3663