



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 37th Parliament

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de l'Ontario**

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 16 November 1999

Mardi 16 novembre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 November 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 novembre 1999

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My statement today is in the form of a direct plea to the Minister of Education for her to understand that the province's funding for special education simply is not working for children in my riding, and it's also an urgent call for her to rectify the funding problem now so that children will not be deprived of the support they deserve in our schools.

The situation is particularly acute for the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, a board that has clearly documented the needs for the children in their system to the satisfaction of the ministry but was then shocked to learn that no new money to meet those needs was forthcoming. This was worked on in good faith as part of the intensive effort by the Catholic board's special education staff, despite their real concerns about the rigorous and in many cases inappropriate student profiles required by the ministry before any funding will be approved. Yet it appears to have all been for naught. As Joleene Kemp, chair of the Thunder Bay Catholic board, put it to you, Minister, in a letter last month, "Why was such a huge task undertaken that yielded nothing but high expectations on the part of parents and dashed hopes on the part of the board?"

The Thunder Bay board is in a terrible position, because they have employed the needed additional support persons by transferring money from a reserve fund, money that is now gone and will only pay wages up to December. The clock is ticking.

The Catholic board is very keen to work with you, Minister, on this urgent matter, and I hope you take them up on their offer so that all students in need of special support can continue to receive the education they need and deserve regardless of their own personal challenges.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I want to welcome the representatives of Ontario's police forces who are here at Queen's Park for the third annual lobby day. This morning I met with officers from the Waterloo region police, and I welcome the opportunity to further

develop the bond of co-operation and partnership as we work to strengthen policing in this province.

In September, I joined the celebration of another important partnership as 20 officers from the former police departments of Fergus, Harriston and Palmerston were sworn in as Ontario Provincial Police officers. This was a historic ceremony, because Wellington became the first county in Ontario to engage the OPP in a long-term contract for policing services. The occasion was best captured by Mr Murray Langdon, chairman of the Wellington County Police Services Board, who said, "The consent to abolish means the end to three fine police services which have served with distinction for more than 100 years, but it also means the start of county-wide policing—making Wellington county a leader in the province." I am certain that the citizens and taxpayers of Wellington county will benefit immensely from this new partnership for community safety.

The work of the OPP is vital and I will continue to be their strong supporter. This includes working with the Wellington OPP force and the province to address the need to have greater access to services provided by justices of the peace in our area.

I would like to say in closing, to the new OPP of Wellington county and to police officers in Waterloo region and throughout Ontario, you have our sincere thanks.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): On November 5, 1999, the United Nations human rights committee released the decision which said that Canada, and specifically Ontario, violates a 1976 international human rights covenant by funding Catholic but not other religious-based schools.

The ruling was seen as vindication of those who support faith-based schools that the present position of the Ontario government is unfair and discriminatory.

In the ruling, the UN said that differences in treatment between Roman Catholic religious schools, which are publicly funded as a distinct part of the public education system, and schools of other religions, which are private by necessity, cannot be considered reasonable and objective.

The UN also gave Canada 90 days either to comply with the ruling or to propose a remedy.

Those who are urging compliance with this UN decision are not advocating removal of funding from the

Catholic system, but rather extending funding to all independent denominational schools.

Although the UN resolution calls for compliance or a proposed remedy within 90 days, the Ontario government quickly indicated that it would not be complying with this landmark ruling. Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories do not discriminate on the basis of religion in allocating education funding. Indeed, nowhere else in the western world does a government provide public funding to one religious denomination and not to others.

I now call on the government of Ontario to respond in a positive way to this United Nations human rights committee ruling.

1340

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to share with the House today, and in fact the province, a very excellent prevention and promotion program developed by a constituent of mine, Mr Ross Mervyn.

Mr Mervyn is a retired Algoma Steel worker and a volunteer in the prison system, both in Canada and the USA. He has recognized that drugs are a major problem in our society today, with lives ruined and wasted, and high medical costs to the public health system. Drugs result, he says, in a lot of crime. In fact, 70% of crime is drug- or alcohol-related, with a high cost of incarceration of about \$50,000 per year.

Mr Mervyn has put together a program that was primarily developed by himself, and he has been its driving force. Following an introduction and some background to groups in various communities, a stand-up presentation is given, followed by a video. The video covers interviews with actual prison inmates. A question-and-answer period then follows. This program has proved to be very successful in many communities across the USA and Canada.

Mr Mervyn has been recognized by almost every level of government for the work he has done on this program. It is, as I said, essentially a prevention and promotion program, something we should be doing more of, it seems to me, if we're going to keep people out of trouble before they get into it.

If you're interested in this program, you could call my office either here in Toronto or in Sault Ste Marie, or call Mr Mervyn at (705) 253-0503.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): This government stands firmly on the side of victims of crime rather than the offenders. We stand behind those who protect our families and serve our communities. Many Ontario citizens also work tirelessly to support our law enforcement agencies.

Today I would like to recognize one such agency, the Neighbourhood Watch of Waterloo region. Working in partnership with the Waterloo regional police, this organization is on the leading edge of crime prevention. Through the hard work of many volunteers and a grant

from the Partners Against Crime program, they have developed a state-of-the-art community alert system. This system dials the homes of Neighbourhood Watch members and alerts them with a recorded message about break and enters, vandalism, vehicle thefts and other non-violent crime in their neighbourhoods. Using state-of-the-art software, this group serves as the eyes and ears of the local police.

The Neighbourhood Watch program works. The Waterloo regional police have recognized the contribution of Neighbourhood Watch since 1990 with an office in each detachment.

Today I would like to thank Chief Larry Gravill and members of the Waterloo Regional Police Service as well as Marietta Gassewitz from Neighbourhood Watch for their dedication to this program. I would also like to recognize the over 28,000 Neighbourhood Watch members in the Waterloo region who take an active part in this program.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): This is directed to the Minister of Education. Students, parents and grandparents in Sault Ste Marie and Algoma-Manitoulin are desperately trying to find a way to prevent the closure of 10 schools.

The Harris government cutbacks to education are forcing the Algoma District School Board to look at closing these schools. To have you stand in this Legislature and to hear you blame the school board for these closures is both irresponsible and not factual.

Five of the schools on the verge of closing are in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin. These schools are in the communities of Spanish, Batchawana Bay, Desbarats, Searchmont and Elliot Lake. The students in these communities should not be shipped out of their hometowns or forced into portables. Some of these students would be forced to ride a bus for over an hour a day. This is unacceptable. The people of Algoma-Manitoulin deserve quality, accessible education.

Minister, I call on you to reclassify the Algoma District School Board as a low-density board. It is. Look at a map. I am currently receiving letters from concerned parents from all corners of Algoma demanding that your ministry halt its plans to close over 20% of the schools in this district. Are these Ontario's tax dollars at work? Take action now so that 2,000 students won't be forced on to buses and so that they can remain in the classrooms in their own home communities.

Do the right thing. Give the funding back that your government has stolen from the children of Ontario.

POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): It is my honour to bring to the attention of the House the awarding of the Ontario Medal for Police Bravery to two London police officers, constables Bruce Miller and Brad Merrison. The

award was made last week by Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston and Solicitor General David Tsubouchi for actions in August 1998. The two officers pulled two elderly men from a burning home on English Street in London. The fire was one of a string of arsons that occurred in our city last summer.

Constables Miller and Merrison also received citations from the London Police Services Board and a Canadian Police Association Award of Excellence for Ontario for what they did. When the officers arrived at the scene, smoke was pouring out of the two-storey home and they could hear screams coming from inside the house. They found an 80-year-old man about two metres from the back door and another older man calling for help from another room. Both officers had to be treated for smoke inhalation after the rescue. The fires were found to be the work of an arsonist.

What these officers did on that occasion is typical of what the men and women of our police services do, day after day, year after year, to make our province safe for all.

Constable Miller is with us in the gallery today. I know that all members of the House will want to join with me in recognizing constables Miller and Merrison on their outstanding achievements.

ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'd like to take this opportunity to commend the Hamilton-Wentworth regional police for their proactive approach to youth crime. I'll be speaking more about this tonight in the debate.

My statement today is addressed to the minister responsible for colleges and universities. I'm sure all the members were shocked to read the press of November 6, in which it was reported that the RCMP had charged a Toronto private vocational school with fraud and conspiracy to commit fraud. Over \$18 million in loans from the Ontario student assistance program and the Canada student loans program, both programs administered by this government, have apparently been obtained fraudulently by this school using the names of over 1,000 students not actually attending this institution.

In my view, \$18.32 million is a very significant amount of money. In fact, it represents 3% of total OSAP spending for 1998-99. It seems very clear that we have another classic example of the government having its priorities upside-down. While they focus on ganging up on squeegee kids, they ignore their responsibility to practise diligence in the administration of these funds.

It's a shame and a disgrace that legitimate students and institutions are being underfunded while this kind of scheme goes undetected by the government. It is not as if they weren't warned. In the 1997 Provincial Auditor's report he warned, "The risk of abuse of this program is high." Why was this warning ignored? Why haven't the

necessary checks been put in place? How can the students of this province trust this government?

PEEL REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I stand to join with my colleagues in support of the men and women who serve in our police forces.

This year, the Peel Regional Police Service is commemorating its 25th anniversary after the amalgamation of the police forces from Chinguacousy, Brampton, Mississauga, Port Credit and Streetsville.

Under the admirable leadership of Chief Noel Catney, the Peel Regional Police Service has been recognized for excellence in conduct and ethics and has won over 300 provincial, national and international awards for innovation, crime resolution and crime prevention.

In September, constables Wayne Drew and Dave Haggarty of the Peel force finished first and second in the main skills event at the inaugural greater Toronto regional police motorcycle competition.

The outstanding work done by the Peel police has contributed to the positive relationship between officers and members of my constituency. It is no wonder that local citizens of Peel continue to show their strong support for our police officers.

Last Friday, as part of our government's commitment to put 1,000 new front-line police officers on our streets, the Peel Regional Police Service held a swearing-in ceremony for 36 new officers.

I would like to personally congratulate these new officers and, at the same time, offer my deep gratitude to all the men and women on the Peel Regional Police Service and their families for the excellent work they're doing to make Ontario one of the best places to live, work and raise our families.

1350

ANNUAL REPORT, PROVINCIAL AUDITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table the 1999 annual report of the Provincial Auditor.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would also like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a number of guests from the Office of the Provincial Auditor, including the Provincial Auditor, Erik Peters, and Ken Leishman, the assistant Provincial Auditor, as well as some of the directors. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MORE TAX CUTS FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 RÉDUISANT DE NOUVEAU LES IMPÔTS POUR STIMULER L'EMPLOI, LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement the 1999 Budget and to make other amendments to various Acts in order to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre le budget de 1999 et à apporter d'autres modifications à diverses lois en vue de favoriser un climat propice à l'emploi, à la croissance et à la prospérité en Ontario.

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

The Minister of Finance for a short explanation.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): Just very briefly, this bill, if passed, will deliver of course on the first instalment of the 20% income tax cut referred to in this past May's budget. It will take care of the Ontario child care supplement for working families. It will extend and expand the land transfer tax refund on first-time homebuyers of new homes.

It will deliver on the retail sales tax rebate on building materials for farmers. It will provide enhanced capital tax exemption for small businesses. It will provide incentives for businesses hiring apprentices. It will present incentives for Ontario school bus safety.

It will also level the playing field in the area of property taxation for newly constructed commercial and industrial properties, and it will strengthen the regulatory powers of the Ontario Securities Commission, which are both—

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat. The Minister of Finance will know it is supposed to be a short explanation.

GREAT LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA PROTECTION ENVIRONNEMENTALE DES GRANDS LACS

Mr Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to regulate the discharge of ballast water in the Great Lakes / Projet de loi 15, Loi réglementant le déchargement de l'eau de lest dans les Grands Lacs.

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

A short explanation from the member for Oshawa.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): In order to reduce the occurrence of invading species, the bill prohibits ocean-going vessels on the Great Lakes system from

docking in Ontario if they have not complied with the ballast water control guidelines prescribed by regulation.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr Gilchrist and Mr Wettlaufer exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr Gilchrist assumes ballot item 78 and Mr Wettlaufer assumes ballot item 14.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I rise today with good news for the health and safety of Ontario workers. For the first time in 13 years, the exposure limits for hazardous chemical substances used in our province's workplaces will be updated.

Workers in Ontario deserve to be protected by exposure limits that are current and up to date. Down the road, it will mean fewer occupational illnesses among workers and lower compensation costs for employers. Over the next 90 days, our government will educate industry and labour about the mandatory new exposure limits.

I will also be meeting with both labour and industry to discuss updating occupational exposure limits on a regular basis. I give you my commitment as minister that we will work to keep occupational exposure limits current. Most of the new limits we are proposing today are those recommended by the internationally recognized American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. More than 80 countries, most Canadian provinces, 36 American states and the federal government use these limits, and many Ontario companies implement them today voluntarily.

I emphasize that compliance with the new occupational exposure limits will be required, and it will be enforced. When the new limits are in place, Ontario will not only be up to date, it will be ahead of the pack. That's because we are bringing an additional 69 hazardous substances under regulations for the first time in Ontario's history. By doing so, Ontario is regulating occupational exposure to a significantly higher number of hazardous chemicals than the majority of jurisdictions around the globe.

Responsible, reasonable, progressive change: That's good for investment, that's good for productivity, and it goes without saying that it's good for the working men and women who handle these chemicals on a day-to-day basis.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I rise today to congratulate the minister for taking a step 13 years later. You'll realize that 13 years ago the Liberals added to this list and the gap between adding to this list has been far too long. I'm glad you learned from the Liberal government of 13 years ago. I'm glad you're finally doing this but you know, Minister, there is still so much more to be done, and although this is just simply a very, very small step, you have been confronted by several other groups with several other initiatives that we would have hoped you would have acted upon already.

For example, I talk about the workplace carcinoma committee, which you are aware of, on which you've met with the United Steelworkers of America and the Canadian Auto Workers, but the reality is your government so far has been negligent in not establishing this carcinoma committee. This committee will save lives. As you know, 9% of the people who go to work every year die because of workplace conditions. We know that's avoidable. Workers know that's avoidable. Unions know that's avoidable. Companies know that's avoidable.

The reality is Cancer Care Ontario has urged you over the past several years to establish this workplace carcinoma committee. If in fact your commitment is to the health and safety of workers, I suggest that tomorrow you stand up in the Legislature and announce that there will be the establishment of a workplace carcinoma committee.

I look at the recommendations from the coroner's jury with regard to the tragic deaths of John Hewson and Robert LaPolice. We ask that you act on those recommendations, certainly the second recommendation, and I read from the report:

"That the government of Ontario completes as soon as possible the review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act initiated in 1997. The revised act should be given the highest priority on the legislative agenda."

I would like you to take that to the P and P committee and suggest to them that instead of squeegee legislation, they should be finalizing this so that indeed your government will save lives in the workplace.

1400

I would suggest as well that you learn from the father of Dave Ellis, the 18-year-old student who died on his second day on the job trying to get some money to go to university. Rob Ellis, his father, has raised a number of issues around workplace death causes, including prevention, enforcement, prosecution, accountability and workplace insurance. Certainly, some of these issues must be addressed by your government and by you as the minister as quickly as possible.

That brings me to the next item that I implore you to ensure passes through the House very quickly, and that's

my colleague Mike Gravelle's Bill 10, An Act to bring health and safety programs to Ontario students.

I would suggest to you, Minister, to listen to the words of Rob Ellis, who said: "It is time that students got over simply asking, 'How much will I make and how many hours will I work?' They should be asking the important question, 'Is the workplace safe?'"

Mr Gravelle's bill will ensure that students are provided with the opportunity to ensure that they are brought up to date on what is expected of the employers, of the employees and of the workplace. I would suggest, I would hope, I would plead that you meet with Mr Gravelle to ensure that this will happen, that this bill will pass through the House quickly and that it will become law for Ontario workers.

I would suggest as well that you look at your own record of accountability when it comes to what you've done. Bill 49 changes the Employment Standards Act, which erodes minimum provisions for overtime pay; Bill 99 makes changes to WCB and cuts benefits to injured workers; Bill 136, the public sector union legislation, strips bargaining rights; Bill 31, the construction, trade and workplace bill, eliminates protection for construction unions. You've cut your occupational health laboratory, chest clinic and materials, testing laboratories, employment practice operations; office of mediation, cut by 23%; office of arbitration, cut.

The reality is, as the new Minister of Labour you have a lot of work to do correcting the faults of your government over the course of the last four years.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Let me first of all, since this is my first opportunity in addressing the new minister, offer to him my personal congratulations on his ascension to the cabinet. I think I would have been one of those who, when there were long-shot odds being offered up, would have taken that long-shot odd that if anybody could have accomplished getting into cabinet from where you were, you would have. Personally, I'm pleased to see it happened.

Let me also identify that as probably being the last time I intend to be nice to you in this place, beginning with your opening comment, Minister, that you rise with good news for the health and safety of Ontario workers. You haven't been here long enough to develop your own reputation but, let me tell you, the one that your predecessors have left for you causes Ontario workers, the second any Minister of Labour stands up, to have shivers down their spine. There's absolutely nothing this government has done that has helped or made things better for the working people of Ontario.

Some of the litany of those issues has been raised and I intend to raise more of them in the next few minutes. Specifically with regard to the announcement you're making, Minister, it would have been nice if you had at least acknowledged the fact that the reason you're doing this is because of the unrelenting work and effort of the labour movement in lobbying your government and your ministry, particularly your predecessors, to make these moves. You know that these moves do not achieve all

that the labour movement feels needs to be done in terms of protecting workers. You didn't say anything about that.

In fairness, if you're trying to create a new atmosphere in your ministry, and I hear that you are, then I would strongly suggest that when you've got credit to be given out there in terms of things that are to be changed, you offer it up.

The labour movement has made this a cornerstone, particularly the Ontario Federation of Labour. Under the leadership of Wayne Samuelson, they have done everything they can to put this front and centre, and you failed to even acknowledge that they had anything at all to do with it. The reality is that without them, you wouldn't be making even this meagre announcement that you are making today.

Further, you go on to say that down the road it will mean fewer occupational illnesses among workers and lower compensation costs for employers. Of course, we know that the lower compensation costs for employers is your number one priority. It hasn't been that long since we watched the debacle of Bill 99, which ripped away \$15 billion in money that would be owed to injured workers, only to see your government, Minister, give \$6 billion of that back to employers, who don't need it. Tell that to the families in Sarnia, where workers have died and family members are dying from exposures that were brought from the workplace to home. Tell them that you're doing wonderful things for the people of Ontario, for the workers of Ontario.

Bill 15: You talk about caring about compensation. We finally, under the NDP, had a situation where the WCB had 50% of the seats designated for workers and their representatives: just justice, fairness. Your government wiped that out and now we're back to the bad old days where employers and their friends and cronies form the majority of seats on the board of what you call WSIB, thereby pulling injured workers right out of the equation. That's the way you've dealt with workers.

What else have you done in this province? You can't deal with this announcement in isolation. The Workplace Health and Safety Agency, which your government took great pride in extinguishing, again, was an agency dedicated to training employers and employees in how to provide a safe workplace and how to avoid exposures and illnesses and accidents and death. And yes, 50% of those seats were guaranteed for workers and their representatives. But you weren't satisfied with just wiping out fairness there. You wiped out the whole thing, you killed it, and you put it back inside the WCB, where it had failed for 50 years. That's the track record of this government.

You killed the Occupational Disease Panel, a jewel in the crown of the legislation that we had in this province. We had advocacy from around the world saying: "Please, don't kill this. It's the model we're trying to get in place in our workplace and in our state or province."

It allowed arm's length identification of exposures to the harm that it can do to workers. Your government

killed that, Minister. You didn't think it was important enough to provide the kind of expertise the ODP did, and then somehow you expect to stand up today and get a big fanfare. It's not going to happen. You've got to change your record, Minister.

GRANDVIEW TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to move a resolution regarding an official apology to the survivors of Grandview and for a representative from each caucus to make remarks on the resolution.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I move:

That this House, on behalf of Ontario and pursuant to the 1994 agreement reached with the Grandview Survivors Support Group, apologizes and expresses sincere regret for the harm caused by the physical, sexual and psychological abuse at the Ontario Training School for Girls, Galt, also known as Grandview, in Cambridge, Ontario, between the 1930s to the 1970s; and

That this House acknowledges that the abuse suffered by the students at Grandview, who bear no responsibility for the abuse they suffered, caused lifelong physical and emotional pain, distress and trauma to the women themselves and to their families and community and that such abuse of children is deplorable and intolerable.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

1410

Hon Mr Flaherty: I rise on behalf of this assembly and this government to address a serious issue involving victims of abuse. It involved the horrible abuse of more than 300 young women at the Ontario Training School for Girls, Galt, also known as Grandview, located in Cambridge, Ontario. The school opened in 1932 and closed in 1976.

The Grandview survivors suffered physical, sexual and psychological abuse at the hands of staff at the school who were entrusted with their care. These horrendous acts not only traumatized the women themselves, but also their families and the community.

I wish to express on behalf of the Legislative Assembly sincere regret for and condemnation of these events.

While the past cannot be changed, we have endeavoured to create a process to give a voice to those directly affected.

The province consulted and negotiated an agreement with the Grandview Survivors Support Group, signed in 1994, that we hope has offered opportunities to heal and to introduce real hope for a better future. The agreement is based on recognition that abuse or mistreatment cannot be tolerated or condoned. It's also based on the recognition that society has a direct responsibility to provide the supports necessary to facilitate the healing process for

survivors of sexual and institutionalized abuse, particularly when the abuse occurs in an institution housing children.

Hundreds of women with great courage and strength came forward and told their stories. Their allegations of sexual and physical abuse were adjudicated and the truth of their claims was acknowledged. Compensation was awarded. However, that doesn't change the fact that the pain they endured can never be erased. What we seek to do today is to attempt to bring a further measure of closure to these survivors.

My predecessor the former Attorney General has written personal letters to those survivors who so requested to express our regret. This statement fulfills the government's final commitment to these survivors.

The abuse at Grandview should never have happened and there can be no excuse or justification for it. It is a source of shame for all of us. The survivors bear no responsibility for the abuse that they suffered. This Legislature and all of its elected members acknowledge it and apologize.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I rise today on behalf of the official opposition in this House to speak to this resolution and to offer our apology. I regret that the survivors who have come to this House are sitting behind me in the gallery; I apologize that under the rules of parliamentary procedure, I have my back to you, but I am looking at you in spirit.

It is with great regret that I say it has come to my attention that a scintilla of a shadow lies over this apology and I'm compelled to bring it to the attention of this House.

Negotiations were over five years in the making for this settlement and a 60-page settlement resulted, which included, quite rightly, a public apology. Notwithstanding a five-year process and an eternal nightmare for the Grandview survivors, it is unfortunate that there was no consultation with the survivors as to the timing and the wording of this apology in the House. Most of the survivors could not simply pick up and zoom over to Toronto from wherever they lived in Ontario on a few days' notice. The survivors learned of the apology of today just last Friday, with the unceremonious arrival of a courier informing them of today's event. The undignified arrival of this courier unfortunately was a long time in coming, marked by a not insignificant delay subsequent to the conclusion of the criminal trials. That is unfortunate. That is no way to treat survivors. That said, I applaud the Attorney General for what he has done today. The horrible abuse at Grandview took place under someone else's watch. The school closed in 1976.

We are properly standing in the House today offering this act of imperfect contrition. This apology will never repair the damage done, but as I stand here and as we sit here, we can recommit ourselves individually and collectively to try to improve the safeguards against such horrific abuse in the future.

Finally, please allow me to offer on behalf of the official opposition to each and every one of the survivors

here in the House today and across Ontario our sincerest apology and regret for the years of unimaginable pain and suffering you have experienced. Both you and your families remain an extraordinary example to all Ontarians of perseverance and determination and courage. We wish and pray for your continued heroic survival, healing and, we hope, reconciliation with a tragic chapter in the history of this province.

I'm in no position to stand here and thank you for this perseverance. I'm in a position only to thank you for coming to this House and hearing our apology.

I would ask all members to rise and thank them now. Thank you.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): This day has been a long time coming for the survivors of the abuse that took place at the Grandview Training School for Girls, for their families and for their communities. This apology, while never sufficient to make up for the injuries done to them, marks nevertheless an historic day for this province. It recognizes government's and society's obligation not only to seek out cases of abuse but also to implement measures to prevent such abuse. It is essential for those of us who have participated in government to acknowledge that over many years people who were placed in good faith under the care of the government suffered as a result.

I must also comment for a moment on how the government has chosen to handle this matter today. We know that many of the survivors did not receive notice of this statement until last Thursday, some last Friday. This has not left enough time for many of those women to find a way to get here today. Many live in other parts of the province, have health problems, have family responsibilities or have to survive on very low incomes. In fact, their lawyer only received the wording of this apology yesterday. I wish that the government had handled this matter somewhat differently. I wish there had been more thought and attention paid to the needs of these survivors here today.

It is important that all three recognized parties in this Legislature recognize that we have all been in government and that we have all had responsibility for those who are in institutional settings, and that responsibility remains today.

This apology does not take away the pain; we are all aware that it does not. But what it does is make it clear that we are responsible, that the government of Ontario is responsible for what happened to those children. It reminds us that when we come upon situations where institutional abuse has occurred, as we did with the provincial schools for the deaf and the blind and in the case of St John's and St Joseph's, we must continue to have the courage to acknowledge our responsibility and to do what we can to redress the damage that has been done. Furthermore, as we recognize very clearly the suffering that occurred at Grandview over the years, we must renew our commitment to ensure that this kind of abuse does not occur again in the institutions over which we have authority.

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I would like to recognize for a moment the courage and the strength that have been required by those who came forward to break the silence about this abuse, and I would like to commend too the work of the Grandview Survivors Support Group, which played an essential role in collectively advocating for the interests of the survivors.

The long and painful healing process never really begins until the truth is told. For many of these women the truth had been blocked from their minds for many years, out of horror, out of embarrassment and in some cases out of necessity. But in an act of remarkable courage, they were willing to face and to relive the darkest periods of their lives.

We are here today to acknowledge publicly that as a society we recognize that you were wronged, that something was taken away from you that could never be replaced and never be made right. We are here today to say that you must remember that not one ounce of responsibility rests upon your shoulders for these acts. The guilty are those individuals who abused their positions of authority and took advantage of children who were incapable of defending themselves. Society too must take responsibility for not providing the safety and protection that every child deserves, for not protecting the most defenceless and vulnerable in our society.

We know that healing childhood abuse is a lifelong process that requires the active support of society. As these survivors begin to rebuild their lives, we must not forget that we all—members of this Legislature, men, women, society—have a responsibility to be part of the solution. Abuse is a social problem that requires urgent attention. We must dedicate ourselves to setting up systems, policies and procedures to ensure that this kind of abuse does not occur in the future. We must promote public education of the lasting injuries that abuse inflicts. We must pursue prevention and early detection. When abuse does occur, we must provide support immediately and ensure that abusers are punished.

On behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, I would like to express to each and every survivor of Grandview our deepest and most sincere regret and apology for the years of pain and suffering that you have experienced. I commend you for your strength, your courage and determination and extend our hope that you are all able to put these terrible experiences behind you and lead meaningful and happy lives. I assure you that we will dedicate ourselves to ensuring that this kind of abuse does not ever happen again in our province.

ORAL QUESTIONS

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My first question today is for the Attorney General.

Today the auditor released his report and he provides a very damning indictment of your government's handling of the Family Responsibility Office. He tells us that there exist today 128,000 cases in arrears. He tells us that two thirds of the cases in arrears have been outstanding for more than a year. He tells us that the number of cases in arrears has stayed at about 75% of all managed support cases since the last audit in 1994. He's telling us that you're doing no better a job than the NDP did. He's telling us that you have institutionalized NDP mediocrity when it comes to the handling of the Family Responsibility Office.

Minister, my question is very simple: Why is it that you have let 128,000 families down, representing over 200,000 children in Ontario?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): We recognize and take very seriously the issues raised in the auditor's report with respect to the Family Responsibility Office. We have built the most aggressive family support enforcement program in all of Canada, and we are constantly trying to improve it. It is a difficult endeavour and, as I say, we take seriously the comments made by the Provincial Auditor in the period with which he dealt, which took us to 1998, I believe.

Dealing with 1999, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that improvements have been made, and that I am told as of this time 25% of the orders are in full compliance and 34% of the cases have payments made each month.

It is necessary to make improvements, I acknowledge that to the member opposite, but I also point out that this is the most ambitious program of its type in Canada.

Mr McGuinty: Let's understand that when this minister wants to move, he can move exceptionally quickly. When it came to the 200 or so squeegee kids who frequent the streets of downtown Toronto, he's got a bill that's been tabled here, he's ready to move, and he will spare no expense and no energy whatsoever to make things happen. But when it comes to 200,000 Ontario children who have been let down by their fathers, we now discover that this minister is, in his turn, letting them down as well.

What we're asking you to do is to accept responsibility for this crisis, to step up to the plate and to start going to bat for these kids. You're great at being aggressive with panhandlers and squeegee kids. When are you going to start stepping up to the plate and going to bat for these kids and dealing with their deadbeat fathers?

Hon Mr Flaherty: There's no question that the Family Responsibility Office can do better. This is a serious issue. It's not one with respect to which I would make political commentary. This is an office that deals with the recovery of money for spouses and for children in need.

I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition must have read the report. He would have noted that the auditor's report acknowledges the satisfactory management of the program's trust fund, which disbursed last year a record \$500 million. That's in the last fiscal year.

The report also acknowledges, as I'm sure the leader noted, the improvements that have been made since the previous audits. No other program in Canada serving spouses and children distributes that level of money to those persons who are in need of those funds.

Mr McGuinty: The facts here are undeniable: You are \$1.2 billion in arrears; 75% of the cases are in arrears; 128,000 families are affected, involving more than 200,000 Ontario children. Those are the undeniable facts. On top of that, the auditor says you are not being nearly aggressive enough in pursuing deadbeat fathers.

He also tells us, to add insult to injury, that he did some testing and he found that 43% of their calls didn't go through even after three successive attempts, due to busy signals. You simply don't have the capacity to deal with mothers who are phoning from across this province, who are their wits' end, who are pulling out their hair and trying to figure out how they're going to come up with enough money to buy their kids some Christmas presents.

How come you've got all kinds of energy and all kinds of drive when it comes to dealing with squeegee kids, but when it comes to 200,000 Ontario kids who have been let down by their dads you just can't do anything for them?

Hon Mr Flaherty: Improvements have been made. The auditor's report deals with a period to 1998.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Flaherty: As the honourable members will want to know, as of September 1999 FRO sent out over 10,000 driver's licence suspensions. In addition to the driver's licence suspensions, \$22 million have been collected from families as a result of that initiative alone. Then we moved forward with the collection agency's pilot project last year, following the auditor's analysis of the FRO, which indeed has collected over \$8 million of found money for spouses and children in Ontario. Improvements are being made; there's more to be done.

1430

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Health. The auditor today tells us something that we have been telling you all along: Only 32% of Ontario's cancer patients are receiving treatment in the recommended four-week waiting period. In some centres across the province it's as low as 24% of Ontario cancer patients. It seems to me that the people of the province work hard, pay their taxes and play by all the rules, and they are entitled to expect that at the end of the day, if their mother or their father is stricken with cancer, or anybody in the family or any of their loved ones become ill because of cancer, they will be entitled to the best possible treatment, including treatment in a timely way. Minister, why is it that only one third of Ontario's cancer patients get treatment in a timely way in Ontario?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the Leader of the Opposition probably does know, since he has obviously read the

report, the work of the Provincial Auditor in looking at Cancer Care Ontario was conducted between February and September 1998. As he may also know, it was in November 1998 that Cancer Care Ontario first brought to this government the issue of waiting lists. Now, this is a problem that you probably also remember has occurred three times in the last 10 years. However, our government is determined that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Would the minister take her seat. Order, member for St Catharines.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The Leader of the Opposition also knows that this is a problem that has occurred three times in the last 10 years. In fact, it occurred when his government was in office. I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that our government is determined that these waiting times and waiting lists not happen again, so since November 1998 we have undertaken a nine-point plan to ensure that we can eliminate the waiting time problem.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I cannot hear the answer by the minister. I would ask the members for Windsor-St Clair and Windsor West to please come to order.

Hon Mrs Witmer: One of the first initiatives that our government did in responding to the need for the waiting list was to set up a task force. That task force reported to the Ministry of Health, and we have expanded the number of human resources. As you know, we expanded—

The Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr McGuinty: Your government has been responsible for health care in Ontario for closing in on five years now. I'm not sure which is more disgraceful: your handling of this matter to date or the lofty goal that you have set for us. You tell us that right now, although we're only able to treat one third of Ontario patients in a timely way, the goal you've established for your government by March 31, 2000, is to provide timely treatment—that's treatment within four weeks of diagnosis for cancer patients—to 50% of our cancer patients. Fully one half of Ontario cancer patients, once we've achieved the goal that you have set out, will still not be getting treatment in a timely way as recommended by our doctors.

Minister, you tell me, what does that tell us about your health care standards in Ontario? One third is acceptable today, and tomorrow the goal that you have established for yourself and for our province is one half. Stand up and justify that.

Hon Mrs Witmer: What that says about the government in this province is that this government is leading the way. We are the only province in all of Canada to implement this high standard of a wait time of no more than four weeks as recommended by the Canadian Association of Radiation Oncologists—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister, take your seat. Order, member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I say, we are the only province to adopt this high standard, and I am very pleased to say that based on the initiatives that have been undertaken

throughout 1999, our nine-point plan, our plan is on track. We are recruiting and we are retaining the radiation therapists. We are recruiting and retaining the oncologists and the physicists. In fact, we are working very collaboratively with our partners. We have expanded and we have announced the addition of additional cancer centres in this province. We are going to see the opening of centres in Kitchener-Waterloo and in Mississauga and in Durham. We are expanding into St Catharines and into Sault Ste Marie. And now we're—

The Speaker: Order; the minister's time is up.

Mr McGuinty: The only thing that counts here today is that this minister accepts that the lofty goal she has established for all Ontarians, for all of our mothers and our fathers and our brothers and our sisters and our loved ones who are stricken with cancer, who our physicians tell us ought to be treated by radiation within four weeks of the time of diagnosis—this minister tells us that as far as she is concerned 50% is a good enough result. Well, I can tell you from our perspective that it's not nearly good enough. The only result we should be striving for in this province is 100%.

Minister, will you now, here and now, stand up and acknowledge that you have failed and continue to fail Ontario cancer patients and their families?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The Leader of the Opposition seems to forget that this has been an ongoing problem that unfortunately was not tackled by his government or the prior government. It is now being tackled today.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister, take your seat. This is the last warning to the member for Windsor West. I cannot hear if she continues to shout across when the answer is coming. This will be her last warning.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It is our government that has now indicated we don't want to see this problem again. We have taken nine steps and they're working. In fact, I would like to quote Dr Tom McGowan, who on February 26, 1999, said: "We've actually seen in the last few months that the waiting times have started to come down. We are working very hard and the waiting list has actually dropped." And, referring to the announcement that our government made, it "is going to allow us to bring it even closer." In fact, recently he said, "Provided that we continue doing as well as we are at present, we will have broken the back of the radiation waiting problem by the spring of 2000."

So the plan to bring in more human resources—

The Speaker: The minister's time.

1440

HEALTH CARE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is also for the Minister of Health. The Provincial Auditor's report today is a devastating account of your government's record in health care. First, the auditor's report shows that hospital restructuring is going to cost \$2 billion more than you admit and is years behind

schedule. Then the auditor's report says that your funding of hospitals bears absolutely no relationship to the needs of Ontario citizens for health care. Meanwhile, emergency rooms are piling up and people are sent home quicker and sicker than ever.

Minister, how can your government screw up the Ontario health care system so badly in just four and a half years?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the leader of the third party knows full well, this province was the very last province in Canada to tackle the reform of our health care system.

I'm very pleased to say that as a result of the work that has been done, we have managed to ensure that services are being brought closer to home. We are constructing new cardiac centres in the province again in Mississauga, in Kitchener and in York county. We are expanding the number of cancer centres by five. We have added at least 25 dialysis centres in this province to bring services closer to home. We have a diabetes strategy that continues to expand, to meet the needs of Aboriginals, northern communities and children. We have a new Alzheimer strategy of \$68 million to meet the needs of those with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. We have a heart health program, and the list goes on and on.

We have taken steps—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Time. Minister of Health take your seat please.

Supplementary.

Mr Hampton: I want to congratulate you on being able to stand here today and reannounce stuff that you announced three and four years ago and much of it hasn't been delivered.

This is what the Provincial Auditor points to: With respect to your so-called health care restructuring he says that there is an example of a hospital, a new hospital, where \$110 million was made available for the construction of the hospital. That should be good news, but following the construction of the hospital, you refused to provide enough operating funds so that the facilities in the hospital can be used. What's the result? Four of the eight operating rooms are idle and people have to travel to other communities to get treatment.

Then the auditor says that restructuring cost overruns in hospital restructuring are likely to negate a significant portion of the so-called potential savings expected from hospital restructuring.

Minister, the Provincial Auditor—

The Speaker: Order. Member's time.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Maybe we want to focus first on the estimates that have been made by the Provincial Auditor where he talks about restructuring costs exceeding what has been predicted. Unfortunately, the auditor has looked at an exceeding of the estimates by 90%. Hospitals have actually indicated to us that they may exceed the estimates by 35% to 90%. He has taken the very worst scenario—so our estimates continue to be right on target. In fact, they have been confirmed by the Ontario Hospital Association, but as I say, the auditor has

taken the absolute worst scenario of looking at all of them as being in excess of 90% over what has been estimated.

Mr Hampton: There's a reason why the auditor is taking the worst scenario. He's been watching your government. He's watched you on the Family Responsibility Office, he's watched you with persons with disabilities, he's watched you in terms of cancer care, he's watched you in terms of the shortage of nurses, the shortage of physicians, and he knows, because of your track record, to expect the worst.

It goes on. The fact of the matter is that what you're doing to the health care system is going to give us a health care system that costs more. Turning over much of the delivery in the health care system to private American corporations is going to cost more. The hospital restructuring system is not going to save money; it's going to cost more. Sending patients to the United States to get cancer treatment is going to cost more and give us less cancer treatment.

Minister, I ask you the question. The auditor points out your sorry record. What are you going to do to fix the mess you've created in Ontario's health care system?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I would again emphasize, unfortunately health system strengthening and improvement was not undertaken by their government; we, unfortunately, came into this job. We did undertake the job. We recognized that based on the fact that we had a growing population, we had an older population and needs were changing, new drug therapy was changing the delivery of services, new medical technology, that we had to continue in the same way as the other governments throughout Canada. So we undertook to strengthen and improve our health system, and we have done so. We have made tremendous progress in bringing the services closer to home. We have made tremendous progress in making sure that we respond to the needs of individuals at all stages of their lives. Despite the fact that no one had—

The Speaker: New question.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Attorney General. There have now been three separate independent reviews of your Family Responsibility Office and each, including the one released today, confirms that your government is failing to deliver court-ordered support payments to families in the province.

With respect to enforcement, the audit today shows that at the end of November 1998, 75% of cases registered with the FRO were in arrears. It showed that most enforcement action only took place when a recipient or their advocate called and demanded action. It showed that when action is finally taken, there are gaps of more than six months between enforcement activities on the same file. It also showed that aggressive enforcement—like the suspension of drivers' licences, like default hearings, like garnishment of bank accounts—are rarely used

by your staff. As a result, the amount of arrears under your government has almost doubled to \$1.2 billion.

Minister, it's clear the enforcement activities at the FRO are not working. What are you going to do to guarantee that families who are owed and need support payments finally get them?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): There's no doubt that there are serious issues raised in the report by the auditor covering the period that the auditor covered, into 1998.

For the member opposite, though, to say that the Family Responsibility Office is failing to deliver the funds the people need, that is just not so. The current statistic, as I've given it, is that about 59% of payments are either on time or some payments are being made on a monthly basis. So it's not accurate to say that there's a 75% arrears situation, as we speak today, in 1999.

Improvements need to be made. Some improvements have been made. Certainly there are more to be made.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A 59% success rate isn't that impressive when it means that 41% of the files at the FRO continue to suffer from this government's negligence in getting the office up and running. It's been over three years since we brought back videotape showing you your FRO in packing crates. The phone calls still aren't getting answered and, on the rare occasion when they are answered, your over \$2 billion blown in 1998 on front-end interface is either fully or partially inoperable.

You now have increased staff levels to more than what they were when the eight family responsibility offices were functioning as regional offices across the province. There have been no savings for any taxpayer, you won't track down deadbeat dads and you punish paying fathers by losing the cheques or the monies they send in. When are you going to fix it?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I point out that since 1998 there have been three initiatives that are quite important in terms of effecting further recovery of arrears for the spouses and children that need them: first of all, the reporting of arrears to credit bureaus; second, the suspension of drivers' permits; and third, the retention of collection agencies in the private sector first of all to go after arrears more than three years old—and that's been successful to the tune of \$8 million—and now more recently, this year, to go after debt that is six months old and more. These initiatives are being taken.

More needs to be done. We have to be vigilant in terms of trying to collect the arrears that accrue from time to time. But we are taking these steps in the interests of the spouses and children in Ontario who are entitled to the payments.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. One of your government's first actions was to cut hospital budgets by

\$800 million. Now half the province's hospitals are running deficits, and your response has been to tell them to cut even more services in order to get their budgets balanced.

The auditor's report today tells us that just isn't good enough. The auditor tells us that your funding formula for hospitals is completely out of whack. I quote the auditor's report: "It does not take into account the demand for hospital services." What that means in people terms, Minister, is what we've all seen: ambulances coming to hospitals and being told that their patients can't go into that emergency room, they've got to go somewhere else; as many as 30 people lying for days on stretchers in emergency room hallways; people who do get a hospital bed waiting months to get surgery.

Minister, do you now understand what the hospitals of this province have been trying to tell you: that you have created absolute chaos in hospital care?

1450

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The member I think is aware of the fact that we recognize, and we have publicly been on the record as stating, that a new hospital funding formula is necessary. In fact, we have been working very aggressively this past year on developing a new funding formula. We've been working with the Ontario Hospital Association through a committee called the joint policy and planning committee.

As the member also probably knows, this new funding formula is a complex issue. We are the only province, again, in Canada that is creating a new comprehensive funding formula for our hospitals which will address the growing and the aging population. It will be based on a formula that takes into consideration age, gender, sex, growth, aboriginal status, mortality rates and fertility rates. That will be ready by the end of the year, and we plan to begin to implement—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister of Health, take your seat. Supplementary.

Mrs McLeod: Let's try to deal with the facts as we know them today. Your answer to hospital funding problems was to cut \$800 million from their budgets. Your plan for this year, in response to half the hospitals in this province having deficits, is to cut another \$100 million from hospital budgets. Your answer to the hospital funding problem was to let your hospital restructuring commission go out and find so-called savings by shutting down hospitals.

The auditor's report tells us that the whole restructuring plan is a mess, just like your funding formula. You need to spend \$1.8 billion more on capital than your restructuring commission said you should. You know that, Minister, because your ministry is busy trying to fix the problems the commission created for you. The auditor says that many hospitals have been unable to realize the savings that the commission had intended them to make, another mistake you're going to have to fix.

I ask you, will you now begin to fix the real problems by stopping the cuts you plan to hospital budgets, go

back to the drawing board and make sure our hospitals have enough funds that they can provide emergency care and beds when the people of this province need hospital beds?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would just remind the member opposite that hospital budgets this past year have increased from \$6.8 billion to \$7.2 billion. I've also just indicated to her that we are doing exactly what has been recommended: We are developing a new funding formula. It will be ready by the end of this year. We will begin to use it next year.

I would just tell you where the additional \$400 million in hospital budgets is going this year: \$130 million for nursing; \$9.1 million for neonatal care; \$27.9 million for new mothers; \$86 million in base funding increases; and \$20 million for high-growth areas. I would also add that there has been one-time funding of \$279 million for Y2K compliance issues; \$100 million for restructuring pressures; \$87 million—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. New question.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Barrie Raceway is an important attraction for my constituents, and the horse racing industry is a vital contributor to the local economy in my riding.

Across the province, horse racing provides 25,000 full-time jobs and contributes \$2 billion to Ontario's economy each year. Important as this industry is to several communities across the province, horse racing has experienced declining attendance in the past and faces competition from other gaming alternatives in the future.

Minister, what steps is this government taking to revitalize horse racing in Ontario and give racetracks the tools they need to compete?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I'd like to thank the member for the question. As the member indicated, horse racing is an important part of local economies in communities like his—Barrie, Sarnia, Sudbury and Windsor—and the government has taken action to help the industry grow.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Runciman: First of all, our government did what it does best, which the Liberal member for St Catharines dislikes intensely, and that's reduce taxes. We dropped the parimutuel tax from 7.4% to 0.5% in our last mandate. This means that \$54 million in revenue is returned to the industry each year.

Secondly, our government, through the good offices of my friend Mr Hodgson, announced that racetracks, with municipal approval, could install gaming machines, and that has resulted in a significant turnaround. Fort Erie, for example, was doomed to closure; it has now had 25 more racing days—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Minister's time. Supplementary.

Mr Tascona: Thank you, Minister, for acknowledging how much the horse racing industry contributes to local economies in Ontario.

Combining horse racing and gaming machines at racetracks is having a positive impact on local job creation, but there are concerns expressed that charity gaming revenue from activities like bingo may not be able to compete with an alternative gaming environment.

What effect would these changes at racetracks have on local charity gaming?

Hon Mr Runciman: There's no doubt that in the broad sense this has certainly helped the Ontario economy—1,000 new jobs—as well as helping the horse racing industry.

Jane Holmes of the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association told the Windsor Star that these improvements have been "very, very positive." The racetracks have not benefited at the expense of local charities.

What I can tell the member is that the experience with opening the Windsor Casino has indicated that any slow-down at charity bingo halls is very short lived. Charity bingo activity in Windsor returned to about the same pre-casino level within the first year of operation of the Windsor Casino.

I can also tell the member about the experience in Sarnia, where the local lottery licence officer told the Sarnia Observer that she has not seen "a significant drop in revenues."

The government is monitoring very closely any impact expanded gaming may have on local charities and we're working with—

The Speaker: Order. Minister's time.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Today's auditor's report provided damning evidence that your government is compromising public safety on our provincial highways.

In the area of road maintenance, Ontario Liberals have always feared that your drive to privatize would compromise public safety. Your response has always been you would only privatize if cost savings were achieved and safety maintained. Yet the auditor's report states (1) that your government did not achieve the 5% savings you said were your minimum to privatize, (2) that your government sold off ministry vehicles and equipment to the private sector without public auction or tender and (3) that your government has risked public safety on our highways by creating patrol areas too large for ministry staff to monitor in order to ensure that our highways are safe.

We have phantom savings, ministry equipment sold off at fire-sale prices, compromised safety standards on our highways. Minister, what do you intend to do to correct this unacceptable situation?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): I'd like to thank the honourable member for his question. Our government is committed to finding efficiencies and indeed we have found efficiencies. The area maintenance contracts have given us savings of 5% or more.

While we certainly appreciate the good work that the Provincial Auditor does in bringing things to our attention, I would point out that in fact the auditor has not taken into account the costs of capital equipment or maintenance which is required by the government if the government is conducting such activities. Therefore, to compare apples with apples, you have to consider the costs that the government incurred in capital equipment and maintenance.

Mr Gravelle: Minister, you need to get out of Pleasantville. I'm telling you, these are very serious matters of public safety raised by the auditor and your response is simply not good enough.

Why are you so hell-bent in your determination to privatize area maintenance work across the province without any guarantees of public safety or cost savings? It's very simple. The auditor's report is very clear: Your privatization may be costing taxpayers more and standards of maintenance have declined. The ministry is paying \$1 million per year to maintain roads that are not even being done by ministry staff any more. They've been downloaded to municipalities. You're paying a million bucks for that.

1500

Minister, my question to you is very simple: Will you put a moratorium on any further privatization of maintenance work in this province, or will you continue to risk lives by this reckless abandonment of your responsibilities?

Hon Mr Turnbull: I would point out that the MTO's accounting practices are supported by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, member for Kingston and the Islands, member for Sudbury. Minister of Transportation.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I would fully understand the Liberals having such jollity. The fact is, you don't understand saving money. All you understand is spending taxpayers' money.

Our government is committed to finding efficiencies in government, and indeed we are finding them: 5% on area maintenance contracts.

CHILD WELFARE

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): My question is for the minister responsible for children. There seems to be an increased interest and concern by members of my constituency about the need to better provide protection for children. I am also aware that the children's aid societies face many challenges in providing children with

the protection and support they need. As minister responsible for children, would you please tell us what is being done to strengthen our child welfare system?

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): I thank the member for Thornhill for this really important question. Earlier, at the beginning of this afternoon's session, we recognized what needs to be done for children, and certainly the abuse or neglect of any child is disturbing for everyone in this government; indeed, everyone in this chamber. That is why we've committed ourselves to improving the child welfare system in Ontario. In fact, several coroners' inquests that took place over the last number of years highlighted the need to reform the child protection system. Our government has worked very closely with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, as well as individual CASs, in developing and implementing these reforms.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Answer.

Hon Mrs Marland: We have made significant improvements to key areas, including funding for the training of more front-line workers. We've introduced a risk assessment model and—

The Speaker: Order. Minister, time. Supplementary.

Mrs Molinari: Minister, last year the provincial government passed amendments to the Child and Family Services Act. Can you please tell us how this new act will provide greater protection for our children?

Hon Mrs Marland: Our motivation for beginning child welfare reforms, first and foremost, was to protect vulnerable children from abuse and neglect. The amendments we made to the Child and Family Services Act last May represent the first major changes to child protection legislation in 10 years. We strengthened our ability to protect children, and we are clearly putting the child's best interests first. Those amendments provide stronger tools for the courts, professionals and front-line workers to do their jobs. They also improve access of children's aid societies to information they need to protect children at risk.

We need to ensure that stakeholders like the children's aid society are ready to implement these changes. Given the new threshold of risk, and this is the most important point that—

The Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): The question is for the Minister of Transportation. Three years ago, the Minister of Transportation told the people of Ontario that by turning highway maintenance over to private corporations, you were going to save money.

Today the auditor tells us that in three of the four highway districts that have been turned over to private companies, it is costing more. Then he says, "Outsourcing may ultimately result in a significant increase in the cost of highway maintenance in these contracts."

Minister, can you tell us why you're sticking the people of Ontario with a private highway maintenance

system that is going to cost them more money and deliver them less service?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): I'd like to respond to the leader of the third party by pointing out that we are getting better value for the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Provincial Auditor ignores the cost of capital equipment or maintenance, and these have to be considered. If you do not consider them, you're not comparing apples with apples. We are committed to continuing on with an excellent program of outsourcing which is saving the taxpayers of Ontario money, which we, sir, are investing in the highways of this province at a record rate beyond that which either of the two previous governments ever invested in the highways.

Mr Hampton: We see again that according to this government, the auditor doesn't know what he's talking about. The team of accountants in the auditor's office don't know what they're talking about.

Minister, this is what the auditor found: When you turned those contracts over to your private corporate friends, you double-counted and tried to inflate what your own ministry employees would cost you if they did the work. Second, they also found that you tried to cook the books by selling off the equipment and then somehow counting that equipment as revenue that would go on in the future.

When you factor those two things out, your privatization scheme is going to cost the people of Ontario a lot more money, is going to deliver a lot less service, and is putting the quality of highways and the quality of public safety at risk.

Minister, will you shut down your privatization system so that the people of Ontario don't have to pay more for highway maintenance and don't have to risk public safety because that maintenance isn't being—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister of Transportation.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I'd like to first of all comment on safety. Safety is our top priority. We will continue to emphasize it. Our roads today in this province are the fourth-safest in North America. That's an improvement from either the time that you were the government or the Liberals were the government. The fatality and accident rate is down at 1950s levels. We are committed to continuing the safety blitz that will continue to improve our roads, and we are spending on roads.

With respect to the auditor's report, I have pointed out that he is not counting the cost of capital equipment or maintenance equipment. You cannot make a comparison unless you include those in the cost.

HEALTH SERVICES IN NIAGARA

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is for the Minister of Health. Thousands of patients in the Niagara region are going to be forced to travel down the very busy Queen Elizabeth highway in order to receive the services of an ophthalmologist.

You would recognize, Minister, that per capita, the Niagara region has the oldest population in the province. We have only 13 ophthalmologists, not all of them are full-time, and we have a present waiting time of four to six months for individuals who wish to have an appointment with an ophthalmologist.

Your solution is to lump them in with Hamilton and say, "See, there's no shortage." It won't work because Hamilton is already backed up with patients and with time for operating.

Minister, will you now do the right thing for the people of the Niagara region, for patients, particularly elderly patients in the Niagara region? Will you now remove the cap on ophthalmologist billings in the Niagara region so that patients in Niagara can receive the kind of eye care they need and they deserve?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The member is talking about the specialist retention initiative, and as I think the member knows, each year the criteria for that program are established through the Physician Services Committee, which means that it is staff at the Ministry of Health and it is physicians themselves who determine the criteria. Each year they review them and they approve them, and based on the criteria that have been approved this year, it was determined that physicians would be exempt only if they are in a unique specialty or in a geographic underserved area where there could be a service access problem. So that was a decision that was made by the Physician Services Committee.

1510

Mr Bradley: Clearly the purse strings are in your government's hands, not in those doctors' hands. Let me share with you what the St Catharines Standard editorial has to say:

"Ontario's health ministry has to take a more honest approach to dealing with the shortage of eye doctors in Niagara. To simply lump this region in with Hamilton-Wentworth and say the two regions are not underserved is an absurd shell game...."

"It doesn't matter to them that patients, many of them seniors, face either longer delays for treatment here or the prospect of driving down the QEW to Hamilton in order to see a doctor...."

"The health ministry has to stop pulling the wool over our eyes. Trying to solve this problem by cavalierly erasing a boundary line doesn't take into account the hardships the people involved will face. The only way we're going to see some quick relief is for the ministry to lift the patient care cap and declare Niagara an underserved region."

You can talk about all the committees you want; the purse strings are in your hands. Will you quit your obsession with tax cuts and reinvest in the health care of this province so that our people in Niagara can receive appropriate eye care?

Hon Mrs Witmer: First of all, I think it's absolutely essential that I stress the fact that our government has increased funding for health care to the highest level ever

in the history of this province. We are currently spending about \$20.6 billion. That is a tremendous increase and we've indicated we will spend 20% more in the next few years, so for anyone to pretend that we are spending less, it is not so, and it is based on the fact that we have created and helped to create an economy where we do have taxes and they are being paid and it is for that reason that we can support the health system that we have today.

Again, I remind you that we work co-operatively with our partners. In this case it is physicians who work with the Ministry of Health who have designed the criteria for this program, and each year those—

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

New question.

HIGHWAY 17

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Many of the residents of eastern Ontario, particularly the western part of the Ottawa-Carleton region and up the valley towards Renfrew, are concerned about the safety of Highway 17. This government, to give credit where credit is due, has made a great deal of progress in the area by expanding four-lane highways, particularly to Antrim.

Last May, the previous Minister of Transportation committed to continue this expansion from Antrim to Arnprior of the four-lane highway, and to initiate the process that would lead to the highway's future expansion through to Renfrew. Will the government honour this important commitment?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): I thank the honourable member for his question and I'm delighted to reconfirm our government's commitment to four-lane Highway 17 through to Arnprior. I would like to comment on the excellent work of our former colleague Leo Jordan in making sure that this money was available for it.

As well, I would like to report that preliminary design studies will begin very shortly from Arnprior to Renfrew. This government honours its commitments. A nine-kilometre section was completed last month on 417 and designs for the four-laning of the next section, from Regional Road 20 to Regional Road 22, is currently underway.

Mr Coburn: I'm sure the residents of that area will find those words very encouraging.

Clearly, this government has proven its commitment to eastern Ontarians by enhancing our transportation infrastructure, particularly with the completion of Highway 416, enhancements to Highway 7 and the continued four-laning of Highway 17. The federal Liberals, on the other hand, seem to be missing in action.

Minister, will you now call on the federal Liberals to join the province in making a commitment to this important part of our safety and economic well-being and encourage them to invest in our transportation infrastructure for future prosperity?

Hon Mr Turnbull: You ask a tremendously important question. We're spending record amounts this year, at close to \$700 million. This year alone the federal government will take out of Ontario in excess of \$2 billion in gasoline taxes. Last year they invested \$20 million, after taking \$2 billion out of the province.

The provincial premiers reaffirmed, and just last night the provincial ministers of finance reaffirmed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Will the minister take his seat. I cannot, with the two sides going back and forth, hear.

Is the minister done?

Hon Mr Turnbull: Perhaps I should repeat: The federal Liberals took in \$2 billion and spent \$20 million on the roads of this province.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. This is a memorandum dated November 5 regarding the Ontario Real Estate Corp real estate sales program. I've read it with great interest. Seeing your press release, you've outlined eight approximate items regarding the process of sales. I think you've missed one, and I want to bring it to your attention right now.

I want to remind you of an announcement that was made on March 23 of this year by your colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services with great fanfare when she said the province would be making lands available for affordable housing projects. I'm going to quote that release to you. It said the Harris government would be "making vacant or underused public lands available to create at minimum 500 units of affordable rental housing." It goes on: "More affordable housing is needed and the private sector is in the best position to build it. However, the cost of land can be a barrier. These lands will be provided at reduced prices...."

Minister, confirm the process for me. Tell me what specific arrangements you've made for the affordable housing projects, and finally, for the record, please tell this House which lands have been set aside—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member's time.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The member of the opposition knows the announcement was made by a different minister, but I will endeavour to explain the policy. On the specifics, he can ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing exactly which properties.

The Ontario Real Estate Corp is reviewing a whole number of properties that the government no longer needs. We don't wish to tie up our dollars maintaining or upgrading those pieces of property that are not needed by the taxpayers to deliver services that the public expect. In that regard, there is a whole list of properties that will be reviewed to create a business case to see if we should sell them or not, and those dollars can be utilized by the

government of Ontario to provide services that the public care about.

In terms of the homeless strategy, we have been quite clear and upfront on that: There are a few pieces of property that, with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we'll consider for sites to help the homeless.

1520

Mr Caplan: Interesting. We should all be concerned about the answer the minister has given us today, because in March your colleague gets up and makes a splashy pre-election announcement saying you're going to do something about homelessness in the province. Then of course your government goes ahead and guts rent controls and tenant protection; you've slashed shelter allowances.

Here it is, eight months later, and you're selling off assets without any consideration to the promises you made eight months ago. The time for action is now. I've met with many groups from around this province who are anxious to access public lands for affordable housing, and these groups want to hear what your plans are today.

Minister, why don't you just admit that you're never planning to give up any lands for public housing, that there is no proposal you're interested in? Why don't you tell this House that it's another in a list of broken promises? Admit today that when you come to write press releases, you know how to talk the talk, but when it comes to living up to the meagre commitments you made in March, you have no idea how to walk the walk. Admit that the announcement in March was a sham. Admit that you have—

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

Hon Mr Hodgson: The answer to his preamble is no.

In answer to his announcement on the homeless strategy, it was announced that it's in co-operation with other levels of government. I know the federal Liberal Party has been accused of dragging its feet on this, but I've heard rumours that they're getting involved. The municipality of Toronto is quite concerned. It is a municipal responsibility and other levels of government have been working with this. The announcement in the spring was, "If we can be helpful, we will." We've announced how much effort we've put into this. There has been the Ministry of Health as well as the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and they certainly don't need to take a back seat to any of those false accusations that you've been suggesting.

FORT HENRY

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): My question is for the Minister of Tourism. There is a concern in eastern Ontario regarding the future of Fort Henry, which is located in Kingston. It is my understanding that Fort Henry is owned by the federal government through Parks Canada but has been operated under lease by the province through the St Lawrence Parks Commission. This fort is designated as a national historic site by the federal government and is an important part of our national

heritage. Can the minister tell me what steps are being taken to preserve Fort Henry?

Interjection.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I noticed the interjections from the member for Kingston and the Islands, who hasn't found time to ask a question about a fort in his own riding.

The fact is that this fort is operated by the provincial government, yet it is the only example in Canada of a national heritage property owned by the federal government but subsidized by the taxpayers of a province to the tune of \$1.2 million. This government is committed to ensuring that it has an outstanding program at this site, but we're not getting the commitment in order to ensure the preservation of this historical site. As I say, we're providing about a \$1.2-million subsidy to operate the program at Fort Henry every year.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Why doesn't the minister just put back the money he took out of the system and out of the St Lawrence—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat. Supplementary?

Mr Coburn: I have expressed concern about the structural integrity of the fort and the St Lawrence Parks Commission have expressed concern about the lack of capital investment in Fort Henry. Can the minister bring us up to date on the discussions with the three levels of government?

Hon Mr Jackson: The people of eastern Ontario should be concerned about this important historical site. After all, for the last two years our government has been sitting at a table, sitting down with residents of the Kingston area, with their municipal council, and with the federal government. We have to realize that this property used to be a Department of National Defence property and it was only recently that the federal government determined it wasn't essential to the security of our nation. It has now been transferred over to Parks Canada, but they're not putting any money into it in terms of a long-term commitment to ensure its preservation.

Our responsibility is to the taxpayers of Ontario. We are maintaining our commitment to our historical sites that we've developed in this province. We are very proud of the fact that we're putting \$2.5 million into Ste-Marie-among-the-Hurons and Discovery Harbour, \$3.2 million into Old Fort William in Thunder Bay, and over \$4 million has gone into the St Lawrence Parks Commission, which includes Upper Canada Village. These are important heritage properties that this government has continued to commit taxpayers' dollars to preserve.

VISITORS

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it's appropriate for me at this point in time to point out to you that we have

visitors in the east gallery from the centre of the universe, the Swan Lake retirement community in Markham.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It's not a point of order.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday, the members of the standing committee on justice had its organizational meeting. At that time they elected a Chair and a Vice-Chair, and as well at that time the members of the subcommittee were determined. The subcommittee adjourned its meeting until today, at 3:30 of course.

My office received a telephone call from the clerk's office indicating that today's meeting is cancelled, and the proposal was that the meeting be held on Thursday at 3:30, in the alternative. The explanation that was given was that Mr Mazzilli, who is the member for London-Fanshawe, was going to be substituting for Ms Elliott, who was the person named to the committee and who was the person on the subcommittee.

I spoke with Mr Mazzilli and I take everything he told me, quite frankly, at face value. I have confidence in what he's explained to me, that he is a member of the committee that's meeting today to deal with the municipal affairs estimates.

My question to you, Speaker, and the point of order is that I find it an interesting twist of the rules to adjourn a meeting to a certain time, date and place, and then, without having that meeting occur, to just simply say, "Well, the meeting's not going to happen there and let's try Thursday at 3:30."

Mr Mazzilli explains that he's the parliamentary assistant, of course, and would be interested in this matter. I appreciate that and I understand that. But today was only a subcommittee meeting. I will make myself available Thursday, of course I will, and quite frankly I'm prepared to consent to having this meeting transferred or adjourned from today to Thursday.

But I raise this, Speaker, first of all to make a record of what happened, because you understand I'm a little suspicious about these sorts of things. But fair enough, and I attribute nothing other than the best of motives to Mr Mazzilli. I want to make that very clear. But I say to the Speaker that the Speaker in this instance should indicate on this point of order that a committee hearing can't just be adjourned out of thin air, that you can't just over the telephone say, "Oh, well, we're not going to be there on Tuesday, so let's do it Thursday."

In any event, though, I'm going to consent to the matter occurring, because I understand why Mr Mazzilli should be at that committee. But I'm concerned about this and I don't want the record to indicate that I'm accepting it as any sort of precedent—far from it. It's only by unanimous consent, in my view, that the committee or subcommittee can do this.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member will know it's not a point of order. With respect, he may want

to raise it with the committee Chair in dealing with committee matters. I'm sure the members will be able to work it out.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would appreciate some clarification as to why it's not a point of order. I don't want to belabour it. I was the other member attending the committee meeting yesterday. There was an agreement of all three parties to have the meeting on a date. But if there is an abandonment of that consensus, if involvement of all members on the committee is altered, why is that not a point of order for the Speaker?

The Speaker: I ruled it was not a point of order. This is something that should be dealt with by the committee Chair in dealing with that. I'm sure that the members will be able to work it out. In situations like this it is not a point of order dealing with procedures in this House.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: It was a subcommittee of the committee that was to meet. It could very well be a point of order. It has to be taken up at the committee level and a ruling has to be made. What I'm trying to say, Mr Speaker, is that—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Fine.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Could you explain to me, was the last speaker a consultant to the Speaker in giving advice to this House?

The Speaker: I thank the member for his help on that.

Hon Mr Klees: On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe that your ruling is appropriate and it's up to the committee, as you say, to deal with this matter.

The Speaker: I'm sure the members will be able to work this out.

1530

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): Mr Speaker, I rise today on a brief point of privilege. Yesterday in the House, in response to a question from the honourable member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, the Hansard records me as saying, "In Ontario, we consider parole to be a right and not a privilege." That of course is not what I intended to say. That may well be—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Sampson: I hear the members from the Liberal benches heckling. That of course would be their particular view of parole in this province; I certainly know it's a view of the federal Liberal government in this country. But this government and this minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Would the member take his seat. The member is trying to change the record and I cannot hear. I'd appreciate it if all the members would let the minister make the correction.

Minister.

Hon Mr Sampson: Thank you, Speaker. What was recorded in Hansard may well be the position from the Liberal benches, but this government, this minister, believes that in Ontario parole is a privilege and not a right, and it's a privilege to be earned. I want that record corrected. Thank you.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Help me, Speaker. Is he suggesting that the record from yesterday ought to be corrected, or is he simply correcting the error that he made yesterday? I'm being quite—

The Speaker: I think the member is, if I follow, directly trying to correct the record of what he said yesterday.

Hon Mr Sampson: Just to be clear, Speaker, I'm correcting the record, and it's my record, so I believe that's within the realm of the privilege. I was just pointing out that what is recorded in Hansard may well be the view of the Liberal Party, but it's not the view of this minister that parole—

The Speaker: Order. The minister has made the correction.

Mr Gerretsen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Surely to goodness the record of these proceedings is whatever the record says. A member can come in here the next day and say, "What is being recorded is not what I meant to say," but he cannot correct the record of what he actually said on the day when he said it. I'm quite serious about this, Speaker. Surely the record of this House is the record of this House.

The Speaker: You know the procedure is that he is allowed to change the next day, and what he is very clearly saying is that the record today will reflect the change that he is talking about. The member has, I think, tried to do that and make the point of privilege and change things, which all members are allowed to do in this House.

PETITIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I just wanted you to know I keep receiving hundreds of petitions from residents who are against the closing of schools in Toronto. This one reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government's decision to slash education funding could lead to the closure of many neighbourhood schools"—and indeed has led to the closure of schools—"including one of the most community-oriented schools like Earls court public school; and

"Whereas the present funding formula does not take into account the historic and cultural links schools have with their communities nor the special education programs that have developed as a direct need of our communities; and

"Whereas the prospect of closing neighbourhood community schools will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools; and

"Whereas Earls court public school is a community school with many links to the immediate neighbourhood, such as day care, a games room, an open gym, fitness classes and a site for sports activities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, demand that the government changes the funding formula to take into account the historic, cultural and community links that Earls court public school has established."

I'm signing this document because I'm in total agreement with this.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm very privileged to present a petition on behalf of the honourable Janet Ecker, who is not able to present this petition on behalf of her constituents. Specifically, Donna Craig has presented here a very large number of petition signatures from such constituents as Irene Wilson, Janet Ellis, Sebastian Angelo, Barbara McLeod, just to name but five.

"We, the undersigned residents of Canada, draw the attention of the House to the following:

"That lately there has been a distinct increase in animal cruelty in Ontario;

"That the antiquated laws and punishments must be amended in order to deter animal abusers from inflicting pain and agony on defenceless animals that are only wanting unconditional love;

"That by having stricter laws would discourage an abuser of domineering a defenceless animal because of the cost and time spent in jail if convicted;

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" to introduce laws which would provide longer jail sentences, larger fines, no further ownership of animals within a lifetime and publication of accuseds' names and addresses.

I'm pleased to present these on behalf of Janet Ecker.

LANDFILL

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a petition here for the Premier, signed by almost the entire community of Tyendinaga, and it reads:

"We, the residents of Tyendinaga township, strongly object to the development of a mega garbage dump in our area. Please stop the proposed expansion of the Richmond landfill site by Canadian Waste Systems."

I'm signing my name to this petition as I support the residents of Tyendinaga in their fight to stop this dump. There are over 700 names on this and I'm pleased to add my name to them.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): I'd like to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

"Whereas traffic levels on all sections of Highway 401 continue to increase; and

"Whereas Canada's number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter trucks; and

"Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driver licensing fees; and

"Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to over \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes;

"We, the undersigned members of the Canadian Automobile Association and other residents of Ontario, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately upgrade Highway 401 to at least a six-lane highway with full paved shoulders and rumble strips; and

"We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenues in road safety improvements in Ontario."

This petition has been signed by many residents of Mississauga and I'm pleased to present it to you.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographic locations;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the

unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities.”

Again, this is signed by another 100 concerned constituents in my riding and I have affixed my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas children are exposed to sexually explicit material in variety stores and video rental outlets;

“Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

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

“To enact legislation which will:

“Create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to sexually explicit material in retail establishments;

“Make it illegal to sell, rent, or loan sexually explicit materials to minors.”

I’ve also signed the petition.

1540

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor;”—and the carnage continues—“and

“Whereas traffic levels on all sections of Highway 401 continue to increase; and

“Whereas Canada’s number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter trucks; and

“Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driver licensing fees;

“We, the undersigned members of the Canadian Automobile Association and other residents of Ontario, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately upgrade Highway 401 to at least a six-lane highway with full paved shoulders and rumble strips.”

This is signed by a number of residents of St Thomas and Elgin county area, and I gladly affix my signature.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

“Whereas traffic levels on all sections of Highway 401 continue to increase; and

“Whereas Canada’s number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter trucks; and

“Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driver licensing fees; and

“Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to over \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes, and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes,

“We, the undersigned members of the Canadian Automobile Association and other residents of Ontario, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately upgrade Highway 401 to at least a six-lane highway with full paved shoulders and rumble strips; and

“We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.”

This is signed by a number of residents from Morpeth, Chatham and Thamesville. I add my signature to it.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children are exposed to sexually explicit material in variety stores and video rental outlets;

“Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposures to sexually explicit material;

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

“To enact legislation which will:

“Create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to sexually explicit material in retail establishments;

“Make it illegal to sell, rent, or loan sexually explicit materials to minors.”

I’ve also signed the petition.

OPPOSITION DAY

SPORTS FACILITY TAXATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I seek unanimous consent to read the motion on behalf of our leader.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr Christopherson: On behalf of Mr Hampton, I move that:

Be it resolved that, in the opinion of this House, professional sports operations should not benefit from special property tax reductions.

I’m pleased to provide the leadoff debate for my caucus on this issue. I would advise the Speaker that our

leader, Howard Hampton, will be doing our wrap-up debate just prior to the vote later this afternoon.

The issue we have here on the floor right now is one that, for the second time since this Parliament has sat, in a very short time, sees the official opposition and the government joining hand in hand, trotting down the same economic path. In this case, it's a question of whether or not there will be tax breaks, of course something this government claims to be a real expert at, and it is, in terms of making sure that the very well off get lots of tax breaks, and that's what we have again.

This is all about cracking under the pressure that's being put on the government, and obviously on the official opposition, the Liberals too, to provide further benefits to NHL millionaires. This is what upsets us. The minister talks about the fact that he wants to create a level playing field. Yet it disturbs us that at this time of massive cuts in order to pay for their tax cut neither the minister nor any of his colleagues ever talk about a level playing field for the homeless. Or how about a level playing field for workers or a level playing field for those individuals in our communities who are watching and experiencing our health care system deteriorate? How about a level playing field for the kids with special needs in Hamilton who aren't getting the supports they need in the classroom, through educational assistance, so that they can fully participate in the education system, as they have up until now and as they are entitled to under law, because there's not enough money?

The government changed the funding formula and now our board doesn't have enough money to hire the necessary education assistants to help these special-needs kids go into the classroom and learn. Where is the government standing up and saying there has to be a level playing field for our kids? We need to make sure that kids with special needs have the same opportunities for an education that every other child has. Why aren't they talking about that level playing field?

Again, in Hamilton we're talking about \$3.5 million. That's a lot of money; in the context of a budget of \$60 some-odd billion, which I believe is what the revenue number is now, it's not. But if it was your child, all the money in the world wouldn't seem big enough to justify why your child can't be participating in a classroom the way they have in the past and the way they're entitled to. No, this government doesn't want to have that level playing field debate. They want to have a debate about a level playing field that is going to see, ultimately, if the option is taken up, \$32 million—\$16 million from the province and \$16 million from the municipalities involved—and I'll speak to that in a moment.

With all the problems we've got in our communities, which, by the way, they've either created or exacerbated by virtue of their cuts, billions of dollars given back to the very wealthy, they've decided that \$32 million will not go to health care, won't go to help the homeless. God forbid they should do anything to provide an infrastructure to support those squeegee kids, because their answer to that, of course, is to throw them all in jail and treat

them like criminals. They don't think it's important enough to spend this money on social services. Where is the Ontarians with Disabilities Act they've promised? None of those things get any attention by this government, not in a meaningful way. But, boy, when it comes to tax breaks for hockey millionaires, they can't get an announcement out fast enough, they can't get that legislation through quick enough. Because \$32 million is nothing for them to worry about when it comes to providing tax breaks for millionaires. They're already probably the best at it in Canada.

But God help you if you're not one of those chosen few and you don't have the means to have private health care, private education, live in a gated community, the only roads that are left to what everyone used to have access to just a few years ago under Mike Harris's Ontario.

1550

None of those things is a priority. Is it just the NDP saying that? Well, it is in this House, that's for sure, because the Tories are proposing it and the Liberals are trotting right on side just like they are with the very extreme balanced budget legislation that's coming down.

The only ones who are saying—here anyway—that this is a wrong idea, wrong priority, and not the best use of \$32 million of taxpayers' money are the NDP. But outside? According to an Angus Reid poll that was released, conducted on behalf of the federal Department of Industry, only 37% of the population supports this. How did this become one of the biggest, most important fiscal matters facing this government? How the hell did that happen?

Again, we're not the only ones who have some real concerns. Walter Robinson of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation states something very interesting. He's on record as saying, "The money people in business spend on games is disposable income and they'll just spend that elsewhere."

I know the economic arguments are going to come up about why this should be done. If I lived in a locale affected by this, purely to represent my home community I might try and make those arguments too. Objectively, in fairness, an MPP has to do what they have to do for their community. If you don't do it, who else will? I have lots of time and respect for that. But that's a whole lot different from a caucus uniting around a position or, in this case, a government saying that the policy for them is that the best way to spend \$32 million is to give it to hockey millionaires. That's the problem with this.

Two last things before I sit down. One, I find it—I can't use the language that describes how I find it, but I will say that I find it curious that the government has involved the municipalities in this. They're going to argue partnerships or "We don't want to be telling municipalities what to do," which of course is a joke, because you've taken over just about everything. Whatever they say is really not the point. The fact of the matter is I think they're doing this because they want political cover. That way it's not just them.

If the government believes in it that much, spend the whole \$32 million. No, no, they split it 50/50 between them and the municipalities. I think it's to provide political cover. They just want to be able to say: "We're not the only government. It's not just us. Here's this local city council; they've decided it's their biggest priority."

It's interesting that it seems that Toronto—which is of course one of the key communities affected by this. It would appear at this point that their council has absolutely no appetite for this, for the simple reason that, unlike the Mike Harris cabinet ministers, the Toronto councillors, when they walk down the street, acknowledge and see and have some compassion for the fact that there are people sleeping on the street because they don't have anywhere to live. Again, if not directly caused, it's certainly exacerbated by the policies of this government—the vicious, mean-spirited policies of this government.

So it would appear Toronto council has looked at this issue and said, "How in God's name would we justify spending \$16 million on hockey millionaires, when we're trying to find every scrap of available dollars to put into some of the social services that we so desperately need in our community, given the fact that the Harris government has dumped all these issues on us and has set in place policies that are causing more and more people to be homeless?" Bear in mind, that's just an indicator. When we talk about the homeless, it's the most blatant example of what's happening in the economy to the vast majority of people in terms of starting to fall downward. It's only those at the very top, those who are already doing well, who are getting the real benefit of this government's agenda.

So it doesn't look like it's going to happen in Toronto but where it may happen in other communities, make no mistake, the minister of the day responsible is going to stand in his or her place and say: "It's not just us; it's also the local community. They decided it's a priority." Again, more political smoke and mirrors.

The other thing I expect, since we're the only ones opposing this and we've put this issue forward, is that we're going to face some criticisms and some attention today, and that's fine. We welcome that, because I'm sure somebody is going to want to talk about some of the programs and supports that we put in place in some communities, such as your own in Sault Ste Marie, Speaker.

We will be reminding all the Tories and Liberals who want to talk about that today that the period we were in, from 1990 to 1995, represented the most serious economic recession across North America and indeed most of the world, but most severe in North America—and, by the way, ultimately most severe in Canada thanks to the policies of that wonderful Tory, Brian Mulroney—so we did help out. We helped out de Havilland, Algoma Steel, St Marys Paper, Spruce Falls, Provincial Papers and others, but it wasn't just some kind of a giveaway. It certainly wasn't off the property tax base.

The fact is that during the deepest recession that we faced since the 1930's, our government wasn't going to stand by and allow all these industries and the thousands of jobs and the crucial economic activity that that means to each of our respective communities to completely crash and burn and wash our hands of it. We weren't about to do that.

That is a whole lot different than being in the midst—some would argue at the end, but at the very least in the midst—of the greatest economic boom we've ever seen, with the government already giving \$6 billion a year in tax breaks benefiting the very wealthy the most, deciding that after you've cut money for education, for hospitals, for social services, all the things that the working, middle-class people—which is the bulk of the population in this province—need in order to maintain the standard of living that has given us the honour of being chosen by the United Nations four times the best country in the world—and we are the biggest province in that country; you've got to feel good about that.

We're losing all of that. We're losing it because of the direct actions and policies of the Mike Harris government. They have decided that having slashed and cut money being spent in our hospitals; changed the formula and cutting money to our education system, leaving kids all across Ontario with special needs not being able to get into the classroom; cut social services—you're not going to be let off the hook just because there has been an election. It's still your policy. You're still the government that took great pride—and I always think of this every time you stand up and pretend to care about the homeless—you're the government that cut almost 22% of the income of the poorest of the poor.

So the same government during the same economic boom says: "We're going to cut 21.6% of the income of the poorest of the poor, then we're going to change the tax system so that we can give the bulk of \$6 billion of tax cuts to the very wealthy, and we're going to cut all the wonderful programs and services that have made this the greatest country in the world to live in." Now they've decided that in the midst of all of that, the next most important thing for them to do is to find a way to give hockey millionaires \$32 million.

This is the essence of what we have the greatest difficulty with. It's the notion that while this government talks about caring about the homeless and health care and education—and yes, I do keep coming back to those things because they are some of the most important things that make our society, and you cut them.

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You talk about wanting to have a balanced budget, nothing is more important than balancing those books, and yet we would have already had a balanced budget if you had made absolutely no cuts but had not given the tax gift to the very wealthy. We would already have a balanced budget, and we wouldn't have had to endure the cuts.

When this government stands up and says that everything they're doing is about the economy and it's about

the overall good and that whole speech, all they're really saying is, "We made sure that we took care of our friends." Obviously, hockey millionaires are a part of that, and equally obviously, those kids who need educational assistance to participate in our education system are not important, are not the priority.

That is the essence of our opposition to this proposal. The fact that both the Tories and the Liberals feel that this is good economic policy means that unless we do something like we've done today, which is to make an opposition day, which is one of the days we're entitled to spend the time in this House talking about an issue that we think is important, if it weren't for this, there wouldn't be much debate around this issue, because there are only nine of us. But we are using one of our opposition days to put this issue on the floor, because we don't believe that you can morally justify spending this kind of money on hockey millionaires when there are so many other issues and policies and programs and services in our community that benefit the overwhelming majority of middle-class working families.

We look forward to engaging in the debate with the other two parties and ultimately to seeing how close a vote we do indeed have at the appointed time.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I've been listening with some interest to the last few minutes of the member for Hamilton West's remarks. I want to clarify a few things up front.

First of all, we're not asking the taxpayers of Hamilton, Ontario, or any other city in Ontario, to give the owners of the Corel Centre in Ottawa a tax break, even though we have such facilities around the province. If you want to take Hamilton as an example, the community which the honourable member represents, we have Copps Coliseum. He can correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't think they pay a single red cent in property taxes anywhere to the municipality—

Mr Christopherson: Who built it and paid for it?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): The province and Hamilton.

Hon Mr Eves: Yes, the province and Hamilton built Copps Coliseum. We are not asking the taxpayers in Hamilton, though, to subsidize the Corel Centre in Ottawa or—

Interjection: Yes, you are.

Hon Mr Eves: No, we are not.

First of all, know your facts. There is no money, no cheque being sent to anyone, Not one single hockey team, not one single hockey player, will get one red cent out of the proposed regulation that we plan on introducing. All we're planning on doing is making a level playing field for a privately owned arena that happened to house professional sporting teams in the province of Ontario, if they choose to have a tax rate anywhere from virtually zero—slightly above zero—to the current commercial rate.

That will be a range of fairness, just like the range of fairness that municipalities have now for any commercial or industrial property within their jurisdiction. It can always be from zero to the current rate; they just can't go above the rate, if they're above the provincial average of 3.3. So you should know what you're talking about before you start talking.

No money is going to be sent anywhere. Municipalities are going to be able to have the opportunity to put their facilities on the same playing field, if they choose, as facilities in other municipalities that maybe were built with the taxpayers' money, maybe were built with partly municipal money and partly Ontario money, maybe even federal money. We're just giving them an opportunity to go there if they want to.

Having said that, another incorrect assumption that's being made is that the municipality and the province will have to eat this amount. The municipality has the ability to recapture that money from other commercial taxpayers, not residential taxpayers—I've also heard honourable members opposite from the third party talking in the media etc, and I've read and heard in the media where people are saying, "We're going to have a 2% levy across the board on residential taxpayers to pay for this." That cannot happen under the legislation. It has to be recaptured from within the commercial class.

In the case of the city of Toronto, they can do whatever they want, it's up to them at the end of the day, but the amount of the tax rate that would go up on every other commercial property in the city of Toronto to lower rates on those facilities would be infinitesimal. It's not going to be a huge amount, but they don't have to do it. Nobody is making them do it.

Mr Christopherson: You don't have much for the homeless, Ernie.

Hon Mr Eves: He talks about the homeless. This year we gave the homeless \$100 million, and the federal government is giving them absolutely zip, zero, not one red cent. Hello. Is anybody home over there in Hamilton West?

He talks about giving tax cuts. Tax reductions in the province have resulted in a net tax revenue increase to the province of Ontario of \$6.5 billion in 1999 compared to what we got in 1995.

I know you don't like to hear this, because I've heard your leader, and I've heard the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, his former riding, talk in 1995 about how our revenue base was going to go down by \$5 billion. I don't hear them regurgitating that totally inaccurate prediction they made in 1995, because the result is not only has it not gone down by \$5 billion; it's gone up \$6.5 billion. You're only out \$11.5 billion. I'm glad you're not running the finances of the province of Ontario if you screw up by \$11.5 billion a year. We can't afford to make those kind of mistakes on this side of the House. We actually have to be fairly accurate as to what's going to happen.

He talks about the tax reductions we've given. The tax reductions we gave to the people at the lowest end of the income scale where they start paying taxes, more modest,

they got a tax reduction of 41.7%, and we scaled it down to about 14% to 15% for those at the top of the income scale. We did that on purpose to help those at the more modest income levels, although you wouldn't know that from listening to the members opposite from the third party.

The member from Hamilton West was talking about quotes from other people. I'd like to read a few quotes into the record with respect to his party's position on these things. Jeff Harder on November 5, 1999:

"NDP leader Howard Hampton is counting on Duncan's" blah, blah, blah, "so voters won't notice his hypocritical line of questioning.

"Hampton's latest target is the spectre of property tax breaks for NHL arenas...."

"What Hampton seems to be willing to forget is that he was at Bob Rae's cabinet table when they handed out hundreds of millions of dollars to rich businessmen. They included miners, paper makers, a bus manufacturer and a multinational, Quebec-based transportation company. The list goes on. Most of it is written in red ink."

Mr Christopherson: Working people don't rate in your mind, do they?

Hon Mr Eves: We're talking about people who own the mills, own the bus companies—that's who you gave the breaks to. You didn't write cheques to individual workers. You wrote cheques to the owners of the companies, the very multimillionaires that you're here denigrating today in the Legislature.

It's somewhat hypocritical, too, or somewhat, sorry, inconsistent—I withdraw the word hypocritical—when the same NDP when they were were in power, not that I say this is a bad thing but this is what they did, on December 1, 1991, passed a bill called the City of Windsor Act. Do you know what that bill did? The bill allowed the city of Windsor to acquire and exempt certain land from property taxes to construct and develop a multi-use facility envisioned complete with a sports and entertainment centre. It was good enough then.

Did you vote for that, I say to the member for Hamilton West? Did you vote for that piece of legislation? How can you possibly be criticizing this if you voted for that? Hello. I'm not hearing anything over there.

All the government is trying to do here is to respond to an inequity in the property taxation area with respect to sporting facilities in Ontario, especially those that happen to be privately owned, that house professional teams. To date, there are only four such facilities in the province. Three of them, the Air Canada Centre, Maple Leaf Gardens and the SkyDome, are in the city of Toronto and the Corel Centre, of course, is in the city of Ottawa, in Kanata.

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There's a level playing field that we're trying to create within Ontario, an opportunity for municipalities that choose to do that. Also, there's a playing field that we have to think about, if we're talking about the NHL or the NBA or the CFL or any of those other things, so that they can have a level playing field with teams in British

Columbia, in Calgary, in Edmonton or in Madison Square Garden in New York, for that matter.

If those municipalities think that those teams are important enough to the economy of their area or their municipality, they may choose to give them a partial break, an entire break or no break as they see fit, being the local elected representatives, to do that. We have said that whatever they decide to do, we will match that on our side with respect to the education tax. If they choose to recoup that money from the rest of the commercial class, we automatically, according to legislation that's already in place, will do the same.

I might point out that they have the ability to do that in many other areas. Municipalities have many optional tools for property classes. They can phase in property tax assessments. They can already choose optional classes such as office towers and shopping centres. Some choose to, some choose not to. They can set graduated rates if they want. They can choose different scenarios. They can protect hardship cases even among the commercial class if they choose to. They can exempt entirely, if they want, disabled people. They can exempt entirely, if they want, seniors. They can exempt entirely, if they want, charities, or partially. They have to exempt them at least to the tune of 40%.

I think those are decisions that are appropriately and properly made at the local level because they're the people who are closest to the individual taxpayers, closest to the people in their community, and they know which individuals or entities need assistance or don't need assistance.

All we're saying, just like all those other cases, is that if these municipalities decide to opt for that, then we will match them on the educational side, in terms of our rate going down in a proportionate amount. I think that's a fair and equitable thing to do.

I would point out, as I've pointed out many times, that this is not going to solve the problem for the NHL. This is an infinitesimal little part of their problem. Until the league, the owners and the players sit down and agree that they are going to have a revenue-sharing plan like other professional leagues have, that they're going to have a salary cap like other professional leagues have, until they sit down and agree to address those two very fundamental problems, at least 90% to 95% of their problem, in my opinion, is going to remain unsolved.

All we're trying to do on the provincial level is to give those particular municipalities that happen to house those facilities, that house those teams, the opportunity, if they choose to avail themselves of it, to put their facilities on a level playing field with others within the province of Ontario, within the country of Canada and within North America.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm very pleased this afternoon to participate in this debate. I will attempt during the time that I have to point out what I believe to be the false assumptions on the basis of this resolution.

As the leadoff speaker for the NDP has pointed out, this is really taking money away from the good things that we would want to support in Ontario, especially health care, especially education, especially those people who may be homeless and all of those who need the support of our government. Indeed, the unintended effect of this resolution may lead to the province as a whole and individual municipalities having less tax revenue to make a contribution, for any level of government to be able to contribute to the things that I just mentioned. That would be my premise this afternoon.

I come from Ottawa Centre. Ottawa-Carleton is the region. The national capital area is a fascinating part of our country. Ottawa-Carleton is a great part to live in, the second-largest populated area in Ontario, and we have an NHL franchise called the Ottawa Senators. They happen to be number one in the league today, in the league totally, from among all 26 teams. We're very proud of that.

We're also very proud of the contribution the team has made not only in terms of the image of Ottawa as being a staid place, not an exciting place to be—of course when you go there you see immediately how wrong that image may be—but in being able to promote the whole area. I might add, I will also outline its economic contributions, which I believe are germane to the resolution that has been put forward today.

The owner of the Senators has stated I believe quite clearly and eloquently that they are more than willing to pay their fair share of taxes. That is stated with some credibility, because everyone knows that the exchange rate makes it quite difficult in this particular field. It doesn't generally. It helps general exporters of products, whether it's software or whether it's cars or whatever. It's attractive because we have a low dollar. But when you're paying for things like hockey players, you're paying in American dollars, and that is a distinct handicap for Canadian teams.

Also, the nature of the taxes and some surtaxes and other charges that the Senators and the Corel Centre in particular have to pay add an extra burden to their ability to be competitive and indeed to survive. The property tax alone for the Senators has gone up over 100% every year. Don't hold me to the specific figure, but the tax they paid for the first year was less than \$1 million. It's now \$4.6 million, and there is a challenge to that assessment, and indeed it's suggested that their tax may be \$7 million. This is an enormous burden for this particular team that makes a contribution to the local economy.

The Ottawa Senators pay to the province, as I said, \$4.6 million, which is more than each and every one of the total American hockey teams combined. In other words, the Ottawa Senators alone pay more than the Toronto Maple Leafs in their property taxes—I don't know what it is; it's less than \$2 million for the Toronto Maple Leafs—they pay \$4.6 million—and the Montreal Canadiens pay about \$11 million. So you can see that if we put all the Canadian teams together, we pay about six times what's paid in the American context. Stick with

that argument for a while. That just affects our ability to survive in Canada.

I suggest to you that there needs to be a recognition of what I would call some adjustment. Of course, the people who are against looking at making some adjustment never like to recognize—people will know there are many tax credits, there are all kinds of supports for the high-tech industry; for example, people in the automotive industry, people in the manufacturing industry. Why? Because they want to keep a business alive, and the NDP supported this. I know they did that. I have no trouble with trying to keep a paper mill alive in northern Ontario because it provides jobs. But we're talking about 1,275 direct jobs in the Ottawa-Carleton area, and not even including all the spinoff jobs that has created.

What I believe the NDP has failed to realize is the role of the Senators in having stimulated not only through their own direct operations—they've developed restaurants, they've developed theatres, they have developed all kinds of new businesses that have strengthened—

Interjection.

Mr Patten: He doesn't want to listen—that have strengthened all kinds of other businesses. The surveys that have been done will tell you that the people in Kanata will tell you that their business community—and I know the member for Carleton would also know that other businesses have sprung up because of the presence of the Senators.

So my position is not directly related to if you make an adjustment in taxes of a couple of million dollars—the NDP talks about \$32 million. It's not \$32 million; in the case of the Senators it may be a couple of million dollars less than they are paying at the moment. But he fails to recognize the ongoing value and fails to appreciate that indeed we're talking about a team that may disappear if it's not able to make it. The team is losing about \$7 million to \$10 million a year. They're in first place in the league, they have the third-lowest payroll in all of hockey, their fan support is terrific, and they're still having trouble making it.

In my opinion, there are three ingredients as to why that is so. The first is that their property tax is very high. Second, they have to pay for something that the NDP forced them to pay, and that was the interchange. In 1991-92, you forced them to pay for the interchange for people to get to the Corel Centre to watch hockey games. Should they pay something towards that? Yes, I believe they should. Was it fair for them to pay the whole amount, \$35 million, the \$2.6 million a year they're paying back for a loan from the province? No, it isn't. Now that Corel is building across the street—

Mr Christopherson: Doesn't that road go to a hospital too?

Mr Patten: That whole area needed that interchange, except they didn't need it quite at that time. They said, "Maybe five to 10 years out." It's now almost 10 years out. Believe me, they would have needed it even if the Senators were not there.

So now we get new businesses that are delighted with that, and they're all saying to the Senators, "Thank you very much for paying the price of the interchange for the development of the whole area." Then we get an NDP resolution to force that on them, when they are facing survival and they are crying, which doesn't acknowledge the contribution they make to the whole area.

As was pointed out by the finance minister, the Corel Centre is not municipally owned. Some of the other arenas may be, and my friend from Hamilton will be discussing this perhaps a little later. So the people of Ontario, in terms of the construction of the facility and purchase of the land, put not one red cent into that facility, which is a net asset to the city of Kanata, to the region of Ottawa-Carleton, to eastern Ontario and to the province of Ontario.

I say again to my friend from Hamilton West, at no point have the owners ever said, "We are not prepared to pay our fair share." "Give us an opportunity to pay on the same basis as any other business, without any surtaxes. Charging us for the interchange, jacking up the property tax almost exponentially will not help us to be competitive," even though at the moment they're the number one team. Wouldn't that be a shame, if the number one team leaves? They'd leave because they have too much of a burden.

What would we lose if they did leave? The economic development corporation in the Ottawa-Carleton area—it's an arm's-length corporation that does studies on the economic health of the region, makes proposals as to strategies—what did they say? What is the economic impact of the Ottawa Senators? They're saying nationally—and they're putting this over a 10-year period, so divide it by 10, if you will—they will contribute \$1.2 billion to \$1.4 billion in economic activity, including \$420 million to \$460 million in taxes over the next 10-year period of time. So we're talking \$42 million to \$46 million for the federal government. Should the federal government do something? You're darned right they should, but I haven't heard from them yet. I will be anxious to hear what they have to say to support this to happen.

Locally what does it mean? It includes a \$750-million contribution, or \$117 million to \$120 million in taxes. If they go, \$400 million to \$500 million in economic activity would leave our local economy. I see one of my colleagues on the other side acknowledging this. He knows that—he lives in Kanata—and this would be a tremendous drain.

That's not all. The NDP talks about simply property tax. Let me give you a little bit of an example of the contribution in taxes collected at the provincial level. In 1998, PST \$18 million; paid on purchases, another \$1 million; the surtax collected, \$6.5 million; capital tax \$2.3 million. It goes on and on.

While the resolution is confined to just property tax, I'm suggesting that today you have to think bigger than that. You have to know what happens. When a company sets up business and they hire one or two people, it's

worth more than just those one or two people. If the business can survive it means that money is circulating, it means that it helps other jobs. There is a factor of anywhere from 1.3 to seven jobs that are worth something in various industries. It depends on the industry; I grant you that. So there is always a value added as soon as you add a new business. When you pull it away, it isn't just the loss of that particular number of people, it's also who else is affected by what you have.

I did a little bit of homework on this. In 1993, the NDP provided \$4.2 billion for theatres, dinner theatres, drama, choreographers, musicians and places that host plays and ballets and performances etc. I support that. Why is it done? It's done because we know it attracts a lot of Americans, a lot of people from other provinces to come to Toronto because they consider it to be an entertainment centre, one of the finest in the world, I might add. I agree with that. It's a little investment, and that's what I think the resolution fails to appreciate. When you provide an opportunity to operate without undue burdens, all of a sudden you are stimulating a whole variety of other things to happen, let alone the numbers of jobs that you directly are able to employ and the numbers of people indirectly that you support as well. I just want to point out that your own history as an NDP government will show that you acknowledged that very fact, and it seems to me your resolution today is in contravention of that.

What do the people of Ottawa-Carleton have to say? There is some division on their concern related to the survival of the Senators. I would like to point out that an extensive survey was done by a reputable group, Compas, a report commissioned by the Ottawa Citizen, on the attitudes of people in the region. It involved people from all 11 municipalities in the Ottawa-Carleton region, not just Ottawa. Perhaps the best way to read this is to give you a summary of it.

"The Ottawa Senators and their advocates in local government have certainly got their message through to the local public." An extraordinary 89% declare that they are aware of the issue, according to the poll.

"Nearly as many, 84%, want governments to move at least part way"—and I agree with that, part way—"towards putting Canadian teams on an equal subsidy and tax footing as their American competitors. Most of those favouring government action feel strongly. Among Ottawans as a whole, 59% 'definitely' want government to take action while another 25% want government to 'probably' take such action.

"Of the minority opposing government action, 20% say that they would change their opinion if the beneficiary Canadian hockey team undertook a binding legal commitment to stay in Canada for at least 10 years in exchange for the financial considerations.

"Advocates ... for the Senators and other NHL teams have called for a reduction of some of the tax and subsidy disadvantages facing Canadian teams. When asked if they would support a completely level playing field ... the

same degree of subsidy and tax relief as experienced by American teams, a near two-thirds ... expressed support.”

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I'm not going to read the rest of this, because I want to comment on that. In other words, the polling has been done by a variety—this isn't the only one; there was one done in February of last year as well. There is support, because people realize what it means to their particular community. This is exceptionally important. In other words, if we lose the Senators, we're going to lose thousands of jobs and we'll lose a major engine that helps promote an image of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, in terms of tourism etc. So at the end of the day it seems to me that the NDP is prepared to stop an adjustment in a tax arrangement that without doubt provides an incredible contribution economically, socially, demographically, recreationally, any which way you want to see it.

I haven't even talked about the people who feel that Canadian hockey is part of our heritage and that's what is distinctive about us and our heritage, who we are and what kind of people we are historically. They're prepared to stop that, make the false assumption that without the \$2 million or \$3 million, this will somehow be taken away from health and education, when in fact if the team leaves you have lost \$40 million-odd annually directly, let alone all of the other spinoff effects; you've damaged and hurt a part of the economy of eastern Ontario.

That is my thesis. I'm happy to participate in this today. I believe the Senators are important to our part of Ontario, but to Ontario as a whole as well as to Canada, because we want to play our part to raise the kind of money that can make a contribution to the broader whole, which helps all of us have a high standard of living, a compassionate society and a society that also is able to enjoy participating in international hockey.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I've been listening carefully to the debate. Let me begin by making a couple of comments.

My friend from Ottawa—I appreciate where he's coming from, because all politics are local—would have the public believe that we have some kind of poor charity on our hands; we've got a basket case on our hands that we have to bail out, while they put the gun to our head before they go to the United States. People who are watching this debate this afternoon should know that the owner and managers of this team made a conscious decision to pay the top three players on this team in Ottawa \$7.2 million, and if Mr Yashin were playing the amount would be even higher. If the Ottawa Senators can pay three of their top players \$7.2 million—and an unspecified amount for Mr Yashin, who's refusing to play right now because he wants more—then surely to goodness we can't call them a basket case. We can't lead the public to believe that this is some poor unfortunate organization that without government help is going to flee to the States. I'd be interested to know what Mr Bryden makes. I'd be interested to know what the team as a whole makes. In terms of what they're paying their top players,

my goodness, it's hard for us to stand here today and argue that we have to have some kind of bailout.

I listened to the finance minister, who would have us believe that there's no cost to Ontarians by putting this legislation forward, that somehow if the municipalities do something and the province antes up, there is somehow no cost. Of course there is a cost, because provincial law requires that if one property tax rate gets lower, others have to make up the difference. Owners of commercial establishments in Toronto and in Kanata would have to make up that difference. The finance minister would have you believe that's a very small amount and we shouldn't worry about those things, but I think the public needs to be reminded that if Ottawa and Toronto were to come forward and do just that, change the property class, bounce that on to some other commercial property owners, we're then on the hook in this province for \$60 million, which is the education portion. That's what we give up.

The finance minister was very clear in the *National Post* on October 29: “The province could be out \$16 million on an annualized basis, and we'll have to make that up elsewhere or hopefully receive revenue from elsewhere,” said Mr Eves.”

There is a cost, because now we're going to have to find \$16 million from some other government program to help finance what we want to do for this hockey team. So there is a cost and the cost may be \$16 million less for health care next year or \$16 million less for education or \$16 million less for the homeless or \$16 million less for any other legitimate priority that this government should have. But what is the government's priority? To try and bail out the Senators. That's what it is. There is a cost, and people out there who are watching this debate need to know that.

Members seem to think that if we just give the Ottawa Senators what they want, if we just encourage Toronto or encourage Ottawa to change the property tax class and if we just lose our \$16 million that could go to other more legitimate things, then maybe the Senators are going to stay. It's not as if the Senators' owner, Rod Bryden, is going to be happy if he gets this cut in his property tax, because as a matter of fact, on October 30 he said in a press conference that he needs \$10 million or \$12 million in help from all three levels of government.

He wants to win the write-off property taxes, which will save him \$4 million; he wants an exemption from the provincial government on amusement taxes, which would save him another \$3.5 million; and then he wants another \$5 million from the federal government. If he gets those things, then maybe he'll stay. At what point do we say to some of these folks, who are not poor by any stretch and who have made conscious decisions to spend big money paying their players: “No, we've had enough. We're not going to have the gun to our head because frankly you just keep upping the ante?”

If you look at the history of what's happened to some teams who have done just that, the reality has been that they have gone on their merry way after they got their

money from the provincial and federal governments and they've opened up shop somewhere else.

Look at the Winnipeg Jets. In 1995 they threatened to move the team to the US if the Conservative government of Gary Filmon didn't cough up \$50 million to keep the team in Winnipeg. You know what? The Filmon government coughed up \$50 million to keep the Winnipeg Jets in Winnipeg. What happened? After that hockey season was over, the Winnipeg Jets picked up their bags and they moved themselves to Arizona; now they're in Phoenix. You know what they're doing now? Now they're in Phoenix, Arizona, and the owners are now demanding that the public pay for a new arena or they're going to leave Phoenix. It just never ends.

Let me give you two more examples. The Pittsburgh Penguins today are so far in debt that they've got Mario Lemieux trying to buy the team. No doubt that comes from the fact that they owe him millions of dollars and they haven't been able to pay. But it's important to note that in 1997 the franchise threatened to relocate to another US community to extract a \$13-million bailout from taxpayers. The owners agreed to stay in Pittsburgh for 10 years if they got the \$13 million. Less than two years later, after receiving the \$13 million, they were in court trying to nullify that agreement while declaring bankruptcy, and that whole issue of bankruptcy has only been stalled by Mario Lemieux's trying to now buy that team.

Let me give you another case, the New Jersey Devils. They got major concessions in the lease at Meadowlands in 1995. In 1999, the owners are now asking the state government for \$100 million of taxpayers' dollars to build a hockey-basketball complex in Newark, and they're saying, "Pay up or we're going to move our team."

It just doesn't end. Anyone in this assembly today who thinks going forward with the proposal that the province has is going to end the demands of Mr Bryden had better think again, because he's not finished. If he doesn't get what he wants, he is still threatening to move the team starting at Christmas of this year.

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They've made a conscious decision to pay their players the kinds of sums of money they have. That's a very clear decision that the team owners and the managers made. But you know what, Mr Speaker? Over and above the break that this provincial government is going to give them—because that's what it is—and over and above what they're asking from the feds, do you know that the Ottawa Senators have established their own charitable foundation to run their hockey team? As a result of having a charitable foundation, called the Ottawa Senators Foundation, the Senators are currently exempt from paying entertainment tax on home games. That saves them another \$3.5 million in entertainment tax on an annual basis.

Imagine the real registered charities out there, how they must feel, doing work on behalf of people who are homeless, on behalf of people who have health care

needs. How do they feel knowing that an NHL hockey team is using that kind of tax exemption?

There is something wrong with what's happening here, and there's something wrong with a provincial government that would say: "That loophole is OK. By the way, we'll let you do that, and further, we're going to up the ante and we're going to give you another potential \$16 million more." Because that's what it is. There is a cost. It's a cost to the rest of us in terms of programs that won't be funded or programs that will be cancelled to cover that \$16-million cost.

If the NHL wants to deal with this, they've got a couple of options. First of all, they've got to look at a cap on salaries for NHL players. One of the reports that was done by the federal government looking into this issue reported that since 1991-92 players' salaries have risen over 400%. I have trouble feeling sympathy for a hockey team that's prepared to pay their players that and then come back to the province, the federal government, the municipal government, looking for help. I really do. So if the NHL wants to do something, they've got to deal with a cap on salaries. I understand from the negotiations that went on that that won't be done until the next round of collective bargaining, which is in the year 2004. So we've got no guarantee that money that's coming won't be used to ante up salaries for players when at the same time those teams are still crying that they can't afford to pay their property taxes.

The second thing is that the NHL should really look at revenue sharing in the way the CFL does, so that the revenue that comes in primarily for the bigger teams that do really well is shared.

The province of Ontario, the federal government and municipal governments should not get into the trap of trying to find ways and means to support what's happening here. Because what is happening here is conscious decisions being made to pay players a lot of money and at the same crying foul when they're supposed to pay property taxes, like every other commercial business in this province has to pay. Are there other private commercial enterprises that can go forward and say, "We don't want to pay anything"? We shouldn't be getting ourselves into that kind of trap.

I read some of the comments by Senator Frank Mahovlich, who is a Hockey Hall of Famer, who said this week: "It would be like pouring money into a black hole. The NHL has some structural problems and they have to resolve those. If we gave them money, it would just disappear. All the agents would line up and they'd tell the teams they have all that government money to pay their players." Of course they do, because if they don't have to pay the property tax, they can put that money back into salaries. If they don't have to pay \$3.8 million of entertainment tax, then they can put that money back into salaries, or profits. That's what some people who are in the know have to say about what the government proposes here.

I say this to the government: If you want to do something useful with respect to hockey, you should take a

look right now at some of the resolutions that are being circulated by some small communities which say, "We encourage the provincial government"—I'll read it all the way through. "Be it resolved that the council of the corporation of the municipality of French River"—which is in my riding—"supports the Village of Merrickville-Wolford resolution regarding the reinstatement of the recreation grant for municipalities of 5,000 or less population."

If you want to do something useful about hockey, reinstate the recreation grants so that kids who are playing minor hockey right across our province will have some support to do that, and we can support those hundreds and hundreds of coaches out there who are spending hours of volunteer time coaching those kids, making sure they're off the street, making sure they're out of trouble, making sure they have something to do in their community.

I think the government approach on this is dead wrong, absolutely dead wrong. I regret that the province is seriously considering foregoing \$16 million of revenue that can be used for so much better purposes in order to give to a hockey team, its owners and its rich players, who really don't need it.

Hon Mr Sterling: I've had a considerable bit of experience with this issue as the Ottawa Senators play out of the area that I represent, at the Corel Centre. I thought it might be useful for members of the Legislature to understand a little bit about the historical context in which the Corel Centre was built—was tried to be built, I guess. The first was the zoning debacle they went through. The second was going through the building process, obtaining the franchise, which I guess came before the building process, and what has transpired over that period of time since the Senators started to play.

First of all, I recognize that this is not an easy issue. It is not an easy issue to explain to the public why the government should be bringing forward some kind of relief in this area, especially since hockey players are, in my view, overpaid for what they do. I understand that. But so too are a lot of people who receive I guess tax credits. One of the areas of tax credits which this province has given is an Ontario film and television tax credit, an Ontario production services tax credit to the movie industry so that they can come primarily to Toronto and produce movies in this area. Those tax credits far outstrip the potential tax credit that we are talking about here. Those tax credits amount to some \$60 million.

Where was the NDP when these tax credit moves were brought forward? Do they favour highly paid movie stars benefiting from these other kinds of tax credits? I understand the concept of these people obtaining this kind of money as being very difficult to explain to people who are working for a living and receiving middle-income compensation.

Let me talk about the history. Back in 1989-90, Bruce Firestone of Terrace developments started to talk about going to the NHL and asking for a franchise. A lot of people didn't believe in Bruce or didn't believe in the

ability of the Ottawa area to get an NHL franchise. Ironically, one of the areas of the province they were bidding against was the city of Hamilton. One of the things the city of Hamilton put on the table to the NHL board of governors was that they had a tax-free stadium for a franchise to come and occupy in Hamilton. That was one of their selling points to the NHL board of governors way back in 1990. So it's a little odd that we heard today the member for Hamilton West complaining that this government, at this late date nine years later, might have offered some kind of equity or fairness in terms of the Ottawa-versus-Hamilton situation.

What happened was that Bruce Firestone owned a piece of land where the Corel Centre is presently built. It was necessary for Mr Firestone, under the name of Terrace developments, to get a change in the zoning, and the NDP government of the day put Bruce Firestone and everybody who was in favour of NHL hockey in Ottawa-Carleton through every possible hoop and obstacle that they could possibly dream up. They claimed that the Corel Centre was going on a valuable piece of agricultural land. I've got to say to you, when I came down here and I saw the NDP, the same NDP government approving the rezoning of thousands of acres around the city of Markham for development, which was much more valuable agricultural land than the land that the Corel Centre sits on now, I got angry because the NDP government spent close to \$1 million opposing the Corel Centre in 1990 and 1991.

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That not only put the promoters, the people who were trying to put this package together, at a considerable financial disadvantage to begin with, because it cost them probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of twice that to fight the government of the day, which was driven by Queen's Park, the NDP government at that time, against the rezoning of that particular piece of land, but it also put the developers and the builders of the Corel Centre into the recessionary period which fell around 1991, 1992 when interest rates started to go up. If they had been able to build six months earlier or a year earlier, if they had had any kind of cooperation with the NDP government, there would have been a saving probably in the neighbourhood of \$20 million to \$25 million over the last seven or eight years.

The NDP put every roadblock in the way of the Ottawa Senators and the hopes of eastern Ontario to have an NHL team. I find it a little distasteful that the NDP now comes forward with a resolution to say, "You the government"—which has been the only senior government to step forward and say we'll do something for the people of eastern Ontario to retain the Senators—"we're against this," and puts up these phony arguments about the fact that this is going to take away from the wealth of the province in terms of what we gain in taxes.

The member for Ottawa Centre put forward a very convincing argument and one that I believe in. The fact of the matter is that if the Ottawa Senators go, the provincial revenues will go down. They won't go up as a

result of what I would call a rather minor forgiveness of taxes to the Corel Centre.

I might also add, if the Senators ever move out of that particular arena, it will be up to the local community to decide whether or not they will increase the taxes or they will leave them as they would be. In other words, the day after the Ottawa Senators go, if that ever happens—and I hope it doesn't—the city of Kanata and the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton can decide to up the tax rate and can regain everything that was in forgiveness before.

I think the finance minister has said that, at maximum, this would mean a cost of \$16 million to the provincial government. No one expects the Air Canada Centre or some of the sports centres here in Toronto to be given that kind of a situation because they're not in the same kind of position as they are in Ottawa.

I want to say this to my colleagues in Toronto and any other parts of the province: eastern Ontario is not very happy at times when they see things like the SkyDome built here in Toronto primarily at the expense of the provincial taxpayer and then when we come forward and say, "Can you help us out a little bit?" "No, no, we can't because this is helping out rich hockey players and all the rest of it." The SkyDome cost Ontario taxpayers somewhere between \$250 million and \$300 million. That was our contribution in the province of Ontario to major league baseball in the city of Toronto.

The people of eastern Ontario say, "Hey, give me a break." If we can help the people out in Toronto to get major league baseball, can we not help out in some way to keep a hockey team in the city of Ottawa or the Ottawa-Carleton area?

Also, the Copps Coliseum: I sat in Bill Davis's cabinet when the Copps Coliseum was approved. I was part of the cabinet that said, "We'll give some money to the city of Hamilton." I think we split the cost of the Copps Coliseum. I think it seats 18,000 to 20,000 people. But the province of Ontario paid for half of that. The province of Ontario didn't give a plug nickel to the building of the Corel Centre, not a plug nickel. In fact, as I mentioned previously, the government of Ontario did nothing but step in the way and try to make the job of the developers more difficult than they did before.

I might add that when the Ottawa Senators started to play hockey in Ottawa, they played at the Civic Centre which is down in Lansdowne Park, and it was a hockey arena which had about 9,000 or 10,000 seats. They had to move to a larger venue because, of course, that wouldn't support it. But when they played there for about a year and a half, they paid no municipal taxes. Yes, they paid some rent, but that rent was nowhere close to the kind of municipal taxes that they are now paying at the Corel Centre.

I guess what you want to ask yourself is—and Mr Eves, the finance minister, talked about this a little bit—do you want municipalities, do you want the province building arenas or is it better off to encourage the private

sector to build those arenas and take the risks associated with it?

I have lived through, now, the building of the Dome, and I've got to tell you, after seeing what happened with the building of the Dome, how the cost got out of control and the ultimate losses to our taxpayers of \$300 million, I'd rather say to private enterprise, "We'll help you along in terms of getting this thing going, but we don't want to own this problem as time goes on."

I heard the member for Nickel Belt talk about other jurisdictions and where NHL clubs had been demanding various different kinds of concessions from different municipalities. One of the municipalities that she did not mention was Minneapolis in Minnesota. Minneapolis was running up against the same problem that I guess we now face in Ottawa. Minneapolis said, "No, we are not going to help you out"—the Minnesota North Stars. So the Minnesota North Stars moved south to Dallas. I guess it's five or six years since the North Stars moved to Dallas. Do you know what Minneapolis is doing? They are building a 100% taxpayers' dollars, brand-new hockey arena which they are going to give to a new NHL franchise to ask them to come back to Minneapolis to play NHL hockey. Do you know why they're doing that? It's not because they are friends of the owners of a team or anything like that. It's because the people of Minneapolis and the business leaders and the community have found that when the hockey team moved so did a lot of the excitement of their city, the attractiveness of their city to move in business into their area, to attract new business in their area.

About two weeks ago I talked to the president of Mitel, which is a firm which employs about 600 or 700 people in the Kanata area. Kirk Mandy is the president and CEO of Mitel, and he said to me, "Norm, you cannot believe how important the Ottawa Senators hockey team is to our business, the high-tech business." It's not because it offers any kind of direct financial benefit, but those companies have a tough time competing for human capital. They are very much concerned and need to attract very skilled people to the community of Ottawa-Carleton. One of their biggest selling points is their ability to say, "There's a major league sports team in our community." There's nothing more impressive to many people who are involved in business than to be able to go down to the Corel Centre and see a hockey game.

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I also want to correct something put forward by the member for Nickel Belt, and that is this whole argument about a charity foundation. That was a nuance that was put forward by somebody associated with the team. I believe there was a meeting that took place between the finance minister and some of the people involved with the Senators organization. They were quickly told that there was no way that this professional team or any other professional team in Ontario could apply as a foundation and therefore escape their responsibility to pay entertainment tax. That was put off the table by this province. It was never even considered as a possibility. But I must

admit that Mr Bryden is somewhat desperate in terms of being able to put forward and keep the Senators in town.

The last thing I want to say is that over the last little while some of the federal government politicians and I have been talking back and forth about this particular issue. I must say that I'm somewhat disappointed by their attitude towards Mr Bryden and the Ottawa hockey team. They seem to be involved in this and trying to throw some kind of hue or scorn on Mr Bryden.

Mr Bryden, incidentally, is a big-time Grit, a big fundraiser for the Liberal Party.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): A very wise man.

Hon Mr Sterling: Some people thrust forward and say he's a very wise man.

In a political sense, he's no friend of the political party of which I am a member, but I do admire Mr Bryden in terms of being able to keep the team going for this time, particularly when players' salaries have tripled from when he first had players to now.

The Prime Minister and Mr Manley say things like that if Mr Bryden is interested in making profit out of his team, he should go south or he should sell the team, if that's what he's interested in. Mr Bryden has been involved as the founder and CEO of Systemhouse. He's been a tremendous entrepreneur in the Ottawa-Carleton area. He's now the president and CEO of the World Heart Corp, which is a company—

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

Hon Mr Sterling: It's hard to believe that a Liberal could be this much of an entrepreneur. Be that as it may, he is. He's now the president and CEO of the World Heart Corp, which is developing a mechanical heart which may mean thousands of jobs in the Ottawa area if it becomes successful. I believe that's sort of on the brink, that that might happen in the next year or two. So he's been a tremendous entrepreneur. I truly believe that Mr Bryden is not so much interested in profit. All he's really interested in is cutting his losses.

What he has said to me and I think what he's said to the finance minister and what he's said to Mr Manley and what he's said to the municipal politicians is, "Look, if we can make certain that we do not lose money by whatever methods, I will assure you that I will stay and the Ottawa Senators will stay in Ottawa for a period of time." Maybe that's five years, maybe that's 10 years, but we have to get the other people to the table. We have to ask Mr Manley, we have to ask the federal government.

Hon Mr Baird: Whatever happened to Mr Manley?

Hon Mr Sterling: My friend from Nepean-Carleton asks what happened to Mr Manley. Mr Manley organized a lot of meetings. He had a meeting where he was calling everybody together to put together a team to try to save the Ottawa Senators. What seems to have happened with Mr Manley is that while he is great at organizing meetings, he's not so great at coming forward and putting something on the table that's solid. That's what we need.

We need leadership from Mr Manley so that he can bring forward a concrete proposal to keep the Ottawa Senators in Ottawa-Carleton.

This is a difficult issue. It is a difficult issue, at any time, to deal with competitive issues. That is something we are going to have to deal with here in the province of Ontario over the next little while as we go through a period of time with globalization where our tax rates, our regulations are going to have to match more what is happening in the other parts of the world. I guess this is but a small example.

Last of all, we need a contribution from the hockey players' association and the owners. They have to come to the table. They are going to have to address the situation or, notwithstanding the ability of the Corel Centre to take advantage of this particular tax advantage, the Senators will not be there.

I am a strong supporter of the Ottawa Senators. I understand the arguments of the NDP. They are false. If the Ottawa Senators go, it will not only be a loss of the Ottawa Senators to the eastern Ontario and the Ottawa-Carleton community but it would be a loss to the tax revenues of the province, the city of Kanata and Ottawa-Carleton.

Mr Duncan: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to join this debate this afternoon. Let me begin by saying that I will be voting against the resolution put forward by the NDP. I'd like to have an opportunity to briefly explain my views to the House and to my constituents.

First of all, I am decidedly not a fan of the Ottawa Senators. This has nothing to do with partisan affiliation, as I know nothing in this House has to do with partisan affiliation, particularly judging by the government House leader's speech.

I was, however, particularly impressed by the comments of my colleague from Ottawa Centre. Earlier today he provided me with some background notes on the tax implications of the loss of the Ottawa Senators, quite apart, notionally, from the idea of losing a professional hockey team from our nation's capital and a metropolitan area of in excess of a million people. I think sadly of the loss of the Winnipeg Jets and the Quebec Nordiques and hope that all levels of government can come together to find a meaningful solution to this very complicated issue.

The statistics that are overwhelming that have led me to be supportive of the initiative the government has taken—first of all, the amount of property taxes paid by the Ottawa Senators eclipses that of all teams in the United States combined. That puts us in a very precarious position in terms of maintaining what I think most of us view as one of our country's great exports, that is, hockey. I'd hate to see us export yet another franchise. That's number one. I believe those property taxes amount to the vicinity of a little over \$4 million per year in property taxes alone.

I was quite astounded—and I think it needs to be said, because obviously the New Democrats, who don't give consideration to these things, don't want to talk about the \$57 million in annual provincial revenues of different

sorts that come from the Ottawa Senators franchise and come from the operation of the Corel Centre itself, not to mention the \$58 million in federal taxes that accrue on an annual basis resulting from the operation of the hockey franchise and of the Corel Centre itself.

The challenge, I thought, for the government was, how do you come up with a creative solution? I know the government House leader will find this story interesting. I found the NDP's whole approach to this quite amusing. Some years ago, my community became interested in building what we called a multi-use facility, an arena, but an arena that could be used for more than just hockey. It was at the bottom of the recession, in the 1990-91 period. There was a new government at Queen's Park, and our community, as Hamilton had done before, was looking to the province for help in the financing of this arena. That government at the time was particularly constrained. We all recall the depths of the recession, the decline in provincial revenues and real revenues, but they wanted to help our community. What they did—because they seem to have forgotten their own record on this—was attach a property tax exemption to a piece of land in our community that was going to be used for an arena, and it was a property tax exemption that was specified by them because it was to be operated by the private sector. It was not to be a municipal facility.

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I must say, at the time I thought they showed a lot of creativity when they came up with that idea. Because of their financial mismanagement of the province, they had no money to directly invest, as the Davis government had done in the Copps Coliseum. In the intervening years, the interim casino was built and the land was used as a parking lot, but that property tax exemption still applies. It still applies, you'll be pleased to know. In fact, officials at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs still refer to it as "Cooke's folly," referring to Dave Cooke, the then NDP minister.

To make a long story short because I know they've got a problem with subsidizing professional hockey players, the Windsor city council is about to enter into an agreement for the development of that land and guess who's one of the partners in that? Wayne Gretzky. It's a private sector group. In about 30 years, that will revert back. It will revert back to public ownership, but the cost to the province over the ensuing 30 some-odd years is going to be very, very substantial.

So I'm surprised they wouldn't understand what I think is frankly a more creative way of dealing with it: Give the local municipality the right to move within property tax brackets to try and effect a solution to keep these teams here. That's the local option and that makes sense. Like the government House leader, I believe the federal government has to come to the table on this and I believe that this is an important first step. I feel that this resolution is absolutely laughable in light of that particular party's own record and our own experience. I applauded them at the time for what I thought was a creative way of dealing with the province's inability to

finance the development of this type of municipal infrastructure, and find it somewhat humorous that they would take such a different position at this point in time.

The revenues to this province alone from the Ottawa Senators and their franchise will total \$57 million from the operations of the Corel Centre and the franchise itself. The revenues to the federal government: \$58.8 million; municipality: \$6.4 million, to a total of \$120 million per annum, not to mention the importance, as the government House leader did, of having a professional hockey franchise in our nation's capital, something that generates not only revenue for government but an important part of our national pastime of the citizens of that community.

The government, in my view, acted responsibly in their approach to this. This resolution is not only irresponsible in my view, it flies in the face of what the NDP itself did when it was in government. But that was then and this is now. Unfortunately they'll change their position, change to suit their circumstances, circumstances which certainly aren't enviable.

Hon Mr Baird: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this resolution.

Probably more than any other government in our history, our government understands that high taxes kill jobs. Our government understands that high taxes hold our economy back. Our government knows that high taxes hurt prosperity. High taxes lead to high unemployment. Unemployment, of course, is the root cause of poverty.

Our policy has been to cut taxes to create jobs. Income taxes for people; we've taken hundreds of thousands of low-income Ontarians right off the tax rolls. In fact, there are even some low-income Ontarians who pay no provincial income tax but who are stuck paying federal income tax because the federal government wants to tax low- and modest-income Ontarians at a higher rate than we do. In fact, we're not taxing them at all.

We've cut the taxes for small business. We've cut the provincial sales tax for farm building materials to try to encourage investment on our farms and in agricultural operations. We've cut WCB premiums. We've cut taxes for research and development. In fact, on property taxes, which is the centre of the issue we're discussing today, this year we propose to cut property taxes for every residential taxpayer in the province. Because tax cuts help make our economy competitive.

As the Premier said on April 29, 1999, "We constantly review our tax rates to try to be competitive with other jurisdictions." That is something that I strongly believe. We've got to constantly look at our tax regime. Is it competitive in a modern economy?

I concede at the outset that this is not an easy issue. Certainly there is not a unanimous opinion in my constituency or in the province. But I have heard from hundreds of people in Nepean-Carleton, in Barrhaven, in Bells Corners, in Stittsville, in Manotick, in Metcalfe, who are tremendously concerned about the future of professional hockey, not just in our community but in our

province and in our country. What they have been asking for is tax fairness for the Ottawa Senators and for the Corel Centre.

I want to be very clear that I agree with Rod Bryden when he says, "No subsidies, no grants and no corporate welfare." That's why our government has serious concerns with the federal Liberal government's proposal to divert revenues from existing charities and to simply cut a cheque to this enterprise. We think that's the wrong way to go, to ask a charity to make do with less.

The policy with respect to allowing local municipalities to create a separate property tax class for arenas has one simple goal: to allow communities and municipalities to choose the level playing field option. The Ottawa Senators played their first few seasons at the Civic Centre. There, they paid no property taxes, either directly or through their rent. A separate tax class would simply put the Corel Centre on a level playing field with other arenas.

The problem I've got with the current tax structure is that it punishes those municipalities that opt for privately funded arenas, and it rewards municipalities that would choose to have the taxpayers pay for and build an arena, which I disagree with and would think is not the way to go. The idea of having a separate property tax class is an idea that I supported last spring during the provincial election campaign and I'm pleased to see that the government has moved forward with this issue.

I do want to comment on the issue that my colleague from Windsor-St Clair raised earlier. There was a bill passed on December 19, 1991, by the New Democratic Party, the same party which brings forward this resolution, called the City of Windsor Act that allowed Windsor to exempt a piece of land from property taxes. What was so special about that land? The exemption allowed the construction of a sports/exhibition centre. It would appear that the NDP supported that bill when it was passed and now are reluctant to allow that same opportunity in Ottawa-Carleton. This is the same government which fought tooth and nail the creation of the Corel Centre and almost cost our community the benefits of having a professional sports team, and also almost cost this government the tens of million of dollars in annual tax revenue that we get today from the Ottawa Senators and from the Corel Centre.

When it helps in Windsor, it's OK, but in eastern Ontario and Ottawa-Carleton it ain't fair.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Baird: I appreciate they don't want to hear these arguments. None of us would like to see unfair, excessive taxation cause us to lose professional hockey from Ottawa-Carleton, from the province of Ontario or from Canada. That's what this issue is all about: tax fairness.

1720

The member opposite from Windsor earlier spoke about the amount of tax revenue that comes in from the Ottawa Senators. In fact, the outrageous part is that if you were to take all the revenue from all the ticket sales, even

including from the playoffs, it wouldn't exceed the taxes these people pay. You can squeeze so hard you're going to actually bring in less money, and that's the obscenity of this whole issue. By unfairly and unduly taxing an enterprise in Ontario, when you squeeze too hard, you're actually going to get less juice out of it because people are not going to sit by and pay those excessive taxes.

I do think it's time the federal government began to act on this issue. For months and months the federal government blamed this government, blamed Ontario, blamed Mike Harris, blamed the Conservative government in Ontario for not addressing this issue, and said, "If they would only stand up and act, we could help save jobs and help save the tax revenue which comes from those jobs." But they didn't want to exercise any leadership. They didn't want to put anything meaningful and doable on the table. The sad part about it is, now that this government has acted, the federal government appears not to even want to exercise or demonstrate any follower-ship, which is truly regrettable.

I will say that I admire my colleagues in the New Democratic Party. They are taking a position against this. Reasonable people can disagree, and they do. I wish the federal Liberal government would come out and take a position on this issue, which they have not.

I say no to corporate welfare, I say no to grants and I say no to subsidies because I think it's the wrong way to go. I said that when the team was looking at coming to Ottawa-Carleton, when we faced the decision, did we want to fund a taxpayer-subsidized arena? I very strongly felt we shouldn't, and we didn't. But at the same time as not putting taxpayers' dollars into constructing an arena, let's not whack them, let's not tax excessively the Ottawa Senators for that choice.

I strongly disagree with this resolution. I support the Ottawa Senators, I support tax fairness and I will be voting against the resolution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Further debate? The member for York West?

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): It is surely York West, Mr Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate my associate at the federal level, who was just elected yesterday, by the way, former councillor Judith Sgro. I'm delighted to share the riding of York West with my colleague Judith Sgro.

I would like to take a couple of minutes on a topic that I don't profess to be a specialist on, even though I like hockey very much and I love to take my grandchildren whenever I can afford some tickets. To address the topic at hand, I have to say that in no way does the resolution by the NDP address the question in itself. We are not giving sports facilities or operators any money whatsoever. The government in power in Ontario here is very dextrous, if I may say. They have come up with a device to say: "Yes, we support you, but we're not going to give you any money. We'll let the local municipality decide." In fact, this is what they are doing with this particular piece of legislation, and I have to say to the mover of the resolution that we are not giving any money away. What

the government has been doing is to twist things around a bit, if you will, and say: "Let's say yes. Let's be sympathetic but let's give the local municipality the option if they want to do it or not." I think that's where the crux of the question—

Interjection.

Mr Sergio: Absolutely. That's where the truth of the matter lies. I believe now that it will be up to the local municipalities in the Ottawa area to rally around the Ottawa Senators and give support to that particular organization, which, in total, I'm not against. Because if you look from an outside point of view and say, "Let's give them some money outright," you may say, "No, I don't favour that." I think we have to look at the surrounding area of all the hockey associations and what they do and what they provide to the local community.

Let me say that the municipal option is one way of providing that assistance. In many cases, when we have entities like that, they provide a number of local improvements for the immediate community and the immediate vicinity. Normally, organizations like that provide a number of excellent activities and programs for our youth, our kids—and families as well—who love hockey and participate in that particular sport.

What I'm most interested in is the fact that a number of small businesses do benefit from having such an organization centralized in a big city like Ottawa. Therefore, apart from the other benefits—tax relief and stuff like that—I think the community benefits a lot more than some of the revenues that may be written off.

I also have to say that having such an entity in an area like Ottawa would encourage other small businesses to establish in the same general area. We have hotels and whatever—restaurants, all kinds of sports stores and other facilities. If we were to have more of those, we would be getting more business dollars as revenue. If we don't have those facilities and we have empty stores, we won't be getting any business or tax revenues.

I think I am done with the five or six minutes which my colleague kindly allotted to me. In support of the member for Ottawa Centre, I will just reiterate the comments he made. I thank you for the time given to me.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I rise in opposition to this motion. First of all, I'll tell you that my voice sounds a bit rough. It's due to cheering another great sporting event last Sunday: the Tiger Cats thumping the Argos once again—and they're on their way to repeating that in Montreal, I'm sure, on Sunday. Hopefully I'll have my voice back so I can cheer loudly there as well, and on the way to the Grey Cup the week after. Certainly I don't feel any regrets about having a voice like this after the Tiger Cats won the game.

There was a simple solution to this thing a few years ago. At that time the NHL could have done the right thing. The NHL had the choice of awarding the franchise to Hamilton or to Ottawa. I don't blame the Ottawa Senators. They did a great job. They put together a great bid and got the franchise. But had the NHL at that time done what I believe would have been the right thing, the fran-

chise would have been awarded to Hamilton and this issue wouldn't be here, because we have the municipally owned Copps Coliseum that is obviously exempt from paying taxes. But it goes to this argument as well: that is, support of a hockey franchise or a hockey arena in the same way. That was paid by taxpayers of all levels of government at that time, primarily to get Hamilton to build Copps Coliseum.

The issue in front of us is not simply as it has been put in the motion or has been talked about: the subsidizing of very well paid professional hockey players. This is in many ways about a business operation. I'm surprised that the NDP would put this forward, because I know when they were in government, as has been said before, many times the right thing was to help businesses that were having difficulties. Whether it was through some sort of bailout package, whether it was some sort of incentive, some type of break, that was part of the thing. We all understand that. We understand it's a lot easier to keep 500 or 1,000 jobs in this province, rather than trying to find a way of bringing in an additional 500 or 1,000 jobs from elsewhere. It's a lot easier, and the NDP seemed to understand that when they were in government. There were a number of examples given earlier by my colleagues, where a number of corporations were in trouble and at risk of losing a lot of jobs. The government did the right thing in trying to help them out. Even today, since they've been in opposition, there have been a number of times where corporations have been in trouble, they've been struggling, some have closed and they have urged the government to step in and help out in those situations.

Interjection.

1730

Mr Agostino: As my colleague rightly says, this government has not acted on that front. I hope this will give the government some type of incentive to look at other situations as they arise as well, beyond simply what is in front of us.

What we're talking about here are 1,200 or so jobs directly associated with this club in the Ottawa area. Yes, there's a roster of 24 well-paid hockey players, and people can gripe about how much money they make and how overpaid professional athletes are. The reality is that's the market we're competing in. They're extremely talented and gifted people who play that game and can perform at that level, and if they can get that money, I guess that's the market we're dealing with both in Canada and the United States, when it comes to professional sports. That's the reality. But if it wasn't for those 24 well-paid players who are on that team, the other jobs wouldn't be there, the Corel Centre wouldn't be there, the spinoff effects wouldn't be there.

This is important to the Ottawa area, obviously, but I believe in the bigger picture it's also important to the country as a whole. With the loss of the other franchises that we had in this country—the Quebec Nordiques as one, and the Winnipeg Jets—I think we've lost part of our heritage, part of our culture as a country. Yes, it's a business; yes, it's a sport; yes, people are into making

money. We understand that. It's also a great source of entertainment for people, it's a great source of national pride, not only for that area but for the country as a whole.

I don't particularly happen to be a fan of the Ottawa Senators; I happen to like another hockey team. But once my team gets beaten out of the playoffs, which happens regularly, then I look to Canadian teams and I sort of get involved in the sense of saying, "Hey, it would be great if a Canadian team could win the cup or advance to the finals."

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: Definitely not the Sabres, because they shafted us out of the franchise in the first place.

This really does give the tools to the Ottawa area and to the region and to the local taxpayers to make the decisions that are necessary in order to keep this. It's a question of whether they can compete, as you do in the private sector, not only in Canada but in the United States. Out of the 20 US-based NHL teams, 13 pay absolutely no property or capital taxes, while three of them pay minimal taxes. So 16 out of 20 teams in the United States pay few or no property taxes for their facilities. That puts our teams at a distinct disadvantage, and it makes it much more difficult.

One can say, "They're going to put a gun to our head again; they're going to come back." The reality is this: We can talk about what it may cost from the point of view of the taxpayers in the Ottawa region with the possibility that this adjustment is made, but one must ask, what would it cost the taxpayers of Ottawa and the taxpayers of Ontario if the team did leave?

I believe Mr Bryden is not in this thing to get more money; he's not bluffing. I believe he has a very serious, difficult situation on his hands. They've got a great hockey team. They sell out; they do very well. They're still losing a significant amount of money, in the realm of about \$10 million a year. That is the reality. We can say, "Well, it's great," but you know what? Mr Bryden can take this team and get almost any major American city that's looking for a franchise to go in and build an arena for them, move the team and probably make a hell of a lot more money there, or sell it somewhere else in the States, or someone else in the States will buy this team. That's been the sort of practice we've seen with the NFL franchises. Teams are tripping over each other, talking about figures of \$750 million to buy an NFL franchise, and cities are willing at a moment's notice to build football stadiums that hold 80,000 or 100,000 to attract that.

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: The leader of the NDP keeps talking about this again. I understand that you have a problem with people making money. That's the tradition of your party; that's the tradition of the NDP. I wish the NDP would show some consistency, as they did when they were in government. When they were in government they believed it was OK for the government to get involved, to try to help corporations that were having difficulties or losing jobs. That was OK then. Now they're playing by

different standards because somehow they don't think of the other 1,200 people who lose their jobs when this team moves. They keep talking about the 20 or 24 high-paid professional hockey players who go with that club. They don't realize that's the reason why those other jobs are there.

It's easy to always beat up on people who are perceived to be making a lot of money, and these hockey players are. There's no question, these hockey players are making a lot of money. Nobody would argue with that. But they also have that talent. Also realize that most of these players are spending eight or nine months of the year minimum in Ottawa—some of them year round, but most of them eight or nine months of the year. They spend their money here. They pay their taxes. That is the reality of it.

Again, I understand that the NDP likes to put its blinders on and be parochial. It's OK for Windsor, because an NDP member is in Windsor. It was OK then. I realize that's what it's all about. It's a party that has no vision. It's a party that has blinders on. It's a party that simply figures: "You know what? It doesn't affect our own backyard. We'll just let it go." It was OK time after time, even with this government in power, where industries have folded, where the leader of the NDP or other members have stood up and said: "You've got to help. You've got to give some money here. There are 1,000 jobs on the line. You've got to step in." It's a selective principle I guess that we're talking about here. There are no more guarantees here than there were when you tried to bail out companies when you were in government. Those companies were as good as the next time they left the country.

The reality is this: What we have in front of us is good for the city of Ottawa. This is good for the province. It's good for Canada as a whole. I believe it is extremely important to our country for this franchise to survive. I understand that the NDP would love nothing better than to see the Ottawa Senators fold and possibly the Maple Leafs can follow and maybe the Canadiens can go and so on. I understand that the NDP has a problem with professional teams, professional sports.

Government sometimes has to make some decisions. I don't often agree with decisions made across the floor. As I said earlier, I actually hope that we will also look at situations, I say to the government, where companies that are struggling or companies that need some help from government come to us to save some jobs and we'll find some way. I'm not necessarily saying to pump money into it, but we can find some way of doing this.

I find it amazing that the NDP and the leader of the party, who have pretended in the past to be on the side of working people, are willing to say to those 1,200 workers in Ottawa, "The hell with you." You know why? Because players make \$7 million a year, the NDP, Howard Hampton and the rest of that gang, thinks it's OK to simply throw those 1,200 jobs out the window. Those people don't matter. Maybe it's because they're not unionized;

I'm not sure. But those people don't matter. That is their reality.

We believe that those 1,200 jobs are important. We believe those 1,200 people in Ottawa who are working related to the Ottawa Senators are important. We believe that the spinoff effects to the Ottawa area are important. We believe the survival of that franchise is important to Ottawa and it's important to our country and to our province and to our heritage and to our pride here. I know that's something the NDP doesn't believe in; I understand that. They have a track record and a history of their selective principles that they're showing here again today.

It's the right thing to do. We support this government in helping the Ottawa Senators, trying to get them out of a difficult situation. We certainly do not support the motion in front of us. Let's do the right thing here today. It doesn't matter what members come from where. The NDP should understand that it's good to help businesses not only in areas that elect NDPers but right across the province, from one end to the other.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I just want to be sure that the Conservatives have concluded their speaking time and the Liberals have concluded their speaking time.

The Acting Speaker: The government caucus has 16 seconds left.

Leader of the third party.

1740

Mr Hampton: I'm pleased to be able to use this time. I want everyone to know precisely what we are debating. The government has tried to confuse this. The government has come forward with a proposal to give tax breaks in effect to professional sports enterprises and we, as New Democrats, think this is fundamentally wrong. For example, the National Hockey League is a very profitable operation. The National Hockey League and its franchises do not need tax breaks from the taxpayers of Ontario.

The government has tried every which way it can to disguise this, but at the end of the day what it amounts to is this: They're going to give special property tax breaks to NHL franchises, and other taxpayers in the province will have to pick that up in one way or another, or public necessities such as health care, education and important community services will have to be cut yet more in order to give millionaire NHL franchises a tax subsidy. That is the long and the short of it. The government can dip and dodge and twist and turn; that's what it boils down to.

I have to say I've enjoyed this debate today. I've enjoyed watching the Conservatives twist and turn and try to deny that they're giving corporate welfare to an operation that's very wealthy. I've enjoyed it even more to watch Liberals twist and turn and justify this incredible corporate welfare scam.

Let me go through some of the things that have been offered up. First, when the government offered up this proposal, they tried to say that this is like the Windsor

Casino. I challenge anyone to look at the Windsor Casino. There were no property tax breaks, no tax breaks of any kind for the Windsor Casino.

Then there was a private member's bill. A private member put forward a proposal to the House that if an arena were built in Windsor, an arena that would be publicly owned—it might be built by a private builder but in the end it was going to be publicly owned—the builder would be able to capture a revenue stream sufficient to capture their costs, but it would revert to the public. They're trying to use that as a justification.

This is not about building a new public facility, this is not about ensuring that public facilities are going to continue to be viable; this is about nothing more, nothing less than subsidizing a National Hockey League franchise. End of story. Liberals can create whatever kind of smokescreen they want to try to cover that fact up; that's what it is. It's not about building another public arena, it's not about building something that kids can enjoy; it's about subsidizing millionaire NHL franchises.

Then the smokescreen is offered up that it's about competitiveness. This is not about competitiveness. This is not about somehow having a situation where people are going to be placed on equal footing. If you examine the operations of the NHL over the last 20 years, that's exactly what hasn't happened. If you look at virtually every NHL franchise, whether they've operated in Canada or the United States, they consistently go back to taxpayers and ask for more subsidies. They consistently ask the taxpayers of the state or the city or the province or the country for more tax subsidies. That is not about competitiveness. That is, pure and simple, good old corporate welfarism. It's about asking hard-pressed taxpayers to subsidize people who are already well off. We say "Nonsense" to that. Don't try to disguise it as competitiveness. It is pure and simple corporate welfare.

I say Liberals ought to be ashamed. Liberals want to say, "When the NDP was in government, you restructured Algoma Steel." Yes, Algoma Steel was restructured. There were no taxpayer subsidies. The workers at Algoma Steel took equity in the company. They took a pay cut in order that they could survive. I don't see any Ottawa Senators, who are making \$3-million and \$4-million salaries, lining up and saying that they will take a pay cut in order that the franchise can survive. In fact, the highest-paid player wants his contract renegotiated. He wants another \$2 million out of taxpayers' pockets.

There were no subsidies at Provincial Papers. The workers in that mill took a cut in pay in order that that company could survive. They then successfully repositioned it. It's a profitable company now. There was no taxpayer subsidy.

Spruce Falls, St Marys: there were no taxpayer subsidies.

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): Tell us about OBI.

Mr Hampton: The Minister of Transportation wants to know about OBI. OBI was simply a place where the government was able to use its capacity to get guaranteed

orders for the production of those buses. If the Minister of Transportation wants to say that OBI shouldn't be around today, if that's the position of the present Minister of Transportation, then you stand in your place and you say that.

I wanted to cut through some of the nonsense that has been spouted here today by Liberals and Conservatives to justify this incredible scam of corporate welfarism. I want to get right to the bottom of what's going on here. Ontario does not have a problem. This is not a public problem. This is not a taxpayer's problem. This is a problem for the National Hockey League. The National Hockey League is a very wealthy entity. The National Hockey League has to decide if it wants to have franchises in Canada. If it wants to have franchises in Canada, it has to sit down and it has to put together a revenue-sharing formula which will allow for franchises in Canada to continue.

Let me give you the exactly comparable situation. In the National Football League you have a franchise in Green Bay, Wisconsin, population 200,000, a very small market, just as Ottawa is a small market, Edmonton is a small market, Calgary is a small market and Quebec was a small market. What does the National Football League do to ensure that you don't simply have five or six very wealthy teams and then a whole lot of other franchises that are going out of business? The National Football League put together a revenue-sharing formula. Each team in the league contributes so much of its revenue into a revenue pot and then at the end of the year that money is shared up to ensure that teams like Green Bay, which has a proud heritage in football, which has won the National Football League, the Super Bowl several times, that that franchise is allowed to continue.

The National Football League has come together and made a decision that they want the small market teams as well as the large market teams to continue to succeed. There is absolutely nothing stopping the National Hockey League from doing the same thing. But, no, the National Hockey League doesn't do that. What the National Hockey League engages in is a process where they go from community to community, each seeking a bigger corporate rip-off scheme. That's what's going on.

Let me point out the example of Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Jets used to be my favourite team. I used to go watch the Jets a lot. The Jets first went to the city of Winnipeg and said: "We need a \$2-million subsidy." Winnipeg provided it. Then they came back and said: "We need a \$20-million subsidy." Winnipeg provided it. Then they came back in the last year and said, "We need a \$50-million subsidy and if you don't give it to us, we're leaving town." Winnipeg gave them the \$50-million subsidy. Do you know what they did the next year? They went to Phoenix. They used to be called the Winnipeg Jets; they're now the Phoenix Coyotes. Do you know what they're saying in Phoenix now? "Taxpayers, build us a \$200-million arena or we're going to leave Phoenix."

This, by any measure, is disgusting behaviour, and yet I'm hearing Conservatives and Liberals in this House saying that they condone that behaviour, they approve of that behaviour, they're going to be party to that behaviour. By any measure, this is nonsense. This is absolute nonsense.

As I said earlier, this is not a public problem. This is not a taxpayer problem. If the NHL believes that it's important to have NHL franchises in Canada—and I think it would be important for the future of the NHL to do that—they should sit down, they should negotiate a revenue-sharing strategy, they should do something about the fact that NHL teams in Ontario, Canada, take in their money in Canadian funds and pay out their salaries in American funds. In other words, they lose 50 cents on each dollar. That's something for the NHL to deal with. If I may suggest, they should follow the lead of the National Football League, because if a team like the Green Bay Packers can continue to exist—nay, prosper—and be successful in the National Football League, there's an example there for the NHL.

Finally, the Liberals have offered up the argument that this is about jobs that would disappear. I want to quote from a Liberal-appointed senator, Senator Frank Mahovlich, a Hockey Hall of Famer who said this week about subsidizing NHL hockey teams with taxpayers' money: "It would be like pouring money into a black hole."

Frank Mahovlich says: "The NHL has some structural problems and they have to resolve those. If we gave them money it would just disappear. All the agents would line up and they'd tell the teams they have all that government money to pay their players, so hand it over." That's Frank Mahovlich, Liberal-appointed Senator, pointing out the fallaciousness of that argument.

You don't have to believe Frank; you can go talk to some economists, and let me give you some examples from some economists. Robert Beade of Lake Forest University studied 48 US cities—36 with professional sports teams and 12 without—and found that the presence of professional sport is not statistically significant in determining economic growth rates; it has no effect. Professor Michael Walden of North Carolina State University looked at 46 major urban centres in the United States. He found that those with major league teams grew more slowly than those without. Do you want to know why? Because a lot of good public money was being siphoned off into supporting professional franchises that don't need or deserve support.

We would be better to spend the money on health care, on education, on the community necessities. That's where the real jobs lie. Tell the NHL millionaires to get their own house in order.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Christopherson has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker: Will all those in favour of the motion please stand to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Martin, Tony

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please stand one at a time.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Hastings, John	Patten, Richard
Arnott, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Sergio, Mario
Barrett, Toby	Johns, Helen	Skarica, Toni
Bountrogianni, Marie	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Boyer, Claudette	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.

Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	McLeod, Lyn	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Eves, Ernie L.	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Palladini, Al	Young, David
Gill, Raminder		

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 9; the nays are 46.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

This House will stand adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1804.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre de l'Environnement, ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées et à la Condition féminine
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Broadview-Greenwood	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Bruce-Grey	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Carleton-Gloucester	Coburn, Brian (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Com- mercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children) / ministre sans portefeuille (Enfance)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Dan (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Thunder Bay- Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing- Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Wentworth-Burlington	Skarica, Toni (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Willowdale	Young, David (PC)
		Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
		Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Justice and Social Policy/ Justice et affaires sociales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant, Carl DeFaria,
Brenda Elliott, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Sean G. Conway, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, John R. O'Toole,
R. Gary Stewart, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

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Doug Galt, Monte Kwinter, Tina R. Molinari,
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Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski
Clerk / Greffier: Viktor Kaczkowski

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Joseph Spina, Bob Wood
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Marilyn Churley, Brad Clark, Pat Hoy,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Jerry J. Ouellette, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N.
Tascona, Wayne Wettlaufer
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Public accounts / Comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John C. Cleary
John C. Cleary, John Gerretsen, John Hastings,
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Brian Coburn,
Garfield Dunlop, Raminder Gill, Frances Lankin,
Tony Ruprecht, David Young
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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