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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 9 March 2005

Mercredi 9 mars 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 March 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 mars 2005

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LANDFILL

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I would like to welcome the citizens of rural Ontario who are here today trying to get the attention of the McGuinty government, which so far doesn't seem to know they exist. Again the Minister of Agriculture managed to duck the event.

These farmers will appreciate an issue that I've been fighting this government on since it was elected back in 2003. The issue is the proposed landfill site in Tiny township known as site 41. Thousands of signed petitions, thousands of letters and a private member's bill paralleling the Adams Mine Lake Act have all been ignored by the government.

The final design for site 41 is awaiting approval. Environment Minister Leona Dombrowsky has talked in this House about how her government's greenbelt legislation protects farmland, but will she protect the very farmland upon which the landfill is supposed to exist? Site 41, among other things, is an example of class 1 farmland literally going to waste. Will she protect the landfill from potential groundwater contamination? I hope the minister has watched the video I sent her some time ago that shows overflowing wells on the property of site 41. The video paints a telling picture of the potential for groundwater contamination if the property is developed as a landfill.

In response to my application for a review of site 41's certificate of approval, Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller said the following in his 2003 report: "The ECO believes that a broad review of the site 41 C of A was warranted to increase government accountability for environmental decision-making on this highly contentious proposal. It would have been appropriate for the Ministry of the Environment to evaluate the certificate of approval in light of the province's intention to strengthen source water protection requirements."

I ask the minister to remember this, and her own words about improving source water protection in this province: Minister, if you care about protecting farmland, if you care about protecting our water, you will stop site

41 now. If you care about the citizens of rural Ontario, show an example and stop site 41 once and for all.

KIDSABILITY

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): I was delighted recently to attend the opening of KidsAbility's newly expanded centre in Guelph. KidsAbility provides treatment for children with physical challenges, developmental delays and autism.

Our local KidsAbility has a unique partnership with the city of Guelph. They are located at the West End Community Centre, allowing special-needs kids easy access to all the recreational facilities enjoyed by other kids in Guelph, but their treatment space was woefully cramped. With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, KidsAbility has recently expanded, with five times the amount of space, including their own waiting/reception area, seven child-friendly assessment and therapy rooms, and a family resource centre. They've also added new services, including the SPOT program, which offers therapy support for children attending licensed child care, funded through Wellington county by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. They've added Together for Kids with Disabilities, a project which improves access to recreation and leisure opportunities, again funded by the Trillium Foundation. They've expanded their therapy services, preschool autism services and infant hearing services to serve more kids in our neighbourhood, and a developmental pediatrician has joined the team.

Congratulations to the wonderful staff at KidsAbility and the West End Rec Centre, and to their long-standing supporters at the Guelph Rotary Club. This is indeed good news for special-needs kids in Guelph-Wellington.

HYDRO PROJECT

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'd like to welcome members of the Kapuskasing Energy Regional Resource Association, or KERRA, to Queen's Park. Some of them are here in the members' gallery.

After travelling through the night, I greeted 100 concerned citizens at 8 o'clock this morning outside of Queen's Park. They have travelled more than 900 kilometres to urge the Ontario government to move forward with the Mattagami hydroelectric development project. Among the representatives are Colette Goulet, businesswoman and chairperson of KERRA; Martha-Lee

Riopel, councillor for the town of Kapuskasing; and Stan Louttit, the grand chief of the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council, as well as other councillors and citizens.

The Mattagami River hydro project has been put on hold for too long. KERRA wants the government to understand that this project supports the government's commitment to renewable energy and also supports regional economic development. It does this by providing an opportunity for the Moose Cree First Nation, Tembec and SNC-Lavalin to partner in the redevelopment of four hydroelectric dams on the river. It promises to generate an additional 384 megawatts of renewable, clean energy for the province's grid.

KERRA has the power; now the government must turn on the switch. I say to the government: Work with KERRA; work with the partners in this project. It's obviously very important to the people of northeastern Ontario.

ENERGY CONSERVATION FORUM

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): On Saturday, March 19, co-hosted by myself and the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, MPP for Ottawa-Vanier, a community energy conservation forum will take place in my riding at Ottawa city hall from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is to highlight the importance of energy conservation through a variety of exhibits, speakers and information sessions.

Here the public will have the chance to browse more than 16 exhibits offering innovative and interesting methods for energy conservation in their home, office or small business. Additionally, the public has the opportunity to sit in on one of the many speaker sessions, offering more information on new energy-efficient products and programs. Those who attend can also bring their old light bulbs to trade in for new, energy-efficient versions that will, in turn, save money on future energy bills.

In addition to fresh fruit and beverages at the door, those who attend can enter a draw for a set of energy-efficient LED holiday lights or a personal energy audit for their home. All the prizes were graciously donated to the event by a variety of exhibitors, and I extend sincere thanks to them for their generosity and dedication to energy conservation.

Finally, I want to thank all of the staff members, volunteers, exhibitors and sponsors for their time and energy devoted to making this day a reality. I offer special appreciation to our sponsors: the city of Ottawa, Hydro Ottawa, Enbridge and the Ottawa Citizen. I'd like to take this time to give special thanks to Madeleine Meilleur and her staff, my Toronto staff and those in the constituency office, and I want to thank my former legislative intern, Rebecca Sciarra. Without her leadership, this day would not be possible. Well done, Rebecca.

I look forward to seeing you all there at the conservation forum.

HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I rise to discuss the Stevenson Road interchange in my riding of Oshawa. As the Minister of Transportation is aware, the commitment was reinforced by him in this Legislature, and the previous government went through the process of studying, consulting and going through the environmental assessment for the new interchange.

This interchange will complement the recent General Motors announcement, as GM staff and providers will use this interchange, not to mention the current businesses and new businesses yet to come who will depend on the interchange to increase serviceability and potential customer traffic.

1340

Minister, the concern, the problem, is that the interchange timelines for completion have been substantially extended, virtually doubling them, when not so far away more advanced projects were listed as only taking half the time to complete. The acquisition process alone substantially delayed the process, further complicating the matter, which has all been cleared up. Minister, is it the financial contributing partners' timelines that have changed, is it the ministry that is delaying the process, or how can the partners in this very important project advance the construction of Oshawa's first fully serviced 401 interchange for the prosperity of all Ontarians?

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I rise today to celebrate two initiatives in the Flemington Park neighbourhood in my riding. Both of these programs demonstrate the importance of community access to public space, including our public schools.

Last Thursday, I visited an evening youth basketball league at Gateway Public School, led by Mr. Ali Baig. The league is in its second season of offering neighbourhood kids an excellent opportunity to improve their basketball skills, make friends and be physically active in safe, supervised space.

Yesterday I attended an International Women's Day celebration organized by the women-only swim group, led by Karen Boulton of Toronto Parks and Recreation. This program is ending its first year and has created a new opportunity for many Muslim women of the community to learn to swim or renew their skills.

Many members of this House have spoken about the importance of active living to our youth and to our broader society. That's a sentiment I share; it's one of the reasons these programs are so important. But I want to talk about the community-building aspect of these programs. It's not just the children who come out to the gym at Gateway every Thursday evening; it's their parents too. They meet other parents in the gym and become friends, and that builds a community. It's not just a physical activity that the women at the resource centre

benefit from; it's getting to know each other as neighbours.

Congratulations to Mr. Baig and the women of Flemington Park who worked with Karen Boulton and the many associated volunteers—women like Sahar Badawy, who are making their neighbourhood a safer and better place to live.

Through our community use of schools initiative, this government is doing its part to promote community-based recreation programs like these. In some neighbourhoods like Flemington Park, facilities that have not been available are now available free to the community. We're working to make that a reality across the province.

SEMAINE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): C'est avec plaisir que je viens adresser cette Assemblée pour une occasion très spéciale.

Hier midi, le lieutenant gouverneur de la province, l'honorable James Bartleman, accompagné de la ministre de la Culture et des Affaires francophones, l'honorable Madeleine Meilleur, a fait le lancement officiel de la Semaine de la francophonie en Ontario.

Cette année, les franco-Ontariens et franco-Ontariennes vont pouvoir célébrer davantage, puisque nous avons décidé de prolonger la période des festivités jusqu'au 20 mars prochain. Il ne faut pas oublier de célébrer l'adoption de la Loi 163 sur le bilinguisme de la ville d'Ottawa, une première en Ontario. Le 20 mars sera la Journée mondiale de la francophonie, et plus de 180 millions de francophones de cette planète seront en fête.

L'Ontario compte plus de 550 000 franco-Ontariens et franco-Ontariennes, et des activités ont été organisées d'un bout à l'autre de la province. Que ce soit à Windsor, à Hearst, à Timmins, à North Bay, à Pembroke, à Alexandria, à Cornwall, à Embrun, à Hawkesbury, à Orléans, à Cumberland, à Midland ou au grand Toronto, les francophones sont en fête.

Plus de neuf millions de personnes parlent le français au Canada, soit environ 28 % de la population canadienne. Donc, du 4 mars au 20 mars prochain, le Canada français sera en fête.

En tant qu'Ontariens et Ontariennes, soyons fiers d'être Canadiens, d'être Ontariens, et surtout d'être franco-Ontariens. Bonne fête, franco-Ontariens et franco-Ontariennes.

INDUSTRIE FORESTIÈRE

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James): On a aussi aujourd'hui parmi nous des résidents du nord-est de l'Ontario, de Hearst, de Smooth Rock Falls, de Kapuskasing, de Mattice, de Moonbeam et d'Opatatika. Ils sont ici pour une question aujourd'hui, ils sont ici pour une raison : c'est la décision par le ministre des Ressources naturelles de dire à Tembec et à Domtar que le bois qui

ira aux scieries présentement n'appartient pas à ces communautés mais à ces industries-là.

On est ici aujourd'hui pour dire simplement au ministre des Ressources naturelles, qui est aux alentours du coin du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines et du ministre de l'Énergie, que vous avez une responsabilité envers les communautés de les assurer que le bois qui est dans nos forêts appartient directement aux communautés et n'appartient pas directement à ces compagnies de scierie et de papeterie. On dit au gouvernement que c'est important que vous mettiez de côté des communautés et que vous vous assuriez que le bois qui est dans nos forêts est relié exactement aux communautés et non directement aux entreprises. Sinon, on va se trouver dans une situation où on aura des scieries dans une couple de communautés et on va avoir beaucoup de communautés qui vont perdre leur scierie.

On demandera directement au gouvernement aujourd'hui, plus tard dans la période des questions, d'être clair sur la question, de renverser la décision du ministre des Ressources naturelles et de dire que le bois n'appartient pas aux compagnies forestières, n'appartient pas à Tembec, n'appartient pas à Domtar, mais qu'il appartient à la communauté de l'Ontario, y incluses des communautés comme Opatatika, et qu'on s'assure que le bois reste avec ces communautés pour qu'eux autres puissent organiser leur propre relève.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): Yesterday, for the first time, associations for corn, soybean and wheat farmers, which happen to be Ontario's top three crops, held a joint annual convention in London. I'm pleased to say that our Minister of Agriculture was at the convention to show his support for our farmers.

This government believes in Ontario farmers and the products they sell. We support the production and use of alternative transportation fuels such as ethanol, which we get from the many corn producers in this province. That's why we are delivering on our ethanol commitment and have announced Ontario's intention to implement a renewable fuel strategy by 2007.

We know our grain farmers are facing some tough times. They are dealing with low commodity prices. Like Minister Peters has said, this government understands that farmers are facing a perfect storm. We are doing our part to ensure that farmers have the resources they need to continue with their way of life, but we need more people at the table. We need our federal counterparts to step up to the plate.

After last week's rally, Minister Peters contacted his federal counterpart to talk about helping grain farmers, who are facing the lowest prices in 25 years. Ontario farmers need more support. Along with Ontarians from across the province, they give \$23 billion more in taxes than they get back. Ontario farmers need the federal gov-

ernment to give them their fair share. This government is fighting for Ontario farmers at home and in Ottawa. We know farmers need aid, and we are working with them to get it.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr11, An Act respecting the Kitchener-Waterloo Young Men's Christian Association.

Your committee further recommends that the fees and the actual cost of printing at all stages be remitted on Bill Pr11, An Act respecting the Kitchener-Waterloo Young Men's Christian Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA JUSTICE

M. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke–Nord): M. le Président, je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du comité permanent de la justice et je propose son adoption.

I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 110, An Act to require the disclosure of information to police respecting persons being treated for gunshot wounds / Projet de loi 110, Loi exigeant la divulgation à la police de renseignements en ce qui concerne les personnes traitées pour blessure par balle.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for second reading.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to bring forward a unanimous consent motion for the House concerning Bill 92, which is the Municipal Amendment Act, 2004, dealing with the MOU between the province and the municipalities. Given that this bill was introduced on June 8 and has not been called in, almost a year, for even one hour of second reading debate, I move the following motion:

That, after question period today, the House immediately move to second reading debate on March 9, followed by immediate debate on March 29 and March—

The Speaker: You're asking for unanimous consent to bring forward a bill?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. You're asking for unanimous consent to bring forward a bill, and there is a no.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): On a point of order, Speaker: I rise to ask for unanimous consent to read the following resolutions into the record, as formally presented to the Legislature—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Please be seated. There's a request for unanimous consent, and I heard a no.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow Mr. Barrett to read a democratic annunciation of 11 recommendations by—

The Speaker: Order. I'm going to put silence to you now. I've said to sit down. You are asking for unanimous consent, and I heard a no.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GENDER-BASED PRICE DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITION ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 INTERDISANT LA DISCRIMINATION DES PRIX FONDÉE SUR LE SEXE

Mr. Berardinetti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 182, An Act to prohibit price discrimination on the basis of gender / Projet de loi 182, Loi interdisant la discrimination des prix fondée sur le sexe.

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

Mr. Berardinetti?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): Very briefly, this bill prohibits price discrimination on the basis of gender. Individuals who face price discrimination on the basis of gender may file a complaint to which part IV of the Human Rights Code applies, or the person may commence an action in the Superior Court of Justice. Persons who practise price discrimination on the basis of gender may be prosecuted.

In short, this bill, if it becomes law, will prevent businesses such as dry cleaners, hairdressers, retailers, and others from charging different prices based on whether the person is a man or a woman.

I move that today and ask that this House support this.

DEFERRED VOTES

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005
LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 167, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 167, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Patten, Richard	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Phillips, Gerry	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Pupatello, Sandra	

The Speaker: All those against, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Wilson, Jim
Flaherty, Jim	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 23.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like your assistance in asking for unanimous consent that Bill 92, the AMO memorandum of understanding act, be called for debate this afternoon.

The Speaker: In my assistance, I will then ask, do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

VISITORS

Mr. Mike Colle (Eglinton–Lawrence): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce the wife of one

of our members, Michelle Berardinetti, who is the wife of the member for Scarborough Southwest.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): That is not a point of order, but of course she is welcome.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Is it one of those points of order that is not a point of order?

Mr. O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the House, I would like to stand and recognize members from my community of Durham riding who are here to support the Lanark Landowners' movement here today. I would like the members to welcome members from the agricultural community in Durham.

The Speaker: Again, it's not a point of order, but they are welcome.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: If we're going down this road, I would like to welcome the people from Kapuskasing, Hearst and Mattice who are here on quite a different issue. But, more importantly, if my wife could be here, she would say hi.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): Anybody else?

The Speaker: Thank you very much. I was about to ask the member for St. Catharines to do his famous point of order.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Mr. Speaker, I would like us to recognize anybody who has not been recognized in the gallery today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GREENBELT

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Hopefully, we won't get a repeat of the stonewalling exercise that he attempted to entertain us with yesterday. Minister, earlier this week you indicated that it would not be appropriate for you to meet with developers who had properties on the proposed greenbelt after, I think it was, August of last year. We subsequently heard that the chief political adviser in the Premier's office, David MacNaughton, had met with them after that date. We now hear that the Premier and his chief of staff, Mr. Guy, have also met with the developer in question. If it was sauce for the goose, it should be sauce for the gander. If you thought it was inappropriate to meet with developers during this period, do you think it's appropriate for the Premier of the province to meet with them? Give us an answer, please.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): Once again, it gives me an opportunity to talk about the tre-

mendous accomplishment of this government in getting a million acres of land added to the protected space—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): This is the first question, and I'm hearing questions and answers from both sides, but not from the person to whom the question is being asked. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: It once again gives me an opportunity to speak about the tremendous accomplishment of this government in adding a million acres of land to the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment for permanent protection of the greenbelt around Toronto. This will not only be protected for agricultural purposes, but also for sensitive environmental purposes. That's what the people of Ontario are really concerned about. And they would like to know as well, where does John Tory stand with respect to the greenbelt? Is he in favour or is he not in favour of the greenbelt? We think it's a tremendous accomplishment, and we are proud of what we've done for generations to come.

Mr. Runciman: That was truly pathetic. You talk about smearing; you are smearing your own process with respect to the development of the greenbelt boundaries by refusing to answer what I think are very legitimate questions in this House. Day after day, you stand up and do that and refuse to answer questions.

Minister, last year you said you purposely didn't meet with developers who had an interest in the greenbelt. When faced with the truth, you fudged, fumbled and finally backtracked and said that you didn't meet with them from August onwards, that it was inappropriate. But we now know that Premier McGuinty, along with his top aides, met with at least one developer during the time when the maps were being drawn. The results: The developer received a \$15-million exemption. The scandal reaches right up the food chain. Of course, McGuinty is not here to explain himself; he's too busy at another fundraiser, ready to take more money from developers. Minister, your so-called process reeks of scandal. It's damaged goods. Will you support our call for a legislative inquiry to clear the air?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: The greenbelt process over the last year and three or four months has had more extensive consultation than any other process we've had in this House during the time that I've been here over the last 10 years. We set up a Greenbelt Task Force to work out the criteria on which the greenbelt should be preserved. They had about eight to 10 different meetings. They came up with recommendations dealing with principles that should be included in the greenbelt. We then set up a ministry process after the bill was introduced, whereby the ministry and I attended a number of meetings as well. We had about 10 public meetings again. Then there was the legislative process after the bill was given second reading. This bill has had more public consultation than any other piece of legislation in at least the last 10 years, and we are very proud of the result and what we've done for not only this generation but for generations to come.

Mr. Runciman: We're talking about the \$10,000 consultations; that's what we're talking about. Minister, the integrity of your greenbelt process has been sabotaged by your failure to be factual and by your boss and his shockingly poor judgment. First the parcel of land is included in the greenbelt, then the Premier meets with the developer, and now your revised map shows that same developer's land is magically excluded. That little trick was worth \$15 million. This is the same developer who paid \$10,000 to talk to the Premier only months before.

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Minister, you said yesterday, "I take full responsibility for the final plan and maps. That's why I'm minister." You personally asked me for my resignation on December 5, 2002, over a simple numbers disagreement with the Provincial Auditor. Given the clear appearance that your greenbelt boundaries were subject to influence by wealthy developers, and your statement that you now take full responsibility, do you think it's appropriate for you to remain in cabinet?

Applause.

The Speaker: Order. Another display like that by any individual hitting on the desk—I will regard this as a warning to everyone who has been hitting on their desks. Another display like that and I will be naming that member. I think it's disgraceful, that kind of behaviour. I would also ask the government—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Where were we in this? The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Let me just say this: I am very proud of the process that was undertaken by this government with respect to the greenbelt. As I indicated before, once the Greenbelt Task Force report was received and the ministry started working on the mapping and the plan with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture, I made the personal decision that I was not going to meet with developers from that moment on, and I haven't.

There were many other meetings. There were 1,200 submissions made, as I indicated yesterday, by municipalities, by individuals, by stakeholders. I'm very proud of the process, and I know that the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Agriculture would be more than pleased to put their officials at the will of the members of the opposition if they want to have a full and complete briefing from those two ministries with respect to the science used to determine the greenbelt.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: On March 2, I asked you why you exempted the land of Mr. De Gasperis in Vaughan after receiving a \$10,000 donation to the Liberal Party, but the farmers in North Ajax, including the Kuleshnyk family—you ignored their concerns that were very much the same. You referred in your response on March 2 to the official plan for the city of Ajax. That quote came as a real surprise to a number of municipal leaders, including Vaughan mayor Michael

Di Biase, who wrote to you: "Given the facts and the notion that all Ontarians should be treated equally, we have no tolerance for double standards in this province. I request that you amend your greenbelt plan to reflect Vaughan's official plan and vision for future growth," in accordance with their official plans. That was written after your final greenbelt map came out. So despite your claims that it's based on the official plan, the Vaughan mayor says it's not.

Minister, why do you have this double standard? Why do developers get one way of treatment and farmers get the boot?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As I've indicated before, we received a number of different submissions. We received one from the town of Ajax, which wanted certain lands included in the greenbelt. We received letters from the mayor of Vaughan, who wanted us to take a look at certain areas that we'd already put in our draft plans. In both cases, what happened is exactly the same: The Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture, together with my own ministry, looked at their submissions and, in some cases, were able to accommodate either the total request or some of the request. The mapping was changed in order to give will to the political will of the people involved, which are the duly elected councils of Ajax and Vaughan. Did they agree on everything that was suggested by these particular councils? Probably not. But they took another look at it and applied the best science that was available, both from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the LEAR system, as used in agriculture.

Mr. Hudak: The minister's answers keep changing. This notion that you considered municipalities equally is a bunch of garbage. You know full well you had similar requests from Brock, Pickering, Georgina, Durham, Grimsby, St. Catharines, Lincoln and York region. In fact, the town of Caledon sent you 69 separate errors in the greenbelt map. We called the town of Caledon, and not a single one changed.

Let's face it: You have been caught out. You've been caught out saying you didn't meet with developers, and you knew you did. You've been caught out giving a developer a greenbelt exemption for a \$15-million—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Government House leader, I'll give you a warning. I'd like to hear the question from the member from Erie—Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: Minister, you've been caught out. You said you wouldn't meet developers, and you did. You've been caught out giving a \$15-million windfall exemption to one particular developer at least, and you've now been caught out with a double standard that some municipal resolutions are more powerful than others. Let's face it: The only reason for this exemption is tied to the \$10,000 donation to the Ontario Liberal Party. Admit the facts.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: As I indicated yesterday, the developer I met with was Mr. De Gasperis, which was about four months before the actual greenbelt mapping and plans started in August of last year. He was only

concerned about one thing, and that was the agricultural preserve. He wanted to know whether or not we were going to meet our commitment, which was to preserve the agricultural preserve in the Pickering area for agricultural purposes, and that's what we did. We told him we were going to do that. That's what this is really all about.

I know the Tories are in favour of paving over that agricultural preserve, but we are not. We are living up to our commitments, and in order to ensure that it will not be built upon in the future, we included it in the greenbelt.

Mr. Hudak: The minister has the opposite of the Midas touch: You took a good idea, preserving green-space, and you blew it; you turned it into mud. Your incompetence on this issue is at an all-time high.

You cut the Beverly marsh in half. Your map zoned garbage dumps, cemeteries and junkyards as fruitland area. You have no plan for farmers. You have no plan for municipalities. One day you're meeting with developers; the next day you said you'd never met with developers. One day you say the minister shouldn't meet with developers, but it's OK for the Premier to meet with developers.

Let's face it: Despite the fact that we warned you not to take on this extraordinary power to make exemptions, you took that power, and now there are widespread accusations across the greenbelt and in the media that you abused that power and gave a \$15-million windfall exemption to one particular landowner and ignored the pleas of farmers. Minister, are you any longer fit to sit in the minister's chair?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I am very proud of what I, as minister, and the ministry did with respect to making the greenbelt a reality for this province. As I indicated before, we have gone through more consultation than we have on any other piece of legislation in this House over the last 10 years. Certain submissions were made. We took a look at them. With some we agreed and with some we didn't agree, but in all cases the best science and the best planning for this province was used in order to come up with the right decisions that were made. As the member well knows, in the end result, we ended up with 8,500 more acres in the greenbelt than we had in our draft plan, and we are proud of that for the people of Ontario.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean—Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to take the minister up on his offer of a briefing, and I'd like to move that the standing committee on general government—

The Speaker: Order. I regard the point of order as asking for unanimous consent; is that it? I heard a no.

1420

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora—Rainy River): My question is to the Acting Premier. I want to ask you about getting access to Premier McGuinty. At this moment,

Premier McGuinty is pressing his tux and slicking up his hair and unfolding his money belt, getting ready for the \$8,000-a-table Liberal fundraiser tonight. Who will attend? Wealthy developers, bankers, lobbyists and corporate executives who can afford the \$8,000 price tag. My question is, what about the people of Ontario who don't have \$8,000 to \$10,000 to purchase access: the nurses who are being laid off, the pulp and sawmill workers who are losing their jobs? What are those Ontarians who don't have the \$8,000 to \$10,000 supposed to do when they want a meeting with the Premier?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'm very happy to have this opportunity to remind all the members of this House that there has not been a harder-working Premier in the province of Ontario than Dalton McGuinty. This is a man who is here early in the morning and who works many long hours in this Legislative Assembly. This is a man who travels across the province during the intersession, sometimes through the week, to meet with Ontarians, to bring good news to their communities, to sit down and listen to them and their concerns. I say to the member opposite that this Premier has been more accessible and has met with more individuals and groups than any other Premier. This is the hardest-working man, and I'm proud to call him my leader.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Order. There is some distraction with those props. I would like to proceed with the supplementary question—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'll state again that I have observed that a couple of books are being used as props. I want to proceed with question period and to hear the supplementary from the leader of the third party, and I'd request that you put away those books—props.

Mr. Hampton: Mr. Speaker, it's a book about politics in Ontario, but I will put it away.

I assume that the Acting Premier indicated by her answer that the Premier is worth the \$10,000 price of admission he is asking for. But I want to ask you about what you said before the election. Dalton McGuinty said, "The Harris-Eves government gave money too much influence and citizens too little." He also said, "We will put the public interest ahead of special interest." Two years later, you're not listening to ordinary Ontarians, you're not listening to the nurses that you're laying off, you're not listening to farmers who are losing their livelihoods or the paper mill and sawmill workers who are losing their jobs. No, you're not. You're too busy listening to the folks who can buy access tonight: developers, lobbyists, those who can afford the \$8,000 to \$10,000.

The Speaker: Order. There's no respect for this House by some members. The member for Niagara Centre has been displaying a book above my head here and I would—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I thought I had made myself pretty plain and clear in what I stated about books being

used as props. The member from Niagara Centre continues to do so, and I'm going to name you for this. You must have some respect for this place. I'm finding a deterioration in this place—it has really gone down—by certain members and I will not tolerate that kind of stuff.

I now name the member from Niagara Centre.

Mr. Kormos was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: As I was saying, this reminds all of us of the time of Patti Starr, the time of the former Liberal government when developers could purchase access. My question is, since you don't want to acknowledge the time of Patti Starr, what are ordinary Ontarians to do today when it's very clear that if you want access to the Premier, you have to purchase a \$10,000-a-head private dinner or \$8,000-a-head access to a Liberal Party fundraiser? What about the ordinary Ontarians who don't have \$8,000 to \$10,000?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: That is absolutely ridiculous. There is not a government in the history of this province that has been more accessible to the people of the province, with the laws we're passing. I am proud to say that with every piece of legislation that has been brought to this assembly, there has been public consultation, and members of the public have been able to access that process free of charge. To suggest anything otherwise is simply not accurate.

Mr. Hampton: I want to talk about the people who have money. They don't go to public consultations; they purchase a \$10,000 private dinner or they purchase an \$8,000 ticket to a Liberal fundraiser. When they want to consult, they ask for secret backroom meetings with advisers. When they want to talk to a cabinet minister, they go privately to a Stanley Cup playoff game with the cabinet minister. I want to ask about those. You see, ordinary Ontarians don't have the money to purchase that kind of access. So I ask the Acting Premier again: What about the people who don't have a private box to go and watch the Stanley Cup playoffs with a cabinet minister? What about the people who can't purchase those \$10,000 exclusive, secret dinners with the Premier? When do they get listened to? When do they get access?

1430

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: I guess I'd like the members of the assembly to know, too, that the honourable member and his party are having a fundraiser. And guess what? You have to pay to go. And guess what you have to pay? You have to pay \$1,500. So I'm just having difficulty. If the suggestion is that—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: It's pretty clear that what we've got now under the McGuinty government is two Ontarios. You've got access Ontario if you have money, and then you've got the ordinary folks who are increasingly—

The Speaker: Your question is to?

Mr. Hampton: It's to the Acting Premier, Speaker. Then we've got the ordinary folks: the nurses who are losing their jobs, the paper mill and sawmill workers who

are losing their jobs and the farmers who are losing their livelihood. What I want to ask is this: Before the election, you said you believed in full disclosure, real-time disclosure. We've been asking, for a couple weeks now, for the names of the 14 insiders who paid \$10,000 a person to have a private dinner with the Premier and the Minister of Finance. Would you tell us finally, please, who were the 14 swanky individuals who could afford \$10,000 a person to have a private dinner with the Premier and the Minister of Finance while you were talking about the greenbelt boundaries?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: The minister responsible for democratic renewal.

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I thank the member for his question. Of course, the names of everybody who donated to the Ontario Liberal Party, to the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party will be disclosed. They can be disclosed in either one of two ways: They can be disclosed under the old laws, where a disclosure takes place by parties once a year, or they can be disclosed under the new system, where disclosure takes place not every 365 days but every five days. If we could get the New Democratic Party to just agree and provide unanimous consent to pass this bill, we could have that information in the hands of Ontarians right now.

So, Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent for the order of second and third readings of Bill 176, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We have a motion asking for unanimous consent. Do we have consent? No.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Let's all settle down. We've got a few more—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Could we all settle down now, please. I'm sure the leader of the third party would like to ask his supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: It's not members over here who have been interrupting me.

The Attorney General mentions his real-time disclosure. Well, it's not real-time disclosure; it's real watered down. This is what the Windsor Star has to say about it: "The toothless pap introduced Monday by Attorney General Michael Bryant is nothing more than a PR exercise and a farcical half-measure." The Globe and Mail's Murray Campbell says: "Imagine myriad numbered companies making \$5,600 gifts and you get an idea of the magnitude of donations that could be hidden." Democracy Watch's Duff Conacher says: "Given their record of broken promises, no one should hold their breath waiting for the Ontario Liberals to take effective action to reduce the influence of money in Ontario politics."

Simple question, Attorney General: Who were the 14 developers who paid \$10,000 a person to have private access to the Premier and the Minister of Finance while the greenbelt boundaries were being established?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: I say to the member, as he knows, it works like this: We provide disclosure to Elections Ontario. Right now, under the current law, Elections Ontario has no authority to release that information; not for another year. But if we can get this bill passed, Elections Ontario can have this out in five days—not 365 days, but five days. I say to you that if you ask the average Ontarian whether or not transparency finds itself out of five days or 365 days, they will say, "Let's go with the McGuinty government's real-time disclosure." So I say to the leader of the NDP, it's time for real-time disclosure right now.

Mr. Hampton: Here's the McGuinty government's real-time disclosure: All those 10 individuals have to do is write cheques for \$1,500 to the Minister of Finance's riding association or any other Liberal riding association, and there is no real-time disclosure. That's the McGuinty government's version of real-time disclosure.

But the issue is this: At the very time that the greenbelt boundaries were being established, 14 very wealthy individuals, mostly developers, paid \$10,000 a person to have private access to the Premier at the very time that you were deciding the greenbelt boundaries. Can you tell us, please, Acting Premier—you're the one who guaranteed real-time disclosure, and this is real time; this is question period—who are the 14 individuals who paid all that money just to have the private ear of the Premier about where the greenbelt boundaries should be established?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: I'm very concerned with something the member said in his question. He referred to \$1,500 donations to riding associations. As the member knows, it would be contrary to the laws of Ontario if anybody contributed \$1,500 to the riding association. I should hope that there are no \$1,500 contributions to the New Democratic Party's riding associations going on right now. I think what the NDP is getting at is that they want to pretend to seek real-time disclosure but they're not willing to get this bill passed right now so that we can get real-time disclosure in real time.

So let me see if I can do this just one more time, Speaker. I'm going to seek unanimous consent that we have the order of second and third readings of Bill 176, that the question be immediately put without further debate or amendment, and that we can get this real-time disclosure in real time.

The Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm trying to move to a new question.

New question, the leader of the official opposition.

GREENBELT

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition): As someone who resigned from cabinet on the principle

of ministerial responsibility, I've never felt comfortable calling for resignations. But less than three years ago, the now Minister of Municipal Affairs felt a minor dispute over numbers justified a ministerial resignation. Now you're a minister, and the chickens have come home to roost. Was this ethical standard that you demanded of others less than three short years ago as phony as your "I did not meet with developers" pledge on TVO, or will you do the right thing, admit your greenbelt boundary process was tainted by developer money and abide by ministerial standards that you professed to believe in 2002?

1440

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): I can only, once again, repeat that I am very proud of the process that we took with respect to determining the greenbelt boundaries. I am proud of the process that we took, of the public consultation that took place, of the number of people who made submissions both to the Greenbelt Task Force and later on to the ministry-led consultation that came before the legislative committee, which had four days of hearings. I'm very, very proud of that process.

Not everybody who came before the committee and before the various task forces and before the consultation process got what they wanted. But we listened to people. We used the best science that was available from the Ministry of Natural Resources, dealing basically with the watershed, the basis that the Minister of Natural Resources uses to determine what should be protected from a sensitive environmental viewpoint.

We are proud of that process, and we are very, very proud of the greenbelt that has been established for many, many generations to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): The minister referenced science that still is missing; it's not public after six days of repeated and heated questioning here in the Legislature. You have not brought forward a single beaker of science to justify any exemption, particularly the \$15-million windfall for the developer.

And sadly, farmers who could not get any appeal, farmers who were not shown any science, farmers who weren't even notified that their land was in the greenbelt, have given up. Six of those farmers would like to pass on to you \$10,000 cheques so at least they'll have an opportunity to make their point to the minister and to Premier McGuinty. It shouldn't be that way, but that's what farmers have concluded.

Minister, you've blown it: You've taken a good idea—to preserve green space—and you've blown it big time. There are growing and widespread suspicions that developers can buy their way out of the greenbelt. Minister, you have no choice. Will you do the right thing? Will you step aside? Will you resign until this matter is cleared up?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I refer the question with respect to the science that was used to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): For the last month, we have handed the science over to the opposition party.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member from Nepean–Carleton.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: Yes, we did. You have the Natural Heritage Reference Manual that was developed over 15 years with all of the stakeholders. This was developed under your government in 1999, and that is the science we developed. The same science we used for the Oak Ridges moraine we also used when it came to the greenbelt.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Last warning, member from Nepean–Carleton: Stop interrupting the minister answering.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: This references all the guidelines of how the greenbelt was determined, how the boundary refinement techniques were done. We again will offer you a full hearing—

The Speaker: Order. I'm going to ask the leader of the third party, is that the book that I made reference to in regard to a prop?

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Yes, Speaker, I'm reading a book. Do you object to my reading a book?

The Speaker: I will say this again: I don't object to a member reading, but to holding up the book after I ruled that it is a prop in itself. I would rather you not display it in any other way. You know that. You are one of the members I respect in this House, and I know that you are quite aware of the rules of this House. The respectability of this House has really deteriorated lately. I hope that you would somehow respect the order that I have given. If you're going to read, I'd rather you lower it and not display it.

Mr. Runciman: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I think all of us in this House want to respect the rulings of the Chair, but we all want to be treated in an equal manner. The minister was holding up a document. If we do it on this side of the House, you rule us out of order, so we ask for equal treatment, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The member from Nepean–Carleton, I'm going to name you. I warned you on two occasions about rapping on the desk, and I name you now.

Mr. Baird was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: I just want to comment on the leader of the official opposition. I try to be fair, and I hope it is in regard to respect for this House. I was focusing on one aspect of the thing. The member who was reading from that was responding to his question. I did not rule that in any way as a prop.

New question.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Acting Premier. In the gallery with us today,

and outside the Legislature today, there are some 80 people from the region of Kapuskasing, Hearst and Opatatika. They're upset with your government's decision to allow Tembec to shut down the sawmill in Opatatika—it's their business decision. We don't take objection to that—it's their decision—but we're upset with your Minister of Natural Resources' decision to say that the wood belongs to Tembec and that they can take it off to a supermill down the road if they want. We're here today to ask you one simple question: Will you overturn the decision of your minister and have the minister do what's right and ensure that the wood that's in the forest stays tied to that community, so that this community can organize itself and find somebody else who is prepared to run a sawmill in Opatatika, and other communities so we can preserve the jobs in those communities?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I'll refer that to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): To answer the question of the honourable member from the other side, as the member knows, the way the licence was structured under the NDP government, the licence was granted to Spruce Falls, which had two plants at the time. Tembec purchased that company and has since decided to run one operation and not two. There was no requirement to make any changes at all. They are the original licence holder, they retain that licence today, and they've decided to move that wood into one operation and not two. There are no changes referred to me.

Mr. Bisson: Minister, you know as well as I do that there's a minister's directive on the licence, and you have the authority as Minister of Natural Resources to do the right thing. Your decision to allow Tembec to cut and run with the timber basically puts Opatatika high and dry. It's the beginning of the end for a number of small communities across northeastern and northwestern Ontario. We're saying: Do the right thing. The former Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Ouellette, said no to Tembec when it came to Kirkland Lake, our government said no when it came to other communities, and we're saying to you, you're in the big chair now. You drive the limo. Say no to the big companies. Stand with the communities so that they can organize their lives and assure themselves of a future in northern Ontario when it comes to the lumber industry.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: What I'm going to say to the member is the harsh reality of what's happening in the forest industry: that the very small mills are not going to survive. What's going to happen is that the companies are going to walk away from all of them unless they have the opportunity to consolidate their operations and make investments in technology so that we can have a sustainable forest industry, in the meantime supplementing that with value-added operations in our communities so that we can grow our jobs in forestry. But we have to have competitive plants to compete with the world market, because we have a lot of competitors right across this country, as we do across this world.

CHILD ADVOCATE

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and it's re the child advocate. Minister, yesterday you made an announcement of your intention to appoint a new independent office of youth and child advocacy. It is my understanding we already have an office of youth and child advocacy for children in the justice system, children we're responsible for in other ways, around disabilities or some other needs. I was wondering what those changes are that you are planning. Can you give us some sort of time frame when you're planning to make those changes?

1450

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I thank the honourable member for her question and for her commitment to children in this province and in her riding. We are delivering on a key commitment to make the child advocate truly independent. My ministry is currently working on legislation that I hope to introduce this spring. If passed, our proposed changes would mean the advocate would be chosen by an all-party committee, would report directly to the Legislature, would submit an annual report to the Legislature and would have the flexibility to issue special reports at their discretion. We believe that the advocate must be independent for that person to effectively carry out their responsibilities, without political influence.

Mrs. Cansfield: Minister, it sounds, actually, like you're going to protect the child advocate as much as you're going to protect the children. That's terrific to hear because, as I recall, the treatment by the previous government around child advocacy wasn't as great as it could have been. We need to know how the changes differ, when they will occur and how you're going to deal with the relationship between the job of advocacy and this House.

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: I thank the honourable member for her supplementary. The reason we needed to change is that in the past, political influence stopped the advocate from truly advocating for children and youth in this province. Judy Finlay, who has worked tirelessly, not only advocating for children and youth but also helping them along with advocating for themselves, was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, "I feel my job is at risk ... the viability of the office as an independent voice for children in this province is at risk." She said this during the former government's stay in office.

We took this very seriously as opposition, and my colleague the now Minister of the Environment, being the critic at the time, fought very hard, along with Judy Finlay. This got on our platform and I'm very pleased that we announced yesterday that we're going to keep this commitment.

The advocate must truly be free of political influence, must be independent and must have the same powers as the Auditor General and the Ombudsman. With this new independence, the advocate would be better able to

advocate for our youngest citizens. We hope that with respect to any future government, this important role will never be muzzled again. Our children deserve no less.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Last week we heard from thousands of farmers looking for help, answers and results. Today we're hearing from another large group of farmers looking for the same things. Yesterday you said you considered today's group a fringe group, but when my colleagues and I went out this morning visiting with the farmers, I saw many of the same faces I saw last week. Minister, these are real people, rural people, looking for answers to their concerns. Farmers couldn't get an answer last week, and today farmers couldn't even get you to listen. You left town last week without an answer to our questions, and you weren't out on the lawn today. So again, I ask you: Where is your support? When is the support coming for our farmers in our rural communities?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): That support has been there for our farmers since this government took office on October 23, 2003. Unlike the previous government, who slashed and burned over \$125 million out of the base operating budget of this ministry, we are not doing that. We are working with agricultural organizations. We listen to what the farmers have to say. Just yesterday, we heard the concerns raised over permits to take water. The Minister of the Environment announced that exemptions will be put in place for farmers with the permits to take water.

Perhaps the member can stand up in his supplementary and tell us very clearly where he stands and where his party stands in the recognition of the Lanark Landowners, because my understanding is that his leader, John Tory, has told Ron Bonnett that they don't support the Lanark Landowners' Association. So perhaps the question can be answered for all—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Supplementary.

Mr. Hardeman: This isn't about which organization I support; this is about supporting our agricultural community. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food just took a 20% cut to the overall budget. You cut support programs for the farmers by \$50 million. Minister, it's quite obvious that your government has no plan for our farmers. They would much rather have a fancy place to stay at the casino than have a stable and reliable food source from our Ontario farmers.

Minister, where are the results? Where is the promised money for our tobacco farmers? How are farmers going to get their seed in the ground? Do farmers have to pay \$10,000 to talk to the Premier? They can't afford it. They need your help, Minister, in getting the support they need. I ask you again, is this just another Liberal broken promise: No money for the tobacco farmers, no money for support programs, pay \$10,000 and the Premier will

listen? Or are you going to talk to the Premier for them, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Peters: Unlike previous Premiers, our Premier does talk to farmers. Our Premier met with those farmers on February 22. As well, we have been there supporting farmers. We've moved forward on \$94 million in transition through the market revenue program. We've provided over \$138 million in support to the beef industry. Because we believe in family farms and we want farms to continue, we've exempted land transfer tax on family-to-family farm sales—a very important thing. We've moved forward, as well—unlike your government, which was prepared to tax maple syrup operations as industrial operations. We recognize that a maple syrup operation is an agricultural operation. We're going to continue to work with the agricultural organizations because this is the second-largest industry and this is an industry we want to survive and thrive into the future.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. In the gallery today are Paulette and Eric Buenaflor. They're here to advocate on behalf of their son Mark, who has autism. Mark was diagnosed with autism October 9, 2003, and later that day he was put on a waiting list for IBI therapy at Toronto Preschool Autism Service. He was finally assessed by TPAS on December 2, 2004, and he was deemed eligible for IBI on December 17. He needs 25 hours of IBI per week, but Mark still hasn't started his treatment. He turns six on April 27. If he doesn't start treatment soon, he's going to be another victim of your government's discrimination against autistic children, age six. Minister, what are you going to do to ensure that Mark starts his IBI before he turns six?

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I thank the honourable member for her question and for her passion and caring on this issue, and I welcome the parents to the gallery. We inherited this file. We are doing our very best to hire therapists quickly. We hired over 102 new therapists as of February 4. We have decreased the waiting lists. We do understand that even one child on a waiting list is one child too many. We are working as hard as we can. We have had an influx of \$10 million for the under-six program itself and \$30 million for the school-based program.

Ms. Martel: Minister, I asked specifically what you are doing to ensure that Mark gets IBI before he turns six, which is on April 27.

Interjection.

Ms. Martel: You see, these parents wouldn't have to be here today, I say to the Minister of Economic Development, if your government had done what you promised to do during the election. Let me remind you what your Premier had to say during the election: "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory.

The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six.”

The McGuinty Liberals are discriminating against autistic children over the age of six just as aggressively as the Conservatives did before them. Mark has been on a waiting list for 17 months today. He is qualified for IBI, and if he doesn't get it before April 27, he'll never get it, not one day at all. When are you and your government going to stop discriminating against children like Mark and every other child over the age of six who needs medically necessary IBI?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: I thank the member for her question. I'm tremendously proud of our autism strategy. We have doubled our spending from \$40 million to \$80 million a year. We have put an extra \$10 million for the under-six program and are working as fast as we can to hire new therapists. We have put a school-based program into place and are offering transition coordinators and resource people to help children with autism right through the spectrum of getting diagnosed to finishing high school.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Member for Nickel Belt, please come to order.

1500

IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a question for the Minister of Finance on the immigrant investor program. As you know, the immigrant investor program for Canada is divided into two streams. One stream is for Quebec, and the other stream is for the rest of Canada. I want to tell you quickly how these streams have been skewed over the years. Quebec, in this respect, in 2002 was getting \$350 million; the rest of Canada was \$70 million. In 2003 the federal program was getting \$32 million and the Quebec program was getting \$470 million. When we are looking at 1999 to 2004, and we're looking at all these figures, what do we see? We see that Ontario was getting about \$100 million, whereas Quebec was getting \$1.9 billion. I know—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Is that the question? Minister of Finance.

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): My friend from Parkdale points out yet another of the anomalies between what the people of Ontario contribute to the federation and what we get back. There has been a great deal of discussion about the anomalies in the area of immigration. We are certainly not complaining about the value that the province of Quebec gets from the federal government in terms of support for immigration. Our argument is, and will continue to be, that the vast majority of immigrants who come to Canada—whether they are in the investor class or, like most of the immigrants, just hard-working people who want to start a new life—come to this great province. What we've been saying for quite some time is that it's high time we had an immigration agreement with the federal government

that recognizes the fact that most immigrants are coming to Ontario, and that Ontario needs the preponderance of support.

Interjections.

Mr. Ruprecht: I don't know why the opposition is shouting us down when this is a deal that we're going to sign. The very sad fact is that immigrants deposit \$400,000 in Quebec, and out of this \$400,000, many of these immigrants then suddenly decide to get a condo there and move to Ontario. Just think about that. Just to get the agreement straight, if immigrants would deposit this kind of money in Ontario in programs designed specifically to further our economy, think what benefit that would mean to us. Let me simply ask the minister this question—I know we're lucky to have him as Minister of Finance, by the way. Minister, I want to ask you right now: What are you going to do in terms of this deal? Are you going to push this with the federal government, or are we going to continue with this kind of skewed situation?

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: I should point out that my colleague from Parkdale is one of the members of this house, among all three parties, who has dedicated his life to helping immigrants settle in this province and this city. He's one of the great champions. I hope to replicate that kind of championship style.

We need to have a new agreement. We're already making some advances on this so-called immigrant investor program, so that we're attracting more of that group of immigrants to the province. But the real work has to be done with the national government, and the real work has to be in the form of an agreement with the federal Minister of Immigration, Mr. Volpe, a good friend and a good colleague. It has to be with the government, so that sooner rather than later we have an immigration agreement with the federal government that reflects immigrants' contribution to this great province and the country.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): To the Minister of Agriculture: As you now know, there are many groups standing shoulder to shoulder, standing united out there today, as well as last Wednesday. Minister, where were you today? Your absence speaks volumes to your tactic to divide and conquer. This is unprofessional. This is disrespectful, coming from a minister of the crown. Answer this question, please—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Minister of Health, come to order.

Mr. Barrett: My question, Minister: Why is it that you and your government insist on playing favourites and pitting one farm group against another farm group, one rural organization against another organization, one crop against another crop? Why would you insist on divide and conquer?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):

Talk about pitting farm group against farm group. I'd like to know what Her Majesty's loyal opposition is doing when you read in Hansard yesterday of the disrespectful steps that this group took in posting a picture of a dead deer, of the Minister of the Environment. The member from Nepean–Carleton made it very clear yesterday: "On behalf of the official opposition, I want to put on the record that we dissociate ourselves from those things." So who's trying to divide and conquer right now?

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture does not support what's happening today. We have not heard from other groups of their support for today. John Tory told the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture that they want to work with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We're going to continue to work with general farm organizations. My question is, who is trying to divide and conquer? Quite honestly, I believe it's the Conservative Party. The Conservative Party is trying to divide farmers in this province by standing up and endorsing rallies like those that are taking place today. That's very shameful.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions is over.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to allow my friend Michael Prue to go and sign the deal with the federal government to get us into an immigration agreement.

The Speaker: Do we have that unanimous consent? I heard a no.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget" broke "the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by 'one penny' on 'working families'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes; and

"Whereas any and all increases in OHIP premiums must go into OHIP, not into a consolidated general revenue fund;

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

"To ensure that all of the McGuinty government's tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum."

I've signed my name to that.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I have some petitions from a group of five high school student bodies from Ottawa in support of a smoke-free Ontario. Their petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke is the number one preventable killer in Ontario today, and there is overwhelming evidence that retail displays of tobacco products" called power walls "in plain view of children and adults increase the use of tobacco; we have collected 324 postcards signed by persons from our school and community supporting a smoke-free Ontario in 2005 and banning the use of power walls to promote tobacco use.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to make all public places and workplaces smoke-free and to ban the use of power walls. The city of Ottawa has been smoke-free since August 2001. All of Ontario deserves clean air."

I sign my name to this petition.

1510

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many volunteer fire departments in Ontario are strengthened by the service of two-hatters, firefighters who work as professional, full-time firefighters and also serve as volunteer firefighters in their free time and in their home communities; and

"Whereas two-hatter firefighters are now being forced against their will by the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association to resign their positions as volunteer firefighters, ambulance paramedics or police auxiliary members, under the threat of being charged by their union and losing their full-time jobs; and

"Whereas Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, British Columbia and jurisdictions throughout the United States have legislation to protect the right of firefighters to serve as volunteers, while Ontario's inexplicable lack of adequate labour legislation leaves them open to the threat of intimidation and dismissal for providing a noble community service;

"Whereas Bill 52, the Volunteer Firefighters Employment Protection Act, which has been introduced in the Legislature, will uphold the right of firefighters to volunteer and solve this problem concerning public safety in Ontario;

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

"That the provincial government express public support for Bill 52 and pass it into law, or introduce similar legislation that protects the right of firefighters to volunteer in their home communities on their own free time."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank fire chief Dave Carruthers from the Clearview fire department for circulating this petition and sending it to me, and I certainly agree with it.

LOI CONTRE LE TABAGISME

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): J'ai une pétition qui provient des étudiants de l'école secondaire Gisèle-Lalonde d'Orléans à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que le tabagisme et l'exposition à la fumée secondaire représente aujourd'hui la principale cause évitable de décès en Ontario, et que les preuves accablantes révèlent que la publicité au point de vente de produits de tabac, surtout l'étalage mural à grande visibilité bien en vue des enfants et des adultes, favorise la consommation de tabac;

« Nous avons recueilli à notre école et au sein de notre collectivité 624 cartes postales demandant que l'Ontario soit déclaré sans fumée en 2005, et que l'utilisation des étalages muraux à grande visibilité soit interdite pour la promotion du tabac.

« Les soussignés demandent que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario appuie la loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée afin d'interdire l'usage du tabac dans les endroits publics et les lieux de travail, et de bannir l'utilisation des étalages muraux à grande visibilité.

« La ville d'Ottawa s'est déclarée ville sans fumée depuis le mois d'août 2001. Tous les résidents de l'Ontario ont droit à l'air pur. »

J'y ajoute ma signature avec plaisir.

Mr. Mike Colle (Eglinton–Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, this is the last day for the pages, is it not? I just wonder.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Yes. Could I ask you to do that at the end of petitions.

Mr. Colle: We all want to thank them for their great work. That's all I'm saying.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): This petition is entitled "Protect our Farmers." We garnered just today about 500 signatures outside.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen's Park due to the lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

"Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis, and will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen's Park on March 9;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deal with the serious issue of farm income, as brought forward by the Rural Revolution's resolutions to respect property and prosperity, as follows:

"Federal and provincial governments have created a bureaucratic environment that legalizes the theft of

millions of dollars for rural business and farm income. All money found to be removed from rural landowners, farmers and businesses shall be returned."

I affix my signature.

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): I present this petition on behalf of the member for Kingston and the Islands.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Child Development Centre, Kingston serves a population of 700 children with disabilities;

"Whereas the McGuinty government stated in its 2004 budget, 'Children's treatment centres help parents obtain and coordinate a range of services for children with disabilities;'

"Whereas the \$24-million capital investment over four years outlined in this budget represents capital expenses and not the operating budget, and along with a small 3% increase, these monies did not assist with the shortfall at the Child Development Centre in Kingston;

"Whereas this shortfall has resulted in cuts to staff positions, particularly psychology, and cutbacks in services and programming at the Child Development Centre, Kingston. This is a much-needed and much-used facility;

"Whereas the Child Development Centre is the only agency whose mandate includes services for children with physical disabilities. Problems of accessibility and lack of specialized knowledge about the various conditions mean that children with physical disabilities cannot access services elsewhere in the community;

"Whereas psychology is a necessary service for children with physical disabilities and their families. Children with physical disabilities are more likely than the general population to have learning difficulties and their special needs require adapted assessments by psychologists with specialized expertise;

"Whereas children with physical disabilities require support at all stages of their development as they increase their understanding of their disability to achieve optimal potential as active, contributing members of society;

"Whereas services for this group are not available elsewhere in the community. These services must be maintained;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario government to reconsider its funding formula for this unique setting. We propose that the McGuinty government immediately approve a proposal to provide sufficient annualized funding for the children's treatment centre in Kingston, using some of the federal \$9-billion contribution to support this vulnerable group of young people who represent our future."

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I have a petition here that relates to the protection of individual rights. It

was presented today to the Legislature by members of the Rural Revolution and refers to a number of resolutions presented by them. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen’s Park due to a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis due to lost property rights and crushing regulatory burden on rural Ontarians and will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen’s Park on March 9;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address the issue of respecting property rights as in the Rural Revolution’s resolutions to respect property and prosperity as follows:

“Resolution 1: The right to own, use, enjoy, and the opportunity to earn a living from private property is the basis of freedom and democracy.

“Resolution 2: Private property shall not be rezoned, redesignated or reclassified in any manner that limits the natural and private use of property without fair and timely compensation.

“Resolution 7: The proposed greenbelt legislation shall be amended to respect property rights as mentioned in resolutions 1 and 2.

“Resolution 11: All entry on to private lands by government officials shall only be conducted with the informed consent of the property owner or under the authority of a search warrant.”

I affix my signature.

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, and especially to the minister of infrastructure services. It reads as follows:

“Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel in an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West,” just west of Old Weston Road, “making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; and

“Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge; and

“Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it’s about 50 metres long). It’s dark and slopes on both east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man’s land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes.);

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Ave. West so that trains will pass under” the St. Clair Avenue West tunnel, “thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its

high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow.”

Since I agree with this 100%, I sign it.

1520

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it’s being presented on behalf of a lot of people around the front lawn of Queen’s Park today.

“Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers and rural Ontarians have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen’s Park due to a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government; and

“Whereas the Rural Revolution believes that rural Ontario is in crisis and they will be demonstrating their resolve and determination at Queen’s Park on March 9,” which of course is today;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deal with the serious issue of farm income, as brought forward by the Rural Revolution resolutions to respect property and prosperity as follows:

“Federal and provincial governments have created a bureaucratic environment that legalizes the theft of millions of dollars for rural businesses and farm income. All money found to be removed from rural landowners, farmers and businesses shall be returned.”

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I have a petition signed by a number of people from the area of Huronia. It reads as follows:

“Save Huronia Regional Centre, Home to People with Developmental Disabilities!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—that’s us.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre”—can you imagine that?—“home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and economies of the local communities;

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services ...

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental

disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence'...."

I sign that petition.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I present this petition to the Legislative of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial government delisted OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services for seniors, the disabled and people with low income; and

"Whereas physiotherapy is an essential service that allows people to maintain independent living, reducing health care costs in the long term;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, demand that the provincial government reinstate OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services for seniors, the disabled and people with low income."

I'm happy to sign this.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): I know folks want to thank the pages. This is their last day in the House. Many of the members who aren't here would have liked to hear this also, but they will be reading Hansard, I'm sure.

Thank you very much for the tremendous service you've done for us here. We wish you all the best.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent for the House to sit for another two weeks and allow these pages to stay with us.

The Speaker: I'll see if we have unanimous consent. I'm hearing a no. I think it came from the pages, too.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent to allow the pages to stay, provided Mr. Bisson stays here for the next two weeks to chaperone.

Interjections: Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: No. It has been a long session.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FILM CLASSIFICATION ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005

SUR LE CLASSEMENT DES FILMS

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 16, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 158, An Act to replace the Theatres Act and to amend other Acts in respect of film / Projet de loi 158, Loi remplaçant la Loi sur les cinémas et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les films.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The member for Timmins-James Bay had some more time on this.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Before I was so rudely interrupted by the adjournment of the House, I was having an opportunity with this particular bill, if you remember, to talk about the whole issue of censorship and about how I understand that, as a society, there are certain issues we want to make sure we have some controls for when it comes to distributing films of different types in movie theatres and on video shelves across the province. What I was saying was that I agree, to an extent, that we have to have a rating system so that parents or individuals themselves are able to make sound decisions about what they're going to view and what they're going to rent when it comes to movies or books or whatever—movies, I should say, in this particular case.

However, I have some reservations around the issue of censorship, because I've never been a big fan of censorship. I was a bit aghast today to see that we have censorship going on here in the House around what books we can read, but that's a debate for another day. I will just say that in a democratic society such as ours and others, one of the basic things we agree with is that individuals have the right to choose, and that's the key word here, what they want to read or view.

I'm not into some of the books and movies that some people purport to enjoy. That's not my thing. I like to watch good documentaries. I love *The West Wing*; I just bought the third season. I bought *24*; I'm somewhat disappointed after the first season, but that's another story. The point is that I believe it's up to individuals to choose what they want to be entertained by when it comes to watching movies.

Obviously, there are certain things where we should, I guess to a certain extent, go beyond rating, but even then it's pretty tough, because there are certain types of movies we would not want going in to general distribution in Ontario. I'm sure that's where the government is going when they talk about some forms of censorship in this bill. But I want to put it on the record that if at one point a court has to make a decision as to what the legislators had in mind when they were passing this bill, I want it to be clear that, as New Democrats, we are not in favour of censorship in almost all forms. We believe censorship is a bad approach that governments sometimes take in a democratic society like ours. Censorship begins at home. You decide yourself as a parent what you think your children should be viewing or reading or watching. You decide as an individual what you want to look at.

One of the things I think we have a responsibility for, however, as a society, is to properly label or rate those movies or whatever forms of entertainment, so that we can make a more informed choice as a society and as individuals within that society. Insofar as the government was going that way, I guess I wouldn't have a lot of difficulty with the bill, but as I read the bill—I'm looking forward to its time in committee because I think we need to clarify this point—there are sections of this bill that speak to censorship, which I want to believe are very

limited, because I believe there are very limited and few occasions where censorship should be allowed.

For example, in this House, I believe that people should be allowed to read books and should be allowed to read the books they believe in, as we do outside in this society, and I'm sure you share that view with me. I just say to the government across the way, certainly that's the kind of tradition that we're used to in democracy, that's what democracy stands for, and we need to be very careful as we go down that path.

Revamping the rating system makes some sense. The work the Ontario Film Review Board does is important, but censorship? That's a place I'm just not prepared to go.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to speak a little bit about Bill 158. The member opposite makes some good points and suggestions. The concerns he raises are legitimate in terms of what censorship could or could not do. I'd like him to know that, as a former educator—I'm actually still on leave—and as a principal, we set up several programs to educate parents about what was going on in some of the records, the albums, the CDs, the movies, the videos. We tried to set that up as an educational tool, to ensure that parents were actually getting the scoop, because as we know and as you alluded to, the parents were not aware of some of the things that were going on in some of these things.

In my constituency role, I've had several parents bring me CDs and different types of materials that were available to them. They could go and rent these things and get access to them very easily. One of the things I brought to the minister's attention was the concern some of the parents have with regard to the accessibility of these particular materials. Even though they were voluntarily rated, they were still being sold over the counter by very young attendants, who may or may not have been told by their managers, "It doesn't matter how old the kid is; if they come to buy that item, you sell it to them."

1530

That's not quite what we're talking about here in terms of the bill, but these are the types of issues that I know he's talking about when he asks, "Do we want to go down the road of censorship?" I think we want to make sure that people are educated about what exactly is happening, what these types of materials are. Do I want to sit back and say, "These are the only things you can do," or "Those things you can't do"? I don't want to be the one to do that.

I make it very clear that I think we should do more educating. It's an opportunity for us to engage in that conversation about how parents should be made aware of the types of things they're listening to, they're watching and they're exposed to. That's for the sake of our children. As adults, we know what doesn't work, and that is trying to get into the bedrooms of the nation.

I'd like to thank the member for his concerns.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I'm very pleased to make some comments on the speech by my colleague the member for Timmins—James Bay. I have to

say that I agree with a great deal of what he had to say in his comments, not only this afternoon but when he first spoke in debate on Bill 158. I had the fortune of being here as well when our critic gave his leadoff speech on this particular bill.

It's interesting to reflect on the timing of this bill coming forward. The government is up against the wall in regard to having to come forward with some kind of legislation, because the existing legislation was struck down by the courts. In fact, my understanding is, the clock started to tick on April 30, 2004. So we can see that the government's really in a big hurry to get this happening and to get it passed, and I can understand why: because they waited until the last minute.

Not only did they wait until the last minute, but it looks like they scrambled to put together a bill that, from what I understand from reading it, getting the analysis of our staff and understanding what our critic is saying on this particular bill, recreates the very bill that got struck down by the courts. So it behooves the question: What the heck are they doing over there? Holy smokes, they're in a rush to get this through. But the very bottom line is that what they've put forward in Bill 158 still does not address the sections of the previous act that were unconstitutional.

It's extremely frustrating for those of us on this side of the House who would rather support housekeeping-type bills like this and get them through the Legislature. Instead, the government decided not to bother doing the right thing and doing their homework, and now this has to go through committee and all kinds of processes. Why? Because the government and the minister didn't bother to use all the resources available to them to put together a bill that's succinct and addresses the problem that got struck down in the first place. I look forward to debating it more tonight.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

There are two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Bisson: If there are four minutes for questions and comments and two minutes for response, I'll take it all.

Just in reverse order, the member for Hamilton East makes a very good point, and that is, one of the reasons I believe this bill has to be referred back to committee is that if you look at the decision by the court, some of the very things the court ruled as unconstitutional in the old bill, the existing bill, are still found in this bill. So we scratch our heads and go, "Hang on a second; we're going through this whole process. Why? So that we can go back to court yet again, be challenged yet again, lose yet again and have to bring another piece of legislation?" We need to make sure we get this right. We understand the courts have made a decision. Let's get it right.

This bill has to go to committee. I wouldn't say it has to have a lot of time. I'm not going to stand here and say, "Let's travel this bill to every community across Ontario." No. I think it has to have some time in committee in order to amend those sections of the bill that are still offensive to the decision of the court.

To the chief government whip: Yes, I hear what you're saying, and I think education is really the best way to go. Sometimes that's frustrating, because people sometimes don't pay attention to ratings when it comes to movies or books or whatever, and sometimes parents don't listen to the advice given by schools and others when it comes to the type of material that's in the hands of our young people. So how you deal with that becomes a very tough issue within a democratic society like ours. I'm with the member: I don't want to be in a position as a legislator, and I know he don't—and that's good English, by the way: "He don't." I'm doing that for a friend of mine who always gets aggravated when I use that kind of English, and just in case you're watching, I did it again. I only say, I agree with him. This is not something we, as legislators, want to do. Free speech is something that's basic to democracy, and we need to respect that.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): It's a pleasure to get up and speak, not so much to this bill, but to the principle of the bill: censorship, classification and having people able to put forward the type of material they wish to put forward, as they see fit.

One of the things I found interesting, apart from this bill—obviously, it's a government bill and it seems to be the type of action that the government has been taking on a regular basis. But it was somewhat of a problem today when we had a whole group of farmers in front of the Legislature trying to get their message out. It wasn't in film format, but it very well could have been. It could have been taped and played for, I suppose, "How to get the ear of your government." The two choices, of course, would be the Liberal way, \$10,000 to talk to the Premier, or make a film and then see if it would fit this classification and whether you could show it on TV.

What's more, I just wanted to point out that the people who were demonstrating out front today had a number of things that they wanted the government to hear. Since they haven't got the film made, they wanted to come here to Queen's Park and speak to the government. The Premier and the Minister of Agriculture decided that they were not well-enough organized, they did not have the sanction of the government as a standing group that represents the agriculture community. I went out to see. Every one of them I spoke to who was talking about the problems in rural Ontario and the agriculture problems was a farmer. They were the same farmers who were there a week ago. But this government has decided that they weren't going to listen to them.

They wanted to be heard anyway, so they asked one of the opposition members—and, of course, this is the job of the Queen's loyal opposition—to bring forward a message that they don't believe is being heard by the government. That should be for the opposition to bring that forward. But because of the classification and the approach that we have in this House, when our member Mr. Barrett from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant got up to ask for unanimous consent to bring their message to us as legislators and to the government of Ontario, the govern-

ment House leader put on the record that no, he was not going to give unanimous consent for that.

So in order to follow the rules, I wanted to make sure that I tied this to the bill that we are presently debating. Having done that, I think it's a form of classification and restriction on what you can and can't present, in whatever way you like.

For the record and for all those present and those who will in the future read the Hansard, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to read what the good folks on the front lawn wanted to present to this Legislature through my good friend Mr. Barrett. This isn't a situation where the member opposite can rise on a point of order, because I haven't done anything yet, so if you would be so kind as to give me that opportunity. But I think it is an issue that becomes very important for the people I represent and those people who were here and are convinced at this point that the government has turned its back on them. I think they have a right to be heard, so I'm going to read this into the record, for your benefit, Mr. Speaker. It is suggested here that it be tabled in the Legislature and, of course, I wanted to do that verbally because I don't want to secretly bring it in.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The theatre outside earlier this afternoon notwithstanding, the member from Oxford is no longer discussing Bill 158.

The Speaker: So far, he has not said anything that is irrelevant to the bill. I'll hear him first to find out if it's relevant.

1540

Mr. Hardeman: I do want to relate this all back to the fact that we are talking about censorship and classification of our communication system. That's what we saw earlier, and that's what we will continue to see if the member across keeps getting up and suggesting that we're not talking about the right topic.

The first item is the Right of Ownership Act. This is what the people outside were wanting. Again, this deals with what government should be doing, as opposed to how we regulate the film industry, for all communication modes: "The right to own, use, enjoy, and the opportunity to earn a living from private property is the basis of freedom and democracy."

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This is reading a motion on a totally different topic. Right of land ownership has absolutely nothing to do with censorship or film classification.

The Speaker: Just help the House a bit on this, it seems to me that the act is to replace the Theatres Act and to amend other acts in respect of film, and I hope that the member will address his comments in that regard.

Mr. Hardeman: I can assure you that it may take me a little while, but I think it's very important that one uses all the tools available to explain what I think is wrong with what the Minister of Consumer and Business Services is putting forward here, as to how it restricts people's right to communicate and how the government

has done that today without even having had this bill passed. I think the lack of need for this bill is very important in this debate, and that's why I think this becomes very important.

"However, this right does not supersede or allow an individual to cause harm or injury to another. Ownership rights shall not be abridged or usurped without due process of law and shall include full, fair and timely compensation. The federal government shall be requested to amend Canada's Constitution by inclusion"—

Mr. Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Nowhere in Bill 158 is ownership of land discussed. May we please respectfully ask the member for Oxford to discuss Bill 158?

Mr. Hardeman: Speaker, on that same point of order: I would point out that if the member across the aisle would like to read the bill to me, then maybe I could tell that it isn't there or that it is there. I don't know. You're making a point here, but I do believe that we have the right to debate as we see fit to debate. But I notice that we're going to have difficulty. The gentleman—

The Speaker: I would like to remind the member again to stick to the point and to the bill, as stated in the orders of the day. Please stick to the bill.

Mr. Hardeman: I sure would not want to infringe upon the ruling of the Chair. I think it's very important to show respect for the Chair, so I will leave that. It's obvious that the government side does not want to hear from the people who were here today to try and speak to them. The minister wouldn't come out, the Premier wouldn't talk to them, and now the members in this House are not prepared to hear what they had to say.

But I'm sure that the member opposite would not object—and obviously I think it's very important, because it is an important day for agriculture—to reference to what the Minister of Agriculture has to say about freedoms and the right to speak and who's responsible for the problems we have, maybe not just in the film industry but generally across the board, and particularly in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Again, I think that's very important, as our livelihood depends on the food part of that.

Now, the Minister of Agriculture and Food was speaking in London yesterday. Typically, as has been the case with the Minister of Agriculture and Food in the past—Mr. Speaker, I know you're wondering when I'm going to get back to the bill, but I am. I just ask for your indulgence for about 15 minutes, and then I intend to come right back to it.

The Speaker: I would remind the member that he has 11 minutes and 23 seconds. If it takes 15 minutes, it will be outside the scope of the time.

Mr. Hardeman: I think it's very important that, as we relate to agriculture and the importance of it in our society, one of the problems the agricultural community has is the inability to convince or to deal with the general public to understand agriculture. Of course, this is where it comes to film classification, because the best way to communicate in our society, as I found out in two previ-

ous elections, is to make a film. People tend to absorb better when they see it, as opposed to when they just hear it. Just sending out a message or sending out a letter will not get the message out. If you want to get the people of our province to understand agriculture, then to make a film and distribute that will do a very good job.

Of course, in classification, it becomes a big problem as to how you would classify the actual goings-on on a farm and whether that would be—incidentally, a lot of people in this province and some of the members who represent the more urban parts of the province may not realize it, but if you put some of the things that are on a farm in a film, they would not necessarily be very—

Mr. Delaney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Referring again to standing order 23(b)(i), the rural-urban division in Ontario and points of agriculture are covered nowhere in Bill 158. Bill 158's text, for the member from Oxford, is underneath his desk if he wishes to haul it out and read it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): The member from Mississauga West, I've only just sat down, so I've only heard a couple of sentences.

I would remind the member that this is about the censorship bill and would ask you to continue with your speech.

Mr. Hardeman: I'm somewhat taken aback that the member from Mississauga West is so insistent upon the fact that he does not want to hear my debate, and upon that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: We have a motion for adjournment of the debate. Shall the motion carry? I heard some nos.

All those in favour? All those opposed? I think the nays have it. It's not carried.

Go ahead.

Mr. Hardeman: I just want to point out that it's obvious that they do want to hear the debate, so I'll carry on in the same vein. Obviously, if they didn't want to hear the debate, they would have voted in favour of adjourning the debate. So I thank them for that vote of confidence.

The minister was in London speaking to our grain and oilseed producers, talking about the crisis they're in. I read the newspaper report on it, and I found it kind of interesting that after all we've said and all the things the minister has said here in the House about what he was doing for agriculture and what he was doing to look after our farmers in Ontario, when he went to London, and when the farmers asked him—

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It's clear that the honourable member has not read the bill. He's not interested in debating the bill. This is a bill about film classification. I think out of respect for other members who have come to this House prepared to debate this specific piece of legislation—the previous Speaker in the Chair ruled three or four times that the member was not following the rules. I'm a new member here. I ask the honourable member, who has some

experience, to please, in the spirit of co-operation, follow the rules of procedure, and if not, I would ask the Speaker to rule him out and go on to someone who wants to legitimately speak about Bill 158. I think that's the fair thing to do.

The Acting Speaker: The member's point is well taken.

I would ask you to confine yourself to Bill 158 and the subject at hand.

Mr. Hardeman: I think the minister opposite makes a very, very good point, not so much about what I'm saying, but about the bill and censorship and classification. Is the member opposite, a minister of the crown, standing up and thinking that because he doesn't like what I say, he can suggest to the Speaker of this place that he should just take my right to speak away and let someone else speak, because he doesn't believe I'm sticking to the topic that he would like to hear about? The trouble is that the bill the minister has proposed really doesn't lend itself to a quality debate, because it does so little, and it does so much to take away the people's rights in this province. I think I would much sooner speak more about the general trend of what this government is doing and point out to the public and to the people of Ontario that not only this bill but a lot of the other bills the government is putting forward are not where we as a province would like to go.

1550

The member opposite was talking about censoring and so forth, and what the bill does, and the classification of films. But I think it becomes very important that we all recognize that there's a process in this place. We all have to do and say what is important to the people we represent, not only on what you have put forward but on what we think is wrong with what you put forward, in general terms. That's really what I was doing today. I suppose you could side with the government side and suggest that unless people are saying what you want them to say, you should take away their right to say it. I don't believe that's how this system should work and I don't think that I'd be quite prepared to have it approached that way. I don't believe this Speaker would do that.

I do want to say that I think it's important that we speak to the issue that is most important to the people we represent. When I get this opportunity to speak, I am going to do just that.

As far as the other issues, I think what we're really seeing here is that we're talking about censoring—

Interjection.

Mr. Hardeman: No, not censoring; I think the minister takes exception to that word too. So we're talking about classification of films and how they should be classified.

Interjection.

Mr. Hardeman: Now the member says I should talk about a totally different subject.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): Talk about your values. What would you censor?

Mr. Hardeman: I thought the minister said this wasn't about censoring.

Mr. McMeekin: Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Hardeman: It's not what I'm saying, it's what the minister said. My problem here is not with what's in the bill; it's with the government's intent on all these things to take over people's lives. Yes, I want censoring. I want the right type of films before my children. Incidentally, my children have got to the point where they pretty well decide themselves what they're going to see, but I can understand that a lot needs to be done in order to make sure that things aren't on the TV that I don't want my children to see.

But we all know that in the practice of this government, as we debate these bills, the minister is not going to change anything in it depending on what I have to say. So, to be honest, I find it much more important to talk about what I think the people of Ontario need to know about what the government is doing and why they're doing it and, in my opinion, what they're doing wrong. That's why I go back to the industry that was here today—agriculture—and how the government is treating the farmers of our province. It's not just my opinion. Obviously, it's in the paper today.

It's quite clear that the members opposite don't want to hear what I have to say. I'm very sorry to hear that. Again, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Sorry, I didn't hear, but I understand you moved adjournment of the debate. Is that correct?

Mr. Hardeman: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: I would have to rule that out of order. You've already moved it once; you cannot move it again.

Mr. Hardeman: I misspoke. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: A motion to adjourn the House. Shall the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I believe the nays have it. I do not believe, Mr. Barrett, that you're in your seat. I cannot count you.

I'm going to ask again. Everybody is in their seats.

Hon. Mr. Watson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member wasn't in his seat. Another member came in. Clearly there were not five people. We have to go on. Mr. Hardeman has another 30 seconds or so. I think we have to follow the rules. If someone isn't in their seat, it doesn't count. So I would ask—

The Acting Speaker: I have told the member that the other member was walking in. I'm trying to be fair to everyone here in the House. I'm going to ask again if there are five members who are going to stand to this. All right, then, do we have five members?

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1555 to 1625.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Hardeman, the member from Oxford, has moved adjournment of the House.

Would all those in favour please stand and remain standing to be counted.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing while you are counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 5; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker: The motion is lost.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Horwath: It's certainly my pleasure to have the opportunity to make comments on the prior debate. I have to say that this bill is a long time coming. I say that because, quite frankly, I think it was the result of a Supreme Court decision back about a year ago, if not more, that indicated that the government needed to act on a decision in regard to the Glad Day books case. As a result, they needed to update the legislation, the Theatres Act, and in fact had about a year to do so. The time is ticking away, the clock is running down, and here we are at the 11th hour with the government finally bringing this bill forward.

The thing that's problematic about it, quite frankly, is that they have not bothered to take the effort to put the appropriate measures in place to address the very issue that was raised by the judge in regard to this case. It's really disappointing. I have to tell you, quite frankly, that it begs the question, to a new member like myself, as to why the government bothers bringing these things forward if they know very well that in fact they don't address the very problem that they were supposed to address in the drafting of this bill. It's extremely frustrating, and I can't for the life of me figure out with why, when they claim to have such an aggressive agenda and so many things they want to accomplish and so much they want to get done, they bring forward a bill like Bill 158.

Quite frankly, if it were addressing the issues that it was supposed to address, I'm sure that my caucus would be very happy to support it; the problem is, it doesn't. So now it's got to go through the process of committee because, quite frankly, it needs to be cleaned up. It needs some amendments. Notwithstanding all of the resources that are available to the minister, the bottom line is that they put forward a bill that needs to have some serious improvements to it. I actually look forward to the opportunity to bring those improvements forward in my debate, which I'll be bringing to you in the next few minutes. Thank you for this opportunity.

Hon. Mr. Watson: I thank the honourable member for Hamilton East because, while I disagree with many of her premises, she talked about the bill. The member from Oxford—I think I've gotten to know him; he's a nice gentleman, and I appreciate his point of view—unfortunately didn't talk about Bill 158.

Bill 158 is the Film Classification Act. This is not about censorship; it's about film classification, and the censorship powers are limited to adult sex films with obscene content. I'm assuming the honourable member from Oxford is not in support of seeing sex films with adult content that are in breach of the Criminal Code. I

hope that he would be very clear and let individuals know that the breaches of the Criminal Code that are specifically laid out—those are the types of films that will be referred to the police by the Film Review Board. It's very clear. This meets the spirit and the intent of the judge's decision in the Glad Day case.

1630

Bill 158 has been worked on thoroughly by our ministry staff, which I'm very appreciative of, as well as staff and legal counsel from the Attorney General. I would hope that members would support this piece of legislation to allow us to continue the good work that the Film Review Board does with respect to classification. I know my friend the member from Erie knows the good work of the Film Review Board. I'm sure he snuck in from time to time to see a few of those films himself. That's what I was told. I know he enjoyed that aspect of the job very much. I've embarrassed him, and I apologize for that. The fact is that Bill 158 is a good piece of legislation, it's well thought out and I ask for the House's support.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm glad to offer comment on my hard-working colleague the member for Oxford's remarks. I agree with what the member for Oxford was bringing forward. I think there is a sense of frustration in the opposition with respect to some of the priorities the government has set in this particular session. My colleague the Minister of Consumer and Business Services has worked very hard on this legislation. He makes a very adept presentation.

I actually did not, to make sure the record is clear, have a chance to sneak in. I enjoyed working with the board, but never had a chance to see them at work. Although, as a former customs inspector, one of our jobs was to seize material at the border that did not meet with Canadian law. So I think in my time—

Mr. Levac: Where is it?

Mr. Hudak: You put it in a plastic bag, you put it in a vault and it gets destroyed. Some of that stuff you see once and you never want to see it again. So I've done my time in that sort of thing, and I'm still trying to shake off the effects of some of the things that the minister refers to.

I do want to say, with all due respect to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, that it's interesting we began this session—I think on the evening of the first day of this session—debating this bill, and we are ending this session debating this bill. I know it's a priority for the minister, but I wonder if it is a priority for the province of Ontario.

I don't recall, in any of this session, debating health care. Not one health bill, which is probably the top priority of the province, was brought forward to this chamber for debate. The deteriorating finances of the province of Ontario and the government's backing down on financial commitments, adding more and more to the Dalton McGuinty deficit, was not the focus of debate in this chamber in this session.

I wish we had more time for debate on the greenbelt issue and any connections or contributions the Ontario

Liberal Party may have played in the exemption that a developer got in the city of Vaughan. So while this minister was doing a fine job presenting this legislation, I just worry that priorities have been terribly mislaid. I wish also, as municipal affairs critic, that Bill 92, which has not had an hour of debate since its introduction in June 2004, would have come to the table.

Mr. Bisson: To the member from Oxford, I guess a couple of things I wouldn't mind hearing him comment on: One is the issue that the member from Hamilton East raised—I hadn't thought about this, and it's actually a very good point—as you read the court decision, the court decision is very specific about sections of the old act, the existing act, that don't conform with the Charter of Rights, and so therefore the courts have ordered that this old act be amended. That's why we're having this debate today, and that's why we're making the changes.

However, as she correctly points out—I went to my office, I called it up on the Internet, I read the judgment, I had a chance to read the bill again, and it's clear; I think she's right—there are sections of this bill that don't comply with the judge's decision, so—

Hon. Mr. Watson: Where did you do your law degree, Gilles?

Mr. Bisson: I don't pretend that I've got a law degree. But it's clear there's some question of doubt here. I would say to the member from Oxford—his thoughts about making sure that we have some time in committee in order to fix the problems that the minister has created. His law degree is not any better than mine, it looks like. I don't have one, so I don't have to make this argument. I just go for lunch at the law society; that's all I do there. It's great lunches, a wonderful place if you can go.

I just say to the member for Oxford, it would be interesting to take a look at that more specifically, and if the government really feels they are in compliance with the judgment, then they can defend that at committee, we can hear the arguments and move on. At least we can do the job well.

The other issue is, I would like to know what his feelings are vis-à-vis the whole issue of censorship. I agree, there has to be a rating system that makes sense so that consumers can make informed choices. As individuals in society and as parents, we all understand that. But as I read the bill, there is a certain amount of censorship in here, as I see it, and I want to know what his feelings are, because certainly in the New Democratic Party we are not in favour of forms of censorship. I know this is sometimes a tough issue, and sometimes hard on society, but in a democracy you have to allow people to speak their ideas, even though they may be in the minority position.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Oxford has two minutes in which to comment.

Mr. Hardeman: I want to thank my colleagues from Timmins–James Bay, Hamilton East and Erie–Lincoln, and the minister for his kind comments. I want to assure the minister that I believe there is a need for classification and making sure that the films that are in cir-

ulation are indeed the type of things that I think my children and my neighbour's children should be watching. At the same time, I think the point I was trying to make in my presentation was that there are a lot of things that are important that this government is not dealing with as opposed to dealing with this.

I think the member for Erie–Lincoln made the point that this was the first bill we debated when we came back for this special sitting of the Legislature to deal with the matters the government felt were important. It's the last one we're dealing with, but it's not going to be completed before we leave here. So the importance is somewhat diminished by that. If that's how the government feels about this bill, then I think we should have been talking today about the things that are really important to the people I represent. That's why I was having some trouble getting those items before the assembly. Obviously, the government wanted me to talk about this. It's not really in their interest, but it is in the interest of keeping the debate off the other issues that I think are important: to show some leadership in health care and to get rid of some of the waiting lists there, to deal with problems we have in our rural communities.

I'm sure they are looking at some of that, but I would have liked to have some debate and some direction on that so I could tell my farmers that they will be able to plant their crops this spring with some assistance from government. That isn't what came from the minister yesterday; the minister yesterday was talking about "Don't look to me for help, look to the federal government for help." That's not good enough for the farmers. That's why I was trying to bring that up in this debate.

I do appreciate the fact that this bill is required, and I commend the minister for bringing it forward. Obviously it's under his jurisdiction and I'm very happy that he's bringing it forward to improve the classification of films to meet the court challenges. We look forward to going to committee to debate this bill further and get a bill that will serve the needs of the people of Ontario.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Before recognizing the next speaker, I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 132, An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act to increase public safety in relation to dogs, including pit bulls, and to make related amendments to the Animals for Research Act/ Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens pour accroître la sécurité publique relativement aux chiens, y compris les pit-bulls, et apportant des

modifications connexes à la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche.

Bill 163, An Act to amend the City of Ottawa Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la ville d'Ottawa.

Bill 167, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 167, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

Bill 171, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of spousal relationships / Projet de loi 171, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les unions conjugales.

FILM CLASSIFICATION ACT, 2005

(continued)

LOI DE 2005

SUR LE CLASSEMENT DES FILMS

(suite)

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Horwath: It certainly is my pleasure to have the opportunity this afternoon to debate Bill 158. I have to say, first of all, I was listening with bated breath, waiting to hear that Bill 70 had achieved royal assent. I didn't hear that and I'm quite shocked. Here we are months and months after a big, high-profile issue in my own community from the very same minister who has had a couple of bills tonight achieve royal assent and who has this bill now in second reading. Yet, the bill that caused such a kerfuffle and that he was so anxious to get before the Legislature, so anxious to have debated and so concerned about protecting the interests of the public when it came to bad business practices in a particular sector—it became quite an issue in my own community—and he's nowhere to be seen.

1640

I think it's quite ironic that, on the one hand, we have this knee-jerk bill brought forward by the minister, which hasn't even achieved royal assent tonight, that claimed to have all these extra bonuses in terms of protecting the consumer—which it didn't, in fact; it was merely a housekeeping bill, and we all know it; that was raised quite clearly by the media and others—and yet here we are, on the other hand, juxtaposed against that, debating Bill 158, which has been a long time coming, which in fact is really late and should have been here a long time ago.

I hope the government doesn't try to pretend that people like myself and the members of my party, the members of my caucus, are trying to hold up the bill by insisting on scrutiny at committee level. In fact, what we're trying to do is to make sure this bill gets the appropriate scrutiny that is required, because from my understanding of what is in Bill 158 and what it's supposed to be doing, the two don't match. What we have is a bill—not dissimilar from Bill 70—that purports to address an issue and in fact does not do that at all.

I say that because, as has been mentioned in this debate thus far, it's very clear that there was an obligation by this government to undertake some proactive

measures that would modernize or update existing legislation so that it reflected a court ruling that struck down existing legislation. As I mentioned in my opportunities earlier, that was done quite some time ago. My understanding is, the clock started ticking about April 30, which is almost a full year ago, for the government to get this done. Again, this is one of those housekeeping-type measures that could have been brought in and moved forward at any time, but now the government's back is against the wall and this issue needs to be dealt with.

I have to say that, on the one hand, I'm pleased it is finally here, after all this time waiting, but I am a little bit disconcerted because, unfortunately, the opportunity to do the right thing and move this issue through the process in an appropriate and effective way has been missed by the government once again and we're in a situation where we have many concerns about what is before us.

I say that because, interestingly enough, there's a bit of a joke—and I don't know if people have been watching for the whole evening so far—about who's a lawyer and who's not a lawyer and whether we have the capabilities to appropriately criticize this bill with regard to its legal force. As you may know, the critic in the party I'm with, the caucus I'm with, is in fact a lawyer and has had an opportunity to review this. He comes to the conclusion, as a result of extensive consultation with many people in the field, that this bill does not do what it is supposed to do, but it simply rephrases the very pieces of the previous legislation that were inappropriate and struck down in the first place. It's quite frustrating to have to deal with that fact, but nonetheless, that's what we're here for. That's why we have all these sets of eyes in the various caucuses, looking at these pieces of legislation, these bills that are brought forward by the government. It's quite appropriate that we discovered this issue and recognized that clause 2(b) of the charter, which has been identified as what the previous legislation, the Theatres Act, was in contravention of, has also been contravened by this bill, Bill 158, which is purported to address that problem.

I have to say that I did have the opportunity to attend the leadoff speech of our critic, the member from Niagara Centre, Mr. Peter Kormos. He was quite informative in his leadoff speech on this particular issue and I found it very interesting. I have to admit that, when pieces of legislation come forward, I'll read the bill—in this case, Bill 158, An Act to replace the Theatres Act and to amend other Acts in respect of film—and it will refer oftentimes to other pieces of legislation. It's sometimes difficult, particularly as someone who's fairly new, walking through some of these bills and trying to get a context for what these various clauses refer back to in the previous legislation. Nonetheless, it was a good opportunity for me to understand, in broad strokes, the intent of the bill.

As was mentioned by the member from Timmins—James Bay, Mr. Bisson, what this bill was supposed to do, what the judge said the government needed to do, was to withdraw or extract from our legislation, from our

realm of powers, the right to censor material, because that's not something that the charter allows us to do. The government was told, "You go and deal with the fact that your legislation is out of date when it comes to film classification, particularly the Theatres Act, and review that with this judgment as a result of this Glad Day Books case. Deal with your legislation and make it fit the current framework of the charter." That's fine. That's the job that was given to the government about a year ago. Unfortunately, they came back with something that doesn't achieve that task. I have to say, as the member from Timmins-James Bay was saying, it's the issue of censorship.

Again, I'm a parent. I have a son who is 12 years old, and I can tell you, I very much appreciate the ratings system. I appreciate the fact that when I go to a video store with him and he comes to me with a video cover, gives it to me and says, "Mummy, can I rent this one?" I just take one look at it—it has a big M on it, which means "mature"—and I say, "Julian, it has an M on it." "I know, Mummy." "What does that M mean, Julian?" "It means 'mature,' Mummy." I say, "Julian, you're 12 years old. That means that that's not for you. That's for kids who are older than you. In fact, that's for kids who are older than teens. That's for adults. You can't rent that video," or, "You can't rent that movie."

I'm an active parent, quite frankly, and I have to tell you, interestingly enough, that my son, Julian Leonetti—and I hope Julian is watching tonight, but he might not be, and that's OK. He's probably doing his homework, which would be a good thing. As a parent, of course, I have many friends in my own age group who are also parents. In fact, my own sister, Susanne Benvenuti, has two daughters, Kate-Lynn and Sarah. Sarah is just a young one, so these issues don't come up, but Kate-Lynn is two years older than my son. My niece Kate-Lynn is 14 years old. There have been times when my sister and I have talked about the different movies that they've rented that were not rated appropriate for her age group, or were. For example, there's a particular movie that she told me she and her daughter were going to rent and watch, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh, you're going to rent that movie and watch it with your daughter? I don't know if that's appropriate."

There is the rub about who decides what's appropriate for who, and there is the rub around why censorship is inappropriate, because after speaking to my sister a little bit further, we discussed what was in that movie and what was not, what the messages were and what they weren't. We also discussed the fact that they were going to watch it together and talk about some of the issues that were being raised in that movie, and they were going to debrief, if you will. They were going to come up with some discussion. My sister, in fact, was going to use that film as a way of dealing with some very tender issues of a young girl who, at the time, was 13 years old.

There you have it. The bottom line is, when it comes to film classification, certainly that's an important piece of our regime or our structure around how we deal with

films and how we deal with that art form in the province of Ontario. But when it crosses that line to say that we decide in isolation of any other context, whether that context be age, whether that context be religious, cultural, or whether that line be just the fact that somebody is going to watch something with another person or not, a.k.a. a parent and a child, it is not our decision to make; it is the decision of the individual. The kinds of films and the kinds of materials out there that are perhaps offensive to some may not be offensive to others, that are perhaps distressing to some may not be distressing to others.

1650

I know the minister talks about this issue of the Criminal Code. That's the bottom line. The Criminal Code exists, and that's where that kind of material gets dealt with. It doesn't have to get dealt with in a censorship capacity by this province. In fact, if it does get dealt with in a censorship capacity by this province through Bill 158, then, guess what? We're doing exactly what the judge said we're not supposed to do. We are not supposed to be censoring the films. We're not supposed to be censoring. We are supposed to, and are allowed and are able—in fact, it is our responsibility—to classify so that when I go to the video store with my son and he tries to tell me, "This one's OK, Mummy. It's just got blood and guts and violence," and I say, "No, honey, that's not OK"—that's what this whole classification thing is all about. That's appropriate, because it gives parents the opportunity to have the measuring stick, or the guidepost, if you will, that enables them to control or to adjust what their children are dealing with or being exposed to and are spending time with.

It's interesting, and I really got a chuckle in part of this debate—I can't recall, unfortunately, who was making the point. But there was one member who was up talking about—I have to say, and I probably shouldn't because I'm not positive; I'd have to go back in the Hansard—I suspect it was the minister. If I'm not mistaken, there was a lot of fanfare around the fact that a couple of major retailers and video stores, and I'm not going to name them, were in line with the government. They were backing up this initiative, they were going to be right in behind the government, and they were going to make sure that no young people were sold or rented the ratings that were inappropriate for their age. They were right behind the government, saying, "Yes. We agree with this. This is the greatest thing."

That's great, but do you know what? The bottom line is, it's not the big guys who are going to be the ones where kids get stuff they're not supposed to get. I have to say to you, if kids want to get something that they shouldn't have their hands on, if they're going to rent something that's beyond the appropriate rating for them, it's not going to happen at the big guys' store. Right? It's going to happen somewhere else. It's going to happen at a friend's house or at a store that has perhaps not got the rules or codes of conduct and all those kinds of things that the big guys have.

It's not the government's role in censorship that's going to make a difference as to how children access and/or view and/or partake in these various inappropriate things that are produced. It's not the government's role at all. In fact, it is the support system of any human being, whether that be a parent or an older sibling or perhaps, for children who don't happen to have parents, a guardian or other kinds of support systems around those children. Those are the people, quite frankly, who cocoon them or put the cone around them not only in terms of their access to what's appropriate and what's inappropriate, but when they are watching TV at 11 o'clock at night and see some pretty racy things—because who's kidding who; they are there—or when they are in a video store or in the mall or walking downtown and looking at one of those electronic billboards and seeing quite explicit things. Those are the people who are going to have the discussions about dignity, about the value of human beings, about positive language and positive images around sexuality. It's those kinds of things that will affect a person's ability to cope with the kinds of images that are bombarding every airwave and every place where these kinds of things are available.

It's not a matter of government censorship making a difference; it's a matter of the ability of a parent or a close personal contact to help these young people get through the masses of information and pieces of media, whether it's photographic or literature or anything else. It's not a matter of the government's responsibility—not that it's not their responsibility, but it's not their role, it's not their job. In fact, that's exactly what the courts decided, that the whole issue of censorship is not the responsibility of the government; in fact, it's not the role of the government. The problem with Bill 158, as it is before us—my understanding of it as a result of the review that's been done by my critic and by the members of our staff—is that there are pieces of this legislation that still allude to a censorship role that the government has. Quite frankly, at this point, that's totally inappropriate. What we need, in fact, is—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. There are a number of conversations.

Ms. Horwath: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker: I was just trying to calm the place down. It's getting harder and harder to hear you. So please continue.

Ms. Horwath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So there are parts of this legislation that, of course, need to be here that are the responsibility of the government in the realm of classification, in the realm of providing the opportunities for parents and other caregivers to identify and to classify which films and which pieces of media are appropriate for which age level. Certainly, as a parent, that's something that I appreciate and that I think is quite appropriate.

However, if I can mention one of the other things that I've heard some concerns about, in my very few minutes that are left—in fact, the member from Trinity–Spadina,

Mr. Rosario Marchese, mentioned it to me just today—it's that there is apparently a number of small, independent filmmakers who have a certain non-mainstream genre of filmmaking that is, again—and it's not the sex stuff—very specific to their own particular interests. They are concerned that they are required to submit their films, at a cost to be determined, as to whether they need to be classified or not. Again, they feel that that's a hardship in terms of their very difficult circumstances in regard to being able to afford the production of their art.

I would only say that it's not only the big issue as to whether or not censorship is or is not reinforced in Bill 158 or reincarnated in Bill 158 the way it was not supposed to be, but there are also some very particular and specific issues that have been raised with us and members of our caucus around what needs to be going through the rather onerous process of classification and what does not.

I can recall getting a bit of a chuckle from our critic the member from Niagara Centre, in his lead on this particular bill, because he was very tongue-in-cheek, as he often is, talking about whether or not Dora the Explorer and Bob the Builder and SpongeBob SquarePants need to be classified, and in fact, that might be a waste of resources. Funny enough—and we chuckle—because I think a member of my caucus who tends to sit beside me usually actually has some ties that have some of those people on them, particularly SpongeBob SquarePants.

Nonetheless, the bottom line is, are there ways to streamline or in some way reduce the onus on producers of film, independent filmmakers, whose films are not in the risky category, if you will, to find ways, perhaps through a committee process and through their coming to committee and having their say in regard to this legislation, to make sure that they are not inadvertently or inappropriately burdened by this legislation if it can be avoided? If it can't be avoided, fine, but let's have that debate, let's have that discussion, let's have those people in, let's hear what their concerns and opinions are, and let's see if there is a way we can accommodate those concerns, because, quite frankly, the bottom line is that, at the end of the day, I think what we all want to achieve is a piece of legislation that not only addresses the concerns that were raised in the Glad Day Bookshops case, but does it in such a way that meets the requirements of this province and also of the filmmakers of this province to be able to continue to produce their art in a very appropriate and productive way.

1700

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. McMeekin: I'm always pleased to follow my esteemed colleague from Hamilton East, even on those occasions when she may, in her 20-minute ramble, say something, somewhere that I agree with.

I'm old school. I believe in only having the government we need. I believe that. But at the same time, we must insist on all the government we require. That's why we have a Ministry of Consumer and Business Services.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): A great minister.

Mr. McMeekin: A great minister. The fundamental job of the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, as my colleague opposite knows, is to protect consumers. To protect consumers means in large part that consumers need to be informed. On this issue, some people are so narrow-minded that their ears are touching and some are so open-minded that their brains are falling out. The simple truth of the matter is that you don't have to be a lawyer to have standards, you don't have to be a lawyer to have family values—my friend opposite mentioned lawyers—and you don't need to be a lawyer to understand that Kate-Lynn and Sarah may be very fortunate to have a responsible, mature parent who has time to sit down when they watch something and say, “Hey, Kate-Lynn and Sarah, how do you feel about this?” There are a lot of parents out there who don't have that kind of time and have come to government and have said, “Look, we don't all have perfect judgment and government has a role to help us, and to work with retail partners who want to sit down and help us as well.”

That's why we're bringing forth this legislation, because it's responsible, prudent and responds to the kinds of demands we're hearing from consumers throughout Ontario.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): This debate on Bill 158 is droning on to the final hour. I guess I question why we came back for this, why the House came back in February for a number of the pieces of legislation we've been dealing with: pit bulls, for example, and smoke-free Ontario. We came back for this. I understand these are relatively minor alterations. I assume this has already been worked out by the Supreme Court. Perhaps we're going through a bit of a charade, if this is nothing more than a revamping of the film classification system. I suggest it's perhaps one more piece.

I understand you have to obtain a licence from the government for any person to distribute films or to exhibit an unclassified film. How far does that go? Where does that lead? Certainly in the month of February we have heard mention of the paternalism of this government, couched in phrases like “the continued creation of a nanny state in the province of Ontario,” principles that seem to have been guiding this Liberal government for well over a year now. It opens the door for a certain liberalization of measures.

This isn't a big concern in my riding, but people are now allowed to take their own bottle of wine into a restaurant. I question, where does this government go? It is telling children what they can or cannot eat in school, for example. I assume there will be administrators empowered to search young people for Snickers bars.

Mr. Bisson: I find myself again agreeing with the member for Hamilton East, and she's in my own caucus. It's amazing. I thought you guys would get a kick out of that.

I think she makes a point, and it's a good one. I don't know where I go with this one but it makes me think a little bit. This bill deals with the issue of film classification. Fine. That's what the bill is all about. But part of

the issue we have in our society is that it's pretty darned hard for government to classify everything that moves. How do you deal with the issue of classification of books, magazines, articles, music and all that? I just think it's an interesting point to raise. The chief government whip raised it earlier in his comments on my speech, and I agree with him that there have been attempts on the part of some parents and schools and others to give parents some warning about what their kids are listening to, watching, reading, doing, so that we can give our children better advice about what we think is suitable. We'll never agree on their music. I've got to say that my mom and dad never agreed with my music, and quite frankly, I couldn't stand rap with my young girls when they were teenagers. I don't know what the pages are listening to these days, but I'm sure there's a generation gap there as well. I'm not talking about those kinds of views—those are issues of style—but I'm just saying things that are inappropriate.

I think she raises a very good point: At what point does government have to take responsibility for the self-censorship and self-rating we need to do as individuals in a society? I think that's a good point. I guess that's why I've been a little bit uncomfortable through this whole debate. As I said in my own comments earlier, I really have a problem with censorship overall, because I believe in a democratic society. Democracy should be strong enough to stand up to attacks within. That's the beauty of what democracy is all about.

I think she raises a point that's worth considering. That's why we should go to committee.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions and comments? The member from Scarborough Centre.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): Scarborough Southwest, Mr. Speaker, but it's close. They're both nice ridings.

I want to thank the member from Hamilton East for her comments, and I look forward to further debate on this issue.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Hamilton East has two minutes in which to respond.

Ms. Horwath: I want to thank the members from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot, Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, Timmins–James Bay and—

Mr. Berardinetti: Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Horwath: Scarborough Southwest. I knew it was one of those Scarborough ones. Anyway, I want to thank them very much for their comments, the last one very brief, as a matter of fact.

I think the bottom line is that everybody recognizes that this bill is required and necessary, or at least that some incarnation of this bill is required and necessary, because the courts indicated it needs to be updated. But as always, the devil is in the detail. I say “devil” because, quite frankly, if we get it wrong, then guess what? It goes through the courts again, and who the heck needs to waste all that time and money going through the courts again?

The point is, let's get it right the first time. Let's make sure that what we're doing is within the realm of what's required. But at the same time, let's also recognize that as a government, yes, we have a certain role in regard to providing the required classifications and the required yardsticks by which people, whether they be parents or individuals, measure the materials they are considering viewing or reading or listening to. It is the individual's choice whether or not they want to rent or buy or purchase or view those kinds of materials. Our job really has to be to be out of the censorship business and to ensure we are completely out of that business.

Let's make Bill 158, through the process of committee hearings, absolutely airtight in regard to our obligations and our restrictions as to what we are and are not allowed to legislate in this province and in this country.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I'm very pleased and privileged to have this opportunity to participate this afternoon in this debate on Bill 158, the Film Classification Act. I'm very pleased the Minister of Consumer and Business Services is present in the Legislature for this important debate this afternoon and is taking note of the comments that are being brought forward by the opposition members and the government members who choose to participate in this debate. I had an opportunity to have the minister in my office this afternoon for a few brief minutes. It was good to have him up on the fourth floor. I know he was interested in what those offices looked like, and perhaps in two and a half years, he may be more interested than he is today. Who knows?

It is a great privilege and a pleasure to have the opportunity to participate in this debate. I have listened to some of this debate from that very chair, as one of the assistant Speakers. I've heard many of the comments that have been made. This is a very important issue facing the people of the province.

"This bill repeals the Theatres Act and enacts a new act called the Film Classification Act, 2004.

"The act governs the classification and approval of film and the exhibition and distribution of film. The act provides for the offices of director, deputy director, registrar and deputy registrar.

"The act authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council to, by regulation, prescribe categories of film, prescribe classification schemes to be used in classifying film and designate categories of film that may not be distributed unless they have been approved. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is authorized to designate persons or bodies to carry out various enumerated functions, including: reviewing film for the purpose of classifying it, reconsidering a classification decision, determining whether a film should be approved, reconsidering an approval decision and determining whether a film is exempt under the regulations from a provision of the act."

As I said, this is a very important issue, but there are a number of other very important issues before this

important legislative body today. For two consecutive weeks we have seen farmers demonstrating on the front lawn of the Legislature who have very serious concerns about the treatment of rural Ontario. Our caucus is continuing to bring these concerns forward. We believe that the government's response to the collective voice of farm families so far has been inadequate. Certainly, when the House resumes sitting on March 29, we will continue to raise these issues unless the government takes concrete, positive steps to respond to many of these concerns.

We have a serious problem in terms of nutrient management rules and regulations. If the government is not prepared to come forward with a meaningful support program to assist the farm families who are expected to undertake these environmental upgrades, if the government is not prepared to participate with them in terms of helping them with the cost as a partner, then unfortunately many of these necessary projects are not going to be undertaken. I would again ask the Minister of Agriculture and Food and the government members who are here this afternoon to consider that.

We are also experiencing a crisis in terms of the prices of grains and oilseeds, which are at a 25-year low. Farmers literally do not have the money to plant seed in the ground in a few short weeks, and they need a support program involving the federal and provincial governments in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and the government has yet to come forward with a response to that plea.

We have concerns in terms of the greenbelt legislation and regulations that are to come forward, and certainly the farmers who are making demonstration today were seriously concerned about that issue.

Mr. Hudak: Bill 92.

Mr. Arnott: We have Bill 92, which is of course the municipal bill that municipalities are expecting to see passed before the House rises today, and our critic, the member for Erie-Lincoln, has on a number of occasions this afternoon sought unanimous consent to have that bill dealt with. If it's not dealt with, we have to wonder, and of course, inquire why that's the case.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is under fairly serious—there have been a number of serious statements made in the Legislature about his activities in recent days. The municipal councils across the province, I think, have every right to ask why this bill is not being brought forward. It was introduced some time ago, on June 8. Almost a year ago it was first introduced, and here we are today. Unfortunately, because of the fact that the government has refused to respond to many of these other serious concerns, I have no choice but to move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: We have a motion for adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

With five members standing, there will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1713 to 1743.

The Acting Speaker: The members will please take their seats.

Mr. Arnott has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will please stand and remain standing while counted.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing while counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly: The ayes are 6; the nays are 29.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Member from Waterloo–Wellington, you can resume debate.

Mr. Arnott: It is a privilege to continue to have the floor on this important issue, Bill 158. It is approximately 5:45, about 15 minutes before the House would normally break for the evening. I'm aware that the Liberals have a very important function that they all wish to attend tonight. As such, I will move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: We have a motion from Mr. Arnott for adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

There being five members standing, we will call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1745 to 1815.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Arnott has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please stand.

All those opposed?

The Clerk of the Assembly: The ayes are 4; the nays are 6.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: No, I'm not recognizing anyone.

It now being a quarter past 6 o'clock, I declare this House adjourned until Tuesday, March 29, 2005, at 1:30.

The House adjourned at 1816.

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