



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 24 November 1999

Mercredi 24 novembre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 24 November 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 24 novembre 1999

*The House met at 1333.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): In a few moments I will be introducing a private member's bill that will restrict Quebec workers from taking our natural resources jobs.

Last spring, the Ontario government passed Bill 17, Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, which restricts Quebec workers from working in the construction industry. While it has been only moderately successful to date, Bill 17 got the attention of the Quebec government and gave support to the Ontario negotiating team working on the labour mobility problem with that province.

Much of the area that I represent along the Quebec border, north of North Bay to Cochrane, has lost hundreds of jobs to Quebec workers in the forestry and mining industries, while Ontario workers don't have access to Quebec jobs. It is all too common to see Quebec residents cutting our trees and hauling our logs to our sawmills and paper mills. Similarly, there are many Quebec residents who work in our mines in northeastern Ontario, most commuting on a daily basis, while Quebec mines just across the border won't hire Ontario miners.

Unlike the robust economy of southern Ontario, jobs in the north are few and far between. Our economy is still based on our resources and our workers need every one. When Quebec puts up a barrier to our workers, it is time that we do the same.

I believe in free labour mobility in this country and I introduce this bill today on behalf of Ontario workers who don't have the opportunity to work in the province of Quebec. Today I am asking the Minister of Labour to support the workers of northeastern Ontario also by supporting this bill.

DMITRI "MATTI" BARANOVSKI

Mr David Young (Willowdale): From time to time a tragedy occurs that changes the way we view our community and the way we view each other, a tragedy that causes an entire community to feel so insecure, so powerless that fear holds it hostage.

On Sunday, November 14, a terrible and horrific crime ended the life of a young boy and sent shock waves through the city of Toronto. Matti Baranovski was in the wrong place at the wrong time, a victim of senseless mob violence. When tragedies like this occur, trust is violated and neighbours become a little more distant. Like the heartbreaking tragedies involving the losses of Alison Parrott and Sharin' Morningstar Keenan, this devastating passing will always be in our collective consciousness.

Matti and his family moved to Canada during the spring last year, believing they had left behind the violence and conflict that plague so much of the world. They moved to Toronto so that Matti could grow up in a safer environment. Matti represented all that is right with our young people. He will never be forgotten. His spirit will triumph over his death. Words cannot begin to describe the pain and anguish that his family is experiencing.

I rise now to ask, through this Legislature, for an opportunity to convey to the family the deep sympathy we all feel not only for that family but for all the young and their families who are victims of senseless violence. I know that our prayers and thoughts are with them.

RENFREW COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL OFFICE

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Agriculture is very important to the economy of eastern Ontario and certainly in my county in Renfrew. Communities in the Ottawa Valley and communities that I represent, like Cobden, Beachburg, Renfrew, Arnprior and Eganville, depend to a very real degree on the health of the surrounding agricultural economy. For many years, the Ontario government has played an important role by maintaining very good field services in communities like the Ottawa Valley.

For the last number of years, however, we are seeing, and my farmers are seeing, as they are seeing in much of the rest of rural Ontario, a clawback, a closing up and leaving town by the Ontario government. Last week we heard from the president of the treasury board, the Chair of Management Board, that an additional \$8.7 million is going to be taken out of the already constrained agriculture budget.

I see from the minister's statement that \$5.2 million worth of cuts in the direct ministry budget are in favour of "administrative improvement." Well, the word out in communities like Renfrew and Stormont-Dundas is, "Yet

more field services are going to be withdrawn; yet more ag offices are going to be closed.”

I stand here today on behalf of the farmers in Renfrew county to tell this government that we want our Renfrew county ag office kept open, keeping the very good programs and services that that office has provided over many decades available to the farmers.

1340

WESTSIDE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):

I am pleased to rise today to congratulate Westside Secondary School in Orangeville on the occasion of its official opening, which will take place on November 25.

Construction of the new school began in April 1998 and was completed in June this year. Students in Orangeville were able to start the new school year in Westside Secondary School this past September. This year, there were 515 students enrolled in grades 9, 10 and 11.

Westside has some unique traits. For example, a team of teachers dedicated themselves to oversee the building process. They were directly involved in every aspect of the construction, from the purchasing of supplies to the organization of the actual building. This was done after work hours on a volunteer basis and is just one example of the dedication of these teachers. They all deserve to be commended.

This new school has also chosen to organize according to key systems, not departments, as is traditionally the case. It was decided that subject departments alone do not cover all of the issues facing a modern high school.

Westside has a system of broadly based committees for things like operations, developing school policy and codes of behaviour, community links and curriculum discussions. These committees include teachers, parents and students.

A school is more than a building. What really makes a school are the students, their parents, the staff and the community volunteers who will come into the building and bring it to life. Westside Secondary School is no exception. I am honoured to have the opportunity to be present at the official opening tomorrow night.

CELANESE CANADA PLANT

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I rise before the house to express my shock and sadness over the loss of 243 jobs at Celanese Canada, a polyester manufacturing plant in Millhaven, in my riding. Celanese has been through a number of changes over the past several years, including a reorganization in 1992 and the introduction of a new product line four years later, which was hoped would increase the stability of the plant.

This plant has recently been sold to US-based KoSa, a polyester manufacturer. In response to changing markets for polyester staples, the plant intends to shut down two thirds of its Millhaven operation and mothball these

facilities. While plant employees were aware that negotiations were ongoing, the union president would indicate to me that they were led to believe the sale of the plant might in fact lead to expansion and better employment opportunities. Thus, they too were shocked to hear yesterday's news.

It is imperative that the Minister of Economic Trade and Development and the Minister of Labour take the initiative and contact the new owner of this company to explore ways to get these 243 qualified people back to work. This plant with well-trained staff and an excellent manufacturing facility is going to sit idle otherwise.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): According to Stats Canada, there are fewer police officers on the streets of the cities and towns across Ontario than there were in 1995. We know what that means to people in their own communities about how secure they feel.

It's interesting to note that in 1994, under then Solicitor General David Christopherson under the NDP government, we had announced a 1,000 police initiative that meant that we were going to increase, over the next couple of years, the number of police officers in this province by at least 1,000 police officers. It's interesting to note that in 1995, the PC government of Mike Harris cancelled that initiative, only to bring it back in order to try to call it a Conservative initiative. But there's a bit of a difference.

The initiative that we put forward was going to ensure that police departments across the province were not going to use these 1,000 police officers just to replace retiring police officers. In fact, it was to make sure that we were going to have new cops on the streets, not just replacing the ones that are going.

Under this particular program, we're now finding that these 1,000 police officers that are being brought into the system are not to bring in new police officers above and beyond the numbers of 1995; it is not even dealing with what's happening when it comes to the retirement.

The government, on this one, can say all it wants but when it comes down to taking a look at it, they're not doing what this program was intended to do, which is to increase the number of cops that we have on the streets across the province.

FIREFIGHTERS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Each and every day, the brave men and women of Ontario's firefighting departments take extreme risks in order to protect our lives, our homes and our communities. Today, on behalf of my constituents in Durham, I'd like to recognize two distinguished firefighters in the riding of Durham for their bravery in the line of duty.

At the November 10 ceremony for the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery, our Lieutenant Governor pre-

sented two of my constituents with the prestigious medal of bravery. Acting Captain Brian Douglas Goldsworthy, a resident of Oshawa and a firefighter with the Toronto department, was honoured for his role in the Bell Telephone fire that hit downtown Toronto this past summer. Captain Goldsworthy took great risk upon himself as he assisted with the hazardous conditions. As well, the high voltage electricity involved in the Bell Canada incident, mixed with fire and water, created a dangerous combination.

Also, Firefighter Michael Stanfield from Blackstock, also a member of the Toronto Fire Department, was invested with the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery for his role in battling a fire in the Beaches area of Toronto. Mr Stanfield rescued six people and carried them, single-handedly, down a ladder to safety.

It is through the bravery and professionalism of Ontario firefighters such as Michael Stanfield and Brian Goldsworthy that Ontario is kept safe.

I'd also like to mention a number of the firefighters of my community who have been recently recognized: Gord Weir, Bill Hesson, Grydon Brown, Tim Calhoun, a firefighter from Clarington, and Chief Richard Miller and District Chief David Ballingall in Scugog township.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I would like to make a statement about another health care cost being put on to property tax.

Sarnia-Lambton municipal leaders have communicated to me the high level of frustration and outrage because your policies are forcing the local hospital community to request of the county \$6 million to go towards hospital expansion, restructuring that you requested and approved.

Health care is a provincial mandate. The local level of property tax was designed to sustain the limited needs of local government. Now local government is being asked to fund the delivery of health care out of those same limited property tax dollars. There is only one taxpayer. I will quote from a letter I received from the county warden:

"The taxpayers we serve are the same ones you serve and they are not as naive as you may think they are. The county of Lambton and its constituent municipalities will not stand for this and we will do our utmost to inform these taxpayers of what is going on....

"On behalf of the taxpayers of Lambton county, I would ask that you reconsider your funding policies and redirect ... monies from your ... provincial resources to fund your health care system. I also believe that communication needs to be made with the hospital communities to advise them against the effort to recoup their financial needs from an already overburdened local taxpayer."

MEAFORD

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey): Today I would like to talk about the virtues of one of the many fine communities in my riding of Bruce-Grey. Meaford is renowned for its apple-growing and boasts many excellent orchards. Each fall, Meaford celebrates that harvest with the Apple Harvest Craft Show.

But there is more to Meaford than just apples. It is home to the Meaford Opera House where each year live theatre is featured during a summer festival.

It is also home of Beautiful Joe, the treasured story of the ugly, ill-treated dog of legend whose 1894 story became a hit of six million copies in 14 languages.

And that's not all. There's the 2,000-foot sandy beach on Georgian Bay, the Meaford Museum which houses the Meaford and District Fire Department's 1938 Maple Leaf fire truck and much more.

Meaford is also the site of the Canadian Coast Guard search and rescue station, manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, during the boating season. It is on the tradition of boating that the station's former ship, the Spume, which was slated for the scrapyard, is now a unique attraction for residents and tourists alike. This ship, after plying the waters of Georgian Bay since 1963, was rescued through the efforts of the community and has now been completely restored and sits on the shore of the Meaford harbour.

Farming, industry, tourism and especially community spirit—Meaford has a lot offer.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption:

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr1, An Act to revive Harbourfront Trailer Park Ltd.

Bill Pr7, An Act respecting The Corporation of the Town of Pickering.

Bill Pr13, An Act respecting Pembridge Insurance Company.

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill Pr8, An Act to change the name of The Corporation of the Township of Burleigh-Anstruther-Chandos to The Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha.

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

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT (AIR TRAFFIC NOISE), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉVALUATION FONCIÈRE (BRUIT PROVOQUÉ PAR LA CIRCULATION AÉRIENNE)

Mr DeFaria moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act requiring the consideration of air traffic noise in the assessment of residential property / Projet de loi 19, Loi exigeant la prise en compte du bruit provoqué par la circulation aérienne lors de l'évaluation de biens résidentiels.

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

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): During the last session, I introduced hundreds of petitions from residents of my riding of Mississauga East complaining about air traffic noise and the impact it has in their homes. This bill is simply to address those concerns. It's a simple bill and it reads that for the purpose of determining the current value of land used for residential purposes, consideration shall be given to air traffic noise.

I hope I will have the support of this House when the bill is debated.

FOOD BANK ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ DES BANQUES D'ALIMENTATION

Mr Spina moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to ensure that food banks account for donations / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à assurer que les banques d'alimentation rendent compte des dons.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Motion carried.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): This bill creates the Food Bank Accountability Act, 1999. What we're looking to do is create an act that requires food banks to ensure that all of the items they receive in donation are used in a charitable fashion. The bank—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member take his seat. Order, member for St Catharines, member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr Spina: This act requires that food banks maintain records that account for all donations of money, food and other things. It arises from incidents recently where items were donated for the use of the food banks and were

misappropriated. If there is an accountability system there, then we can ensure that all of the food—

The Speaker: Member take his seat. Order. I cannot hear the member in his explanation. Member for Beaches-East York, come to order. The member for Hamilton West, I ask him to come to order. This will be the last warning for the member for Hamilton West.

Mr Spina: What it does ask for is accountability so that these records will be available to the public to ensure that what is donated for the food bank is used in fact for the people for whom it was intended.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Speaker: Perhaps you can help me out. I could not hear whether it was food banks or oil companies that this bill was directed at. Can you help me out?

The Speaker: That is not a point of order, I think the member knows.

FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT (MINERS AND FORESTRY WORKERS), 1999

LOI DE 1999 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE (MINEURS ET TRAVAILLEURS FORESTIERS)

Mr Ramsay moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to prohibit Quebec residents from working in certain mining and forestry occupations in Ontario / Projet de loi 21, Loi interdisant aux résidents du Québec d'exercer certaines professions minières et forestières en Ontario.

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

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): This bill creates the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act (Miners and Forestry Workers), 1999. The new act prohibits residents of Quebec from working in certain occupations in the mining and forestry industries in Ontario. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may suspend the operation of the new act as it applies to a specified occupation if it is satisfied that the province of Quebec no longer restricts the right of Ontario residents to work in Quebec in that occupation.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent that we go directly to second reading on the bill that has just been introduced by the member from Brampton, to discuss just to what lows this government is prepared to go when it comes to attacking the poor in this province.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

PREMIER'S COMMENTS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): Speaker, I stand today on a point of order. I was con-

tacted yesterday afternoon by one of my constituents, Mr Gary Malkowski. As members of this House will know, Mr Malkowski is a former member of this Legislature and a tireless advocate for people with disabilities.

Mr Malkowski approached me yesterday because he is outraged by the way the Premier of this province has now for the second time misquoted him in an effort to take cheap political shots at the NDP. Mr Malkowski at no time said that the move by "Mike Harris and the Ontario Conservative Party is the best thing to happen to the disabled in my lifetime." In fact, earlier this afternoon, Mr Malkowski wrote a letter to the Premier expressing his extreme displeasure.

When will the Premier learn to not use people with disabilities as props in his partisan gamesmanship and treat them and their concerns with the respect that they deserve?

Mr Speaker, I would ask you today to uphold the integrity of this House and ask the Premier to withdraw his comments of yesterday and to write a letter of apology to Mr Malkowski.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member will know that is not a point of order.

1400

ALLAN LAMPORT

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to make a statement about Allan Lamport.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr Kwinter: Today we mourn the death of Allan Austin Lamport, who passed away on November 18 at the age of 96 and is survived by two daughters, Suzanne and Jane, and five grandsons.

I don't want to dwell on his death; I really want to celebrate his life.

Lampy, as he was affectionately known by all of us, lived a life in full measure. At age 96 he certainly has had the full allotment and then some prescribed in the Scriptures.

When we talk about him, we are really talking about a unique individual, one of a kind. My big problem in the brief time that I have to speak about him today is, how do I encapsulate what is Allan Lamport?

He was born in 1903. He went to Upper Canada College, where he was a heavyweight boxing champion. He was the captain of the ice hockey team. He was a member of their football team. He started a rowing club. He was an athlete par excellence. After he left school he had a job for a couple of years, came back, took up flying and started his own air service, Century Airways.

From there he decided to get into politics, and in 1936 ran for the seat in Toronto on city council, ward 2. He was defeated but that didn't deter him. He came back the following year. Not only did he win that seat, but he simultaneously won the seat in the provincial Legislature

of St David. So we had this unique situation: You have a city councillor; you have a member of the Legislature.

In that time he served under the premiership of Mitch Hepburn, and it's interesting to know some of his colleagues who sat in the House with him: Lionel Conacher, whom some of you may know, probably the greatest athlete Canada has ever seen, all-round athlete—I'm cognizant of what we say about Wayne Gretzky, but Lionel Conacher had it all; David Croll; George Drew; Leslie Frost; Farquhar Oliver; and Harry Nixon—just some of the people he served with in that time.

He came to the Legislature in 1937. He didn't spend a lot of time but he had some memorable moments. One of them was when he stood up in the House as a flying officer. He had enlisted in the air force in 1939 and because of his flying experience was immediately given a commission. He was attacking a member of the establishment and I want to read what he said, "This black-hearted American quisling, Henry Ford," for his lack of sympathy towards the Canadian war effort.

That attack had such profound impact that the RCAF immediately transferred him to the east coast, his seat was filled by Donald Summerville, and he spent the rest of the war until it ended in 1945 and then came out as a squadron leader and decided to enter politics. He immediately won a seat on city council and at that time, which was just after the war, became the champion of public transportation. He eventually went on to become the chairman, and I'm sure you know that one of my colleagues, Michael Colle, also served as chairman of the TTC. Allan Lamport was really there when they opened up the Yonge Street subway. He was a man who was the impetus behind the Bloor West subway. He did all of this in a way that defied normal political wisdom.

In 1952 he ran for mayor, and in those years—just imagine us sitting in this Legislature—you ran for one year. As soon as you got elected, you had to start running again. He was mayor in 1952, 1953 and 1954. During that time he was a strong proponent of Sunday sports and he is probably most remembered for the impact he had on making Sunday sports available to the people of Ontario, when you consider that in those days in the playgrounds the swings were locked up on Sunday because that was perceived to be something that people shouldn't be doing.

He also had a great influence on lotteries, on cocktail lounges, on public housing—he was a proponent of Regent Park—certainly roads, public access to all of these things. But in all of this endeavour he was also a true character, an absolute character who was noted almost as much for his malapropisms and what they call Lampyisms as he was for his political life.

I want to recount a story that some of my colleagues, particularly Mr Bradley and Mr Conway, will appreciate, and some of those on the other side of the House who were here in the days of Eddie Sargent. Allan Lamport was a pilot, Eddie Sargent was a pilot, and Donald Summerville, who was then the mayor of Toronto, was also a pilot. Mr Speaker, you should know—this is a sad

commentary—that Donald Summerville died in office playing goal in an ice hockey game. Having said that, the three of them had some drinks and decided to go for an airplane ride in Eddie Sargent's plane. When they were flying, they started arguing as to who was the best pilot. They mentioned that Donald Summerville had once bombed the Exhibition by mistake when he was in the air force. During the argument they landed at a military base, and Lampport, always on his feet, very bright—his first defence was a good offence—immediately took the military to task for allowing them to breach the security of that airport and land on their field.

I want to just quote a couple of very famous Lampyisms: "If I'm going to be pushed off a cliff, I want to be there." "You can lead a dead horse to water but you can't make him drink." "We've got to act wisely or otherwise." "He's so honest, he doesn't even steal from himself." "Bring my friend a variety of assorted sandwiches." "It's not a matter of life and death; it's more important than that." "Let's jump off that bridge when we come to it." "It's as easy as pitching horses." I love this one: "The campaign is never over until I've won."

I had a strong personal relationship with Allan Lampport because he was the man behind starting the airports in the Toronto area. He was responsible for Malton airport—now Lester Pearson airport—the Toronto Island airport, the airport that's up at Downsview. He did all of these things as a member of the aviation committee.

He was a lifelong boater. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. We used to spend a lot of time discussing boating issues. I was the chairman of the harbour commission, so I controlled the Island airport, and he had very strong feelings about that.

He also was a lifelong member of the CNE, where I served for many years as a director.

We had an ongoing relationship. I saw him as recently as six months ago. Here's a man who, at 96, was impeccably dressed. He always had a flower in his lapel, always had a twinkle in his eye—he was absolutely outstanding.

There is no man who had a greater love for Toronto than Allan Lampport. He took the Toronto that was known as Toronto the good; he made it Toronto the better, and spent the rest of his life trying to make it Toronto the best.

I want to close with a couple of his last comments, again these famous Lampyisms, in which he talked about what he eventually was going to have happen to him. He talked about his immortality. He said, "Should God spare me, I'd like to be buried in St James Cemetery." Lampy, you didn't get your wish. I noticed in the program at your funeral yesterday that they're burying you at Mount Pleasant. He didn't always get his wish.

He also said, "When I die, they'll bury me with my shoes on, going 150 steps a minute." Once, in a very heated debate in city council, he said, "Don't you argue with my Maker." Lampy, I know that, with a twinkle in your eye, you may argue with your Maker. When you're

dancing those 150 steps a minute, your buddy Harold Ballard will be there, cheering you on.

Lampy, we're going to miss you.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): It was just a couple of years ago when I last saw Allan Lampport, or Lampy, as he liked to be called. He was over 90 then. I remember having a chat with him. It was a beautiful, sunny day and there were hundreds of people at this event. I remember chatting with him, of course, as many people did, because many of us who knew him and were aware of his history, were also generally aware of his age. I think he had many conversations with people, including me, that day about it. I said, "Lampy, how do you do it, especially after all those years in politics?" We all know how hard politics can be on individuals.

1410

He did give me some advice that day. I was delighted to see in one of the newspapers that his grandson Glen Day read these words at the service for Lampy. Those are 10 keys that he gave for growing younger and for living a successful life. I'd like to read these into the record because it's good advice for everybody, perhaps particularly so for us in this House.

These are Mr Lampport's tips to leading a successful life:

"Like yourself for who you are and keep that well polished;

"Live to your standard without selfishly stepping on other people;

"When you have the time and knowledge, help others;

"Make yourself part of the lives of your children;

"Learn to be on time and ahead of time;

"Be uplifting as much as you can;

"Feel happy with all things;

"Don't let your fear bother or interfere you;

"Laugh at yourself in front of a mirror every morning"; and

"Follow all the advice and don't care about your age. Keep a happy life and love your country." Those were added by Craig Sievenpiper.

Mr Lampport was known to many here in Toronto as "Mr Toronto." Certainly when I served on Toronto city council, I can't tell you how many times his name came up in debates and discussions.

His civic career stretched from 1930 to the 1970s, but it was during the time in the 1950s, when he served as mayor, that he proved to be a man, in many ways, ahead of his time. Many have said that he indeed built the foundation for the Toronto we have today. He brought us the subway system, airports. For a sports fan like myself, I'm very pleased that he brought us Sunday sports. We all benefit from that today.

Lampy loved Toronto. His achievements and his contributions are absolutely incredible and too long to list here today. I noted that my colleague who knew him far better than I did listed some of those achievements.

Mr Lampport died last Thursday at the age of 96. He leaves two daughters, Suzanne and Jane, and five grandsons. I also noted a quote by his daughter Suzanne, I

believe it was, who said—and I'm paraphrasing here—that he lived a long and happy, successful life and that now should be a celebration of that life.

I'm very happy today to rise on behalf of my colleagues and say that we appreciate all of his accomplishments for the people and the city of Toronto and that we honour that. Today we express, and I express, on behalf of the NDP caucus our deepest sympathy for his family.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I rise today on behalf of the government of Ontario to honour the life of Allan Austin Lamport. I myself didn't know Mr Lamport as well as, obviously, the member for York Centre. By the time I arrived on the scene in the municipal world of Toronto, Mr Lamport had since moved on. To sit on Toronto council, I know the member for Riverdale—I'm not certain of her new riding—

Ms Churley: Broadview-Greenwood.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Broadview-Greenwood—would know there are many stories about Allan Lamport and many stories about what he represented to the people of Toronto. They've been recounted rather well today. I don't feel worthy of speaking about a man who had such a profound effect on this city, probably the finest city, I think, in the world, and the direction it took.

You talk about being mayor, the TTC chair. You think about him as a member of provincial Parliament. He sat in the same Parliament as the leadership under Mitch Hepburn, which is truly some accomplishment, to think that he had the memories of the Mitch Hepburn legacy of a government in this province still to this day, or until some few days ago. He was the Variety Club Humanitarian of the Year. He was the TTC chairman. He was mayor of Toronto for three terms, which was three years, and you spoke about that, member for York Centre. Imagine, year after year you run. Every year he ran, and for three years he was elected mayor of Toronto.

There are the three airports that he, it is universally accepted, drove to be built, and today we have Pearson International, one of those airports, as a testament to that.

It was a civic career that spanned decades, and it's unmatched in my opinion. But there are two things I want to talk about that I think changed the course of this city of Toronto, and I don't think anyone can take any more credit for the kind of city we have today than Mr Allan Lamport.

One was the Sunday sports debate. It's tough for us to sit here in this place today and even contemplate a debate about playing sports on Sunday. It's considered passé, so unbelievable, that they had that debate. Yet some few short years ago in this same Legislature, I was part of a debate that talked about Sunday shopping.

It was that many years ago that Mr Lamport spearheaded the Sunday sports debate. I spoke to my grandfather, who worked for the Toronto Argonauts at the time and who has since passed away, about it on occasion, and he was one person who tried to emphasize to me what a huge debate it was in this city to have sports played on Sunday. It froze along party lines, along religious lines, and for a mayor to take a stand on such a controversial

issue when he could easily have sidestepped it speaks volumes about him and volumes about his beliefs. He was attacked unmercifully from all sides, but he seemed to represent that point of view that he believed what he believed and he carried forward.

That was one major change; it changed Toronto, because we moved into a different cosmopolitan look, this city. It changed us because we became more worldly; there's no doubt about it. At the time, we were considered somewhat backwater-Canadianish in essence.

But I think the most profound effect that he had on the city of Toronto today, and in the old days Etobicoke—in the days when he made the decisions there were New Toronto, Long Branch, Mimico, Alderwood, Islington, all kinds of little villages that didn't even make up Toronto—the day he spearheaded us, I think, to put us in the forefront of all major cities in the world, is the day he pushed for the subway in Toronto. The subway changed Toronto dramatically, the Yonge subway line and furthermore the Bloor subway line. We will never be the same city after that, and we're the better for it. The public transportation in this city today is still considered one of the finest in the world. It was based on his ability to see into the future and his ability to make decisions that I think we would have difficulty making today, looking at public expenditures at the time that were going to be so large, but accepted by him as something that we needed to make this country, this province, this city one of the finest in the world.

I went to his funeral yesterday, and it was basically a who's who of municipal and probably provincial politicians and other leading lights in our society. Everybody had a kind word to say about Allan Lamport. There's no point in going over the same Lampyisms, as they would say. I'm not so sure that some of those, although I wasn't there in the first hand, weren't used prudently, judiciously, to diffuse difficult situations and debates. But this city would not be the city it is today if it weren't for Allan Lamport.

It is hard for me to understand, being my age; he wasn't in power even when I was born. But when you review history and see what he stood for, you know full well that we are accepting accolades today and the civic leaders of Toronto are accepting accolades today about Toronto based on the decisions made by people like Mr Lamport and others who sat on council 30 and 40 years ago.

In closing, I certainly send for our caucus our best, in a most regretful time for them, to the family of Mr Lamport. And what a family it was, a truly good family I saw yesterday, very close, and ultimately that was one of the driving, passionate concerns in his life, his family.

I know this is probably going to be an overused Lampyism, but I have to use it in closing. In true Lampy style, in my opinion and in this Legislature's opinion, I'm sure, he was not only unique; he was different. Thank you.

The Speaker: I thank all the members for their kind words and I will ensure that copies of the remarks are sent to the Allan Lamport family.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Acting Premier and Chair of Management Board. We've had serious concerns over the Tory fundraiser, your personal friend, Tony Miele, CEO of the Ontario Realty Corp, for some time. Under his leadership as CEO of the ORC, it has found itself before the courts in lawsuits totalling millions, trying to defend itself for not following proper tendering process in the sale of Ontario taxpayer lands and assets. Each of these suits involve deals that are benefiting your Tory friends.

Before the House today is Bill 14; it's being debated again in the House this afternoon. In this bill, section 141(3), if passed, will give the responsibility and powers of the minister to the Ontario Realty Corp. My question for you is this: How will this change the law in terms of how the Ontario Realty Corp must lawfully do the business of selling off public lands?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): First of all, your premise is totally inaccurate, spurious. It takes the character of an individual who has worked for the Canada Lands Co, qualified, ran the sales program for the federal government for all of eastern Canada—for the record, I think those allegations should be corrected.

The question of allowing the board of the ORC to be a different scheduled agency is one that's long overdue. There were board members, for the last three years at least, who have wanted that to happen sooner. It's time now to allow the ORC and their board of directors some more autonomy. It doesn't change the accountability the Legislature has in terms of the authority to sell government lands. It still has to go through an ORC process.

Mrs Pupatello: To the Chair of the Management Board: What Tony Miele told his employees last night at 8:50 in a memo described exactly what the effect Bill 14 would have on that organization. What he said was that it would be administratively independent from you. It also says that it's going to have the responsibility of establishing its own internal administrative policies and practices.

This is the same chairman, Tony Miele, who is now defending himself before the courts as CEO of the Ontario Realty Corp for abrogating that same process you just spoke to, so that individuals are not being able to purchase property because they're the lowest tender but because they're your Tory friends.

This bill is then going to make what is currently happening, which is unlawful—you bring in Bill 14 and make it lawful. What we see now is that the Tory money and your Tory friend are again impacting on what the law of Ontario is going to be. What responsibility do you have in defending the public interest and protecting us in those same sales of Ontario lands and assets?

Hon Mr Hodgson: First of all, as to those allegations, if you're so sure there's any shred of truth to them, I would invite you to say them outside where you're liable. You know there's no truth to that and yet you want to say it in here with perfect immunity.

I realize there have been problems with the ORC in the past and that's why there's a new management team. Tony Miele, the chair, has taken over those allegations that are before the courts. That happened before he was the chairman. I agree that there needed to be a change at the ORC. The next step in that change is to make sure that the organization can operate in a businesslike fashion. The accountability has not changed. But if you'd like to send over the memo, I'll take a look at it if there's anything more to it than that.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): To follow up on the question of my colleague, the reality of this memo, which was sent by Mr Miele, which aligns clearly with the skewed lines you have in your bill, makes it clear that the ORC will operate independently of your government, independently of any accountability to you or to the taxpayers of Ontario.

It is not a private Tory club. We're talking about potentially \$5 billion in taxpayer-owned property they are to dispose of. Change the name, maybe, to Tory Real Estate Corp. It would make more sense. Clearly, the document, again, allows them to set their own administrative practices. That means they're not accountable to you, Minister. It allows them to respond quickly to market conditions—code words for saying, "We can basically discard the tender process, and if we think it's a good deal we'll move on it quickly."

What you are doing is giving over all the responsibility for the \$5 billion in assets to a bunch of people you appointed to run the board and the corporation. Will you do the responsible thing and withdraw the sections of this bill that apply to the ORC, give it some accountability and give ownership back to the taxpayers, not to your Tory friends?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I would ask the member, if he has any shred of evidence on these allegations that he rambled on about in his preamble, that he make them outside the House. If he would send over the memo, I could have a look at what he's referring to. If he could have a page send that over, I'd appreciate it.

I guess they're not going to send that over. The point is that the accountability does not change.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Environment. This past Saturday, when pushed for action on the Oak Ridges moraine at the Clean Water Summit, you defended the status quo by saying, "We have something in place that, if applied the right way, can be very worka-

ble.” Your statement directly contradicts the advice you have received from your own ministry experts.

I have in my hand a report, completed in June of this year and signed by your assistant deputy minister responsible for the GTA, which says that if these proposed developments in the GTA continue, it “is creating a real possibility that the potential to obtain clean water will be permanently lost” in the Oak Ridges moraine.

Your report says that if your developments go through, clean water is jeopardized. How can you continue to not do anything to support a freeze on development of the moraine when clean water is jeopardized, and your own report says that?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Coming from a representative of a party that did nothing on the moraine when they were in power, I find this a bit hard to take, but I will answer the honourable member’s question, because he and I were both at the waterfront regeneration trust meeting. If he had listened to what I said, he would understand that I said these rules have to be applied aggressively. Let me talk about the permit-to-take-water system, because that is the issue that is driving some of the concerns and anxieties respecting the moraine, and indeed a lot of the headwaters throughout southern Ontario.

I said that we have toughened the rules since the time of the Liberals being in power. I said that the rules had to be in place to ensure that every drop of water that is sought to be removed from the moraine or removed from any aquifer in Ontario has to be proved scientifically to be replenished. That’s a commitment of this government—not a commitment of him and his quick fix, but a commitment of this government. We’re proud of that commitment.

Mr Colle: Minister, you don’t get it. This is not about water per se; it’s about the fact that there are 55,000 housing units proposed for the moraine as we speak. Your guidelines are voluntary; they’re not good enough to protect the moraine. The moraine is threatened because of these 20 major applications that are going to allow 55,000 homes on the moraine. That’s what your report says: “Urban expansion with its associated extensions of sewer and water pipelines and development proposals in sensitive areas is posing significant threats to the long-term protection of the moraine and its water recharge functions.”

Minister, what you’ve done is just the opposite. You, on the other hand, have said that maybe these pipelines should be extended, as you wrote in that letter to the chairman of Durham region. You said, “Extend the pipeline so the development proposal in Uxbridge can be built.” Knowing that your own experts told you these pipelines posed significant threats to the moraine, why did you ignore their warnings and actually lobby on behalf of more pipelines and more development?

Hon Mr Clement: Let’s just state for the record it’s a GTSB report that you’re waving around. Yes? It’s not a government of Ontario report. I think that’s the case.

Mr Colle: Well, the back says “Ministry of Municipal Affairs.”

Hon Mr Clement: Listen, it’s a GTSB report, not a government of Ontario report.

The other question I’d like to ask the member if he’s interested in having a serious discussion—the official plan didn’t come from nowhere—is, where was his party and his caucus when the official plan for this area was passed? Maybe asleep at the switch, if he’s so concerned about it.

I’m talking about the permit to take water system. I have said that my ministry has a plan in place so that every single drop of water that is required to be taken out, based on a proposal, like for housing, has to be scientifically proved to us—to me, to my ministry, to our government—that it can be replenished. I don’t know what more the honourable member needs, but that is a commitment we were willing to make that certainly his government, when it was in power, did not make.

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Mr Colle: This report that I’m referring to was signed off by his deputy minister, Elizabeth McLaren, who is in charge of the Greater Toronto Co-ordinating Committee. On the back you’ve got the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. I know you don’t want to talk about the report because what the report says right now is that there are 20 massive developments for the Oak Ridges moraine that will bring 55,000 more people to live on the moraine.

Your refusal to protect the moraine and to rely on old, voluntary guidelines conflicts directly with your own ministry experts calling for provincial action. You have decided to listen to developers instead, who say, “Do nothing.” These developers have given your party hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations. So instead of listening to your own report which says clean water is in jeopardy, instead of listening to the experts who say, “Freeze development, get a plan in place to protect this water,” you’re saying, “I don’t want to listen to you; I want to make sure that the developers get their way.”

When are you going to stand up for clean water, protecting the moraine and stop—

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

Hon Mr Clement: I’ll speak a little bit more slowly to the honourable member and repeat that we are doing something. His party is good at a lot of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Here’s what we’re doing. We’re at the OMB representing the province and protecting the provincial interest. Point number one, that’s doing something.

The second thing we have done is we have tightened up the permit to take water system precisely because we want to make sure that the water supply and the water quantity and the water quality is there for our generation and for future generations. It has to be scientifically proved to us—the onus is on the applicant—and to all who want to review it that every drop of water to be taken out has to be replenishable.

That is action. He calls for action. We have acted. He has the rhetoric but the record of his government stands by itself as a record of doing nothing and signifying nothing.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier and it's about the situation of child poverty. Yesterday we learned from the National Child Poverty Report Card that child poverty in Ontario is growing faster here than anywhere else in Canada and we know that your government's policies are causing that. But what was your Premier's response? His response was simply to say, "Hogwash." One in five children in poverty in Ontario and the Premier says, "Hogwash."

My question is about another one of your policies that's going to make the problem worse. We've learned that your government is going to slap women and children who try to use the Family Responsibility Office to collect child support with new user fees, new taxes. If they try to use the FRO to collect child support, they're going to have to pay between \$25 and \$100.

Minister, when child poverty is already a serious problem in Ontario, how do you justify hitting women and children who are already poor with another tax?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I know the Attorney General would like to answer this.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): We recognize and take the issues raised in the auditor's report very seriously, of course, including the comments he made about the Family Responsibility Office. Many improvements have already been made in the Family Responsibility Office; others are underway. It is the most successful office of its type in Canada and we should give credit to those who work there. More than \$500 million in the last fiscal year has been collected by the Family Responsibility Office on behalf of those spouses and children in Ontario who are entitled to those benefits. That is not to say that improvements cannot be made; improvements can be made. We are trying to make that system more effective to serve spouses and children in Ontario. We take the auditor's comments to heart and we're working on them.

Mr Hampton: I can't believe my ears. Look, the number of children living in this province who are in poverty is getting worse by the day. Your government's response: Those women and children who try to use the Family Responsibility Office to collect child support, you're going to hit them with a tax. Don't you have a heart over there? Don't you care? My God, these are children. Some of them don't have food. They don't have clothing. Their mother has to worry about the power being shut off, the telephone being taken out, losing their apartment, and you're going to hit them with another tax. My God. There are tax cuts for the well-off, but kids living in poverty, you're going to go after them again.

Stand up and say it ain't so. Stand up and say you've got a heart, that you really do care about kids who are poor. Say it, Minister.

Hon Mr Flaherty: It is because we want to get money to spouses and children more quickly that we are introducing some of these fees. Fees will serve, if you think it through—I ask the opposition to consider this—as incentives to payers to fulfill their obligations to their spouses and to their children. Indeed, those costs are passed on only to those people who don't fulfill their obligations with respect to their spouses and their children.

Contrary to what the leader of the third party is indicating, this is not a disincentive to honour one's obligations. In fact, it is an incentive for those who are responsible to pay to support to their families, to do so in Ontario, to do so quickly, to do it promptly, to do it efficiently, for the sake of their own families.

Mr Hampton: You had better go back and ask for a briefing from your own officials, because this is what it amounts to: When a woman now contacts the Family Responsibility Office and she wants a financial statement, she will have to pay \$25 for that financial schedule. If she wants changes made in it—in other words, there's been a change of circumstance—you're going to hit her with a \$100 user fee, a \$100 tax.

I've got a suggestion for you: Go back to your NHL millionaires and get the \$16 million back and lay off on the poor children of this province. Go back to some of those people who are very well off in this province that you've given a tax cut to and tell them that they should give just a little more, so poor children won't have to pay this stupid, disgusting tax.

Minister, I'll give you another chance. Stand up and say that these user fees are not going to be put in place, that you're not going to go after the poorest children in the province while you give the wealthiest people another tax break.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Once again, I think it's crucial for the members opposite to be aware of exactly how the new system would work. It's being suggested that the government would charge a recipient to find out how much is owed. That's wrong. An account—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Flaherty: If the member for Kingston and the Islands would like the answer, I'll give it to him.

The way it will work is that an account summary, updated daily, is available to payers and recipients free of charge, 24 hours a day, through FRO's automated phone service. This service is more current than a written statement is, in any event, and is forwarded by the FRO by mail. This is a fact: That kind of information is available to those persons who need to have that information 24 hours a day. It's free and it's available by phone.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My next question is also for the Acting Premier, but I want to say to the Attorney General, you know full well that if

they ask for this in writing, they have to pay the user fee. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

I put forward today a proposal that would allow you to use the so-called Keg Mansion and the provincial land surrounding that in a way which would provide for 100 units of market housing and 100 units of non-profit affordable housing, which is so desperately needed not only in Toronto but elsewhere in the province. It would also allow you to protect the heritage buildings, some of which belong to the Massey family.

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I want a commitment from you today, Minister. First, are you prepared to protect those heritage buildings, put them under protection, so that if a developer buys the land, they will be protected? Second, will you consider the proposal to develop the land such that it results in 100 units of market housing and 100 units of affordable housing, and you use one to help pay for the other?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): If the question is about the Ontario Realty Corp's board of directors reviewing properties and which ones they should sell that aren't essential for the government to own in order to deliver a service, that review is ongoing. There is no need for the government, as I've mentioned before, to have its assets tied up, which will need to be repaired; to tie up more dollars that could be better used for the people of Ontario. We don't think it's necessary that we own things like golf courses or buildings that aren't necessary in the future.

If the question is on affordable housing and issues around homelessness, I would refer the question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'll wait for your supplementary.

Mr Hampton: The reason I ask this is because one of the principal issues involved with child poverty is the fact that since you've killed rent controls and since you've eliminated not-for-profit housing, there are literally tens of thousands of children across this province who are either homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. Their incomes aren't going up, but rents are increasing by 13% a year.

There's a strategy here. It won't cost your government any additional money. You could protect the heritage lands, you could sell some of the lands to a private developer for market housing—condominiums, if they wish—but the proceeds of some of that private sale would go towards ensuring that 100 units of affordable housing—co-op housing or non-profit housing—would be built.

I'm giving you a creative solution that won't cost your government any money to deal with some of these pressing issues of child poverty. I'm asking you, will you take us up on the proposal? It won't cost your government anything; it's a down payment on dealing with some of those child poverty problems; and it will work.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing would like to answer this question regarding housing.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for his suggestions. I just want to correct the record. Rental increases were capped this year at 2.6%, not 13% per annum as he suggested, which has been the lowest level in 25 years. So let's set the record straight here.

Perhaps there is a fundamental difference between the honourable member's party and our party. We also want to help low-income citizens and homeless citizens here in Ontario, but these same old solutions are coming from those benches over there: Throw money at the problem, throw money at the bricks and mortar, so-called not-for-profit housing. Not-for-profit housing is a misnomer. The lawyers made a profit, the architects made a profit, the social planners made a profit. And who paid the bill? The taxpayers. Who got the benefit? It certainly wasn't those people who needed low-income housing.

We have better solutions and we're working on them. We have eliminated the first \$2,000 on PST for new rental unit developments. We've created a broader tax class for rental properties. We're trying to streamline the process for new buildings so that the taxpayers aren't paying for that but the private sector pays for that. And we have just recently added 10,000 families for rent supplements through the signing of the social housing agreement with the feds.

Those are our solutions. They are not the same old failed solutions of the opposition but they are solutions that will work to the benefit of Ontarians.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Despite the fact that 33,000 people from my riding signed a petition to keep St Joseph's Hospital open, despite the fact that Brantford city council passed a unanimous resolution in support of keeping St Joe's open, despite the fact that the Health Services Restructuring Commission stated the savings happening would do so regardless of a one- or a two-hospital model, and despite the fact that you have not responded to a new and creative proposal to keep St Joe's open, your ministry is set to close St Joseph's Hospital.

Now you have a letter from 18 doctors, all chiefs of departments, from both St Joe's and Brantford General Hospital, strongly disagreeing with your direction regarding patient transfer during construction. I quote:

"A premature transfer of services before proper end-state facilities are available to accept them cannot serve in the best interests of the health care needs of the county. We appeal to you to rescind and amend these directions so as not to compromise our health care."

Minister, will you agree with our doctors, our city council and our citizens and amend these ridiculous orders to move patients into construction?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member opposite may or may not know, we have always taken into consideration the

advice of communities. Certainly we have made adjustments to the timelines concerning the deadlines that have been set by the commission regarding transfers and other items, and we will continue to work with the people in your community in order to ensure that high-quality patient care can be maintained.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): There is a reason the community is concerned. In Kingston, over 70,000 people signed petitions to keep the Hotel Dieu Hospital open. It has offered excellent medical facilities for the last 150 years.

The Provincial Auditor in his report states that you are \$1.8 billion short province-wide to build new hospitals. This is right in line with our experience in Kingston, where your restructuring commission stated that the capital investment required would be \$94 million. Later on it was changed to \$108 million, with the community paying over \$30 million. It now turns out that the ambulatory care component alone will cost at least \$40 million to \$45 million, not the \$30 million that was estimated, and that the total project cost for restructuring will be \$145 million, with \$50 million coming from the local community.

Minister, will you now scrap your plans for our area and implement the blueprint outlined by the citizens of St Joseph's, which will save the local taxpayers \$28 million and ensure that top-notch hospital services are maintained in eastern Ontario, and will you put the province's tax savings into much-needed patient care services such as more family physicians for the people of Ontario?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We certainly do appreciate the information and recommendations that we receive from the Provincial Auditor, but as you know, the plan was to modernize and strengthen our health system, and that is what we are doing. We wanted to ensure that all of the money was being used as efficiently as possible, that it was being directed to patient services.

If we take a look at the recommendations that were made by the commission, if we take a look at their financial estimates, we at the Ministry of Health are aware of the fact that the projects are coming in beyond the original estimate, and we have indicated that it will cost approximately \$3.2 billion for the restructuring, and we've set that allocation aside. That is consistent with the Ontario Hospital Association. I'm pleased to say that we already have \$1.2 billion worth of projects underway and we will be moving—

The Speaker: Order. The member's time has expired.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is to the Attorney General. I've heard a lot of posturing from members of the opposition that aggressive panhandling and squeegeeing are not important to the people of Ontario. However, I feel that it is important to make the streets safe for the people of Ontario. I would ask the

Attorney General to explain why the government felt Bill 8, the Safe Streets Act, was necessary.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Simcoe North for the question. Yesterday I had an opportunity to meet with front-line police officers at 52 division in downtown Toronto and listen to their concerns about their ability to police the streets of Ontario's largest city. That is one of the reasons, of course, why we've introduced the bill, that we had information from front-line police officers about the tools they needed in order to do the job in Toronto and in the other urban centres in Ontario.

People have the right to be safe and to feel safe in their communities, on their streets, in their homes. That's why we introduced Bill 8. We believe in that principle. The public spaces of Ontario belong to all of the people of Ontario. They have the right to use those public places and those public spaces without being intimidated and harassed and in safety.

Mr Dunlop: I'd ask the Attorney General to explain to the House what activities the bill covers and the tools the police will have to deal with these very serious issues.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I heard yesterday from the front-line police officers in 52 division about some of their findings in downtown Toronto, about the aggressive panhandling, about the commercial activity by squeegee people. I use the term "squeegee people" advisedly.

In one of the downtown Toronto divisions between May 1 and October 8, we heard yesterday, 331 individuals were engaged in the commercial activity of cleaning windows on a public highway. Of those, 101 were females aged 15 to 41; 230 were males aged 16 to 60.

The police officers in Toronto and in the other urban areas need the tools we're going to provide to them. They told me yesterday about handing out tickets to people and having those tickets thrown away and ignored. Part of this issue is of course respect for our police in Ontario, respect for police in our urban centres. That's why through this bill, if passed, we'll be providing our front-line police officers with the tools they need.

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MATERS MORTGAGES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Attorney General. Minister, you may be aware that I corresponded with the Minister of Finance in the autumn of 1998 and again in the late summer of this year regarding the desire of investors in Maters Mortgages to see an out-of-court settlement of their legal action against the government of Ontario to receive compensation for their investment losses.

You will know that in excess of 4,000 individuals have an interest in this case and are hopeful that the civil action can be resolved without further proceedings in the courts, since this legal case was initiated in September 1994 and has yet to be brought to a conclusion.

Mr Eves was kind enough to respond in a timely fashion to my letter, indicating in both replies that since the civil action is going on it would be inappropriate for him to address this issue outside the court. Minister, would you inform the House of any progress made towards resolving this matter and would you indicate whether the government is open to the possibility of an out-of-court settlement.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member opposite for the question. It is a long outstanding multiparty litigation to which the member for St Catharines refers. There have been developments from time to time, as you know, during the course of that litigation. There have been discussions from time to time between the parties during the course of that litigation. It is a complex matter. I have been briefed with respect to the matter. I'm certainly open to any suggestions the member opposite might have with respect to ways to bring the parties together in that litigation, which has gone on for years.

We all know the potential longevity of that type of complex civil litigation in our court system today, so I'm certainly open to any suggestions the member for St Catharines may have to expedite resolution.

Mr Bradley: At this time, Minister, one of the paramount concerns of the investors is the length of time this matter has been before the courts and the obvious frustration their legal representatives have experienced in endeavouring to meet with legal representatives of the government to explore the possibility of reaching an out-of-court settlement.

Judge Sharp was appointed as a case manager in a process intended to speed up the case, but scheduled meetings with the judge and lawyers from both sides were cancelled for a variety of reasons on March 7, May 14, May 27 and June 3, and he was subsequently appointed to a higher court. No further meetings have been scheduled and no new judge has been appointed as a case manager. Investors, many of whom you may know are in their senior years, are worried that lawyers acting on behalf of the government are endeavouring to lengthen the legal proceedings.

Minister, can you give the investors an assurance that the government would be open to exploring ways to expedite this matter, either through a mutually agreeable out-of-court settlement or at least an expedited court case?

Hon Mr Flaherty: The member opposite will appreciate that this matter is relatively recently in the courts. It was investigated I gather by the bureaucracy during the period 1990 to 1995 and the litigation has ensued, I understand, since that time.

I can't comment on the particular proceedings in any piece of litigation involving the crown, as I'm sure the members opposite understand. I am interested, as I'm sure all members are, in any steps that can be taken to expedite resolution. Certainly we're trying to do that through case management in our court system in Ontario. It's met with tremendous success in the Ottawa-Carleton area. It's met with success to the extent that it is now

partially mandatory in the Toronto judicial region. If we can help expedite resolution of these types of cases, I'm certainly prepared to listen to suggestions.

LIQUOR LICENSING

Mr Bob Wood (London West): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Before putting the question, I know all members will want to join with me in welcoming a group of people in the members' galleries who are visiting us from the London West provincial PC association.

My question is this: The minister will be aware of increasing concern across the province about large-scale social events oriented to young people where drugs and alcohol are illegally sold. What strategy is the minister developing to address this concern and, in particular, to send a message to the owners of these premises and to organized crime?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and welcome the delegation. You have an outstanding MPP.

The member is right. Illegal drug used at many rave parties is widespread and dangerous, and this government is prepared to work with police and municipal authorities to shut down criminal activities at these events. However, the problem is much bigger than rave parties as it relates to illegal activities occurring in licensed premises, and I assure all honourable members that we are following through on our election and throne speech commitments by vigorously fighting these activities, many of which involve organized crime.

Mr Wood: Mr Speaker, that was an outstanding answer. When does the minister think that these initiatives will translate into concrete action against this problem?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Runciman: Enough compliments, Mr Speaker. There are far too many illegal activities, like drug dealing, prostitution and money laundering, being run out of licensed establishments. Our government will be organizing a round table with our municipal and police partners to hammer out a coordinated approach to these challenges.

In the interim we are, through the outstanding work of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, moving to close down illegal activities in licensed premises. For example, the AGCO is partnered with the OPP, York and Peel regional police and other enforcement agencies in a project aimed at reducing prostitution in strip clubs. This effort, called Project Almonzo, has resulted in 530 criminal charges being laid and the AGCO has moved to immediately suspend or revoke many of the liquor licences for these establishments.

The government has many powerful tools, such as denying or revoking a liquor licence to ensure compliance with—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time has expired. New question.

CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): My question is to the minister responsible for children. Minister, right now at daycare centres all across the province where there used to be climbers, slides and swings, there are now only sandboxes. Why? Because your government has brought in new rules for playgrounds, rules that the daycares can't afford to keep. In Toronto alone, the city estimates that over 95% of daycare playgrounds will not meet the new standards, and this is the same across all of Ontario. Daycare centres have asked your government to help pay for children's playgrounds, but once again your government has said there is no money for children.

The Premier has made it clear that your government is prepared to fund playgrounds for millionaire professional athletes. Are you prepared to take immediate action to fund playgrounds for the children of Ontario?

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): Mr Speaker, this comes under the responsibility of the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): The safety of our children is of paramount importance to this government. That's why we were among one of the first provinces to adopt the new standards of the Canadian Standards Association.

In May 1998, the Canadian Standards Association released a new standard for children's play spaces and equipment that applies not just to daycares but to public play spaces such as schools, parks and housing developments. This is an issue we have followed quite closely. We're obviously tremendously committed to child care. This year, we'll spend more supporting parents in their child care efforts than any other government in Ontario's history.

1500

Shortly after we learned of the CSA designation, the ministry notified the operators of approximately 3,400 licensed child care centres in the province that this new standard would apply to their centres. The ministry is not requiring daycare operators to replace all of their equipment immediately unless it is clearly in a state of disrepair and worn out.

Ms Churley: Minister, I don't think you get the problem here. The daycares have to pay an inspector to come in and inspect. Then when they're told, "No, it doesn't meet the standards," they have to pay to have the structures torn down and then they have to pay to get new playgrounds built. That is another tax on people. These daycares can't afford it. Our government had put money in to help the daycares and your government once again took away money for children.

The parents are angry and the children are scared. What has been your ministry's response today, to just give us a history on how this came about? What are they supposed to do, have more bake sales? Your "let them eat

cake" attitude is unacceptable. I ask you again, will you announce today that you will put money into rebuilding these daycare centre playgrounds, or are you just going to have money for rich hockey players? Is that your answer once again, Minister? What about the children of this province? Stand up for children today for a change.

Hon Mr Baird: The safety of children is obviously a very big priority for this government, for this minister and for this caucus. The issue the member raises—I should point out to the House that equipment manufactured or installed prior to when the standard was released in May 1998 needs to be brought into compliance as repairs and renovations occur. Damaged or worn components are required to be repaired or replaced to meet the new standard, but we are not requiring removal of equipment that is safe.

Safety is incredibly important. I do want to point out to the member opposite, who has said that this government isn't committed, that this government, this caucus, this cabinet and this minister are spending more on child care than any government in Ontario's history, substantially more to provide child care than when she was in power.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This government saying that they spend more on daycare than did the previous government under the NDP is a lie and you should retract that.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I will ask the member to withdraw the word "lie" please.

Mr Bisson: Not unless he withdraws the lie.

The Speaker: Order. This is your second warning. I'm asking the member to withdraw the word "lie."

Mr Bisson: I'm prepared to withdraw, but he has to come out with the truth. That's all I'm asking.

The Speaker: That is not an unequivocal withdrawal. I will ask you to withdraw it clearly.

Mr Bisson: I withdraw it clearly.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): My question is for the Minister of Education. Last week you stated that when it comes to meeting the needs of special education students, changes and improvements will be made. Jonathan Smith, a 14-year-old grade 9 student, has been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and a severe learning disability. Jonathan's mother, Gloria, says that all doors have been slammed in her face. Because of lack of resources at the school, Jonathan only gets three hours of special education a week and this is only on a temporary basis.

Three hours a week of learning is inexcusable. Mrs Smith is a single working mother. She fears what will happen to Jonathan if he can't get access to the structured educational environment that he needs. The Premier's promise to put in the needed additional dollars for special education students clearly isn't forthcoming. Will you, Minister, admit today that your quest for cost-cutting is at the heart of Jonathan's right to be at school so he can be

prepared for a future where he can make a positive contribution?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I'd certainly be quite happy to have staff talk to the honourable member about following up with the school board on this issue, if it would be appropriate. The reason that we have increased money for special education funding in this province is because we recognize that for many young people those kinds of supports are extremely important. We not only changed the policies of how special education funding goes to boards, so that those students that have the highest need get the highest money, so there is money that is protected to boards. They can't spend less. They can top up, and many do, but they also have money that is flexible so they can use it to do things that might better reflect the needs of their particular student population. The policies have been changed, the money has been increased and we continue to work with boards and parents to improve how we provide those very important special education supports for family.

Mr Sergio: Madam Minister, when it comes to special ed kids, it seems that we have a widespread problem that you refuse to acknowledge and commit needed resources to.

I've had a distressing call from another worried mother. Antonia Servello is a happy six-year-old who enjoys school. This grade 1 student needs to be in a special program for attention deficit disorder, but her school has no class suitable to meet her needs. Her school does not have the funds to hire a new teacher assistant, nor the money to even provide an assistant to work with Antonia's class teacher.

These mothers want their children in school where they can get the best education they need and deserve. How many more cases are we to raise in this House before you will take notice and admit that you have devasted special needs programs?

My question to you is, what will you do about it?

Hon Mrs Ecker: We have done a considerable amount. We have given the boards more money for special education. Let me also point out that when we started to fund special education, we went out to the boards and said, "How much do you spend on special education?" We took that figure and we topped it up. We made it more. We added more to it and gave the money to the board. We appreciate that there are issues that we need to deal with with the boards in terms of how the policies are impacting on families, how the money is flowing. What I would like to say to the honourable member is that clearly with more money in the system, with improvements to the way that money flows, which everyone agrees are the right steps, still there are challenges in the supports that many families are getting. We are continuing to work on this to try and work it out so that those students are getting the important support that they need.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Many people in my riding—and there's a delegation that live in London-Fanshawe—and throughout the province are concerned about supports available to teenage mothers. Teenage mothers on welfare face an enormous challenge in raising a child when they have not earned a high school diploma. The pressures and the stresses of caring for a young infant when these mothers are still in their youth themselves often make it difficult to finish school. Without a high school diploma, it's hard to get a job. The Harris government was re-elected in part on a promise to help Ontarians trapped in the cycle of dependency, help them get back into the workforce.

Minister, clearly these young mothers need your help. What is our government doing to help them?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I want to thank the member for London-Fanshawe for the question, also another good hard-working MPP from London.

Without a good education, teen parents on social assistance risk getting trapped in the welfare system. Our goal is to help them break that cycle of dependency. Research has shown that teen mothers who graduate from high school are much less likely to require social assistance in the future. Provincial funding of \$25 million to support our learning, earning and parenting program initiative, which offers parents support such as child care to help them complete their education, is a major part of the solution. This is an important investment in the futures of young parents and their children. It will help them finish high school, become job-ready and help the cycle of dependency. Our LEAP program isn't about saving money, it's about saving people.

1510

Mr Mazzilli: I understand that there's research that has shown that young mothers who graduate from high school are much less likely to require social assistance. As such, it only makes sense that we use welfare resources and programs that target and help young mothers. My question to the minister is, what are we doing to stop the abuse of welfare in order to help people that truly need it?

Hon Mr Baird: Our government is committed to ensuring that our welfare system helps only those that are truly in need. Programs like LEAP help underscore that commitment. Because we truly care about how the resources are spent, we believe that we have a responsibility to work very hard to ensure that every single dollar in social assistance is spent wisely and is spent well. To us, no fraud is good.

Our efforts have already saved taxpayers more than \$100 million. As a continuation of the crackdown on welfare fraud and abuse, we've allocated additional resources to help increase the capacity of our welfare system to conduct eligibility reviews.

Our government, simply put, does not believe that it's right that someone receiving social assistance could realize significant financial gain, for example, owning a second residence. Our welfare system, our welfare reforms believe that welfare is program of last resort.

That's why we've gotten rid of cottage-fare in the province of Ontario.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I too, as a representative of London, would like to welcome those individuals here today.

My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Culture. Yesterday this House unanimously passed a resolution. It called on the government to pass a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act within two years. Members of all three parties—and I thank you—supported that resolution, including you, Minister.

You pledged to introduce an ODA, once consultations were complete. Yesterday I spoke with countless persons with disabilities and many of them asked me, "When will the consultations begin for a new ODA?"

Minister, the disabled community does not recognize your process of informal, closed-door, invitation-only chat as a true consultation process. When you met with members of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, you said you did not know when the real consultation process would begin. Will you tell the 1.5 million citizens of this province with disabilities, are your closed-door meetings the consultation process? Or are these consultations on how to undertake a consultation process?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I'd like to say that we were very happy with yesterday. I got a chance to meet with people from the disabled community and have a chat with them about our process. I think we were very clear in the throne speech when we said that within a year we would come forward with an action plan that would talk about process, timelines. We still are committed to that and we continue to work towards that action plan.

Mr Peters: Minister, I've written to you to define an action plan, and I have yet to see that definition of an action plan. Your attempt at consultation is not enough. One and a half million persons with disabilities have asked for a consultation process that is honest and open and accessible to the public. Ontarians with disabilities want a formal consultation process, and to begin that immediately. The best way that I can suggest to you to achieve that is to form an all-party select committee.

You have received countless letters from disability groups, asking that a select committee undertake the consultations. The official opposition and the third party are prepared and on the record as supporting this select committee. All we need, though, is your involvement, your commitment.

Minister, will you immediately commit to striking a select committee of the Legislature on this most important issue?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say a couple of things about this. In the last session of the House, the previous minis-

ter entered into a consultation process. She has talked to a number of people. I've spent a fair amount of my time in the last little while reviewing the reports that have come from disabled communities who wanted to give their input to the government, so I have first done that.

As I have looked at that and had questions about specific elements within that, I have met with different groups also, and that would include the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the hearing impaired, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Windsor-St Clair, please come to order. I cannot hear the answer.

Hon Mrs Johns: I've met with a number of different stakeholders.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker: No, we're stopping the clock. Order. Point of order?

Mr Duncan: The minister is not responding to the question, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. Start the clock. Minister.

Hon Mrs Johns: I'd like to suggest, just to remind the members from yesterday, that the Liberals had an opportunity to bring forward a disability bill; the NDP had an opportunity to bring forward a bill—in fact, one of their members brought forward a private member's bill. As we say, we're moving forward—

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

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is addressed to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. As you know, the northern region of the province faces a unique set of challenges to economic development. The vast distances between communities, the harsh climate which can impede efficient transportation and the cyclic vulnerability of the resource-based economy are the conditions that differentiate the north from the south. They are the factors that must be considered in developing public policy.

As the minister responsible for economic development in the north, what steps have you taken to help communities and businesses prosper in northern Ontario?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I thank the member for his question. Indeed, I appreciate his recognition of the challenges faced by communities in northern Ontario. These challenges and differences are indeed recognized by the Mike Harris government. We're addressing these challenges in a comprehensive economic development strategy.

In addition to cutting taxes, leaving more money in northern Ontario's economy, in addition to cutting red tape, in addition to bringing forward legislation like

balanced budget legislation to make sure that future generations are not burdened with additional debts and deficits, we do have unique programs to help out communities in northern Ontario. To name a couple, we have the capital assistance for small communities program, which indeed has invested about \$26 million in 275 different communities across northern Ontario. On my trips to about 40 different northern communities to date, like Trout Creek, Ignace and Wikwemikong we're seeing this support come into action, and important projects to support the way of life in northern Ontario communities.

As well, on a recent trip to Kenora and Timmins—

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

Mr Galt: Thank you very much for that answer.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the north is its great natural heritage and natural resources, which both contribute to a high quality of life and provide a foundation upon which the northern economy is built. Forestry, mining, hunting and fishing and ecotourism are vital to the region's development. I think you will agree that the government must pursue a strong program of sustainable development in order to boost the resource-based economy. But policies such as forest management, mining regulation and control of wildlife populations must be supported by proper infrastructure, including a highway system that supports the transportation of people and products.

Can you tell the Legislature how the resource-based sectors of the northern economy are faring under the Mike Harris government?

Hon Mr Hudak: Indeed, the Minister of Natural Resources and I, to give an example, are very committed to supporting the resource-based economy of northern Ontario. In fact, I was in Kenora on Friday. I was very pleased to be there and brought greetings on behalf of the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources on the new Trus Joist MacMillan plant opening up in the Kenora area, which is going to bring 475 permanent direct and indirect jobs into northwestern Ontario.

In terms of supporting the mining industry—

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Come to order. We are stopping the clock because the third party has gotten very close every day to getting their question in, and when we have points of order at this point in time they miss their last question. I'm going to ensure they get their question. A point of order?

Mr Peters: Mr Speaker, pursuant to standing order 37(a), I wish to advise the House that I am dissatisfied with the member's answer and I will be filing the proper paperwork to have that answer—

The Speaker: The member will know he can file that with the table without raising a point of order, but I thank him for letting us know.

Start the clock. Final comment?

Hon Mr Hudak: I'm pleased also to talk about support for the mining industry, which is a \$5.5-billion

industry in the province—announced last night in Timmins, support in that area for mine rehabilitation as part of a \$27-million program, as well as a \$19-million investment in geophysical surveys and Operation Treasure Hunt.

I thought as well, talking about the Kenora area and—

The Speaker: The minister's time is gone.

1520

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Education. There was a very important meeting in Sault Ste Marie last night, held by the Algoma District School Board with leaders of the communities that are within that school board area. It was on the issue of the formula and the impact that the lack of funds, because of the way the formula was developed, is having on that board's ability to deliver programs. They were wondering if you really understood the issue of high density versus low density.

When the formula was put together for the Algoma district, the territory within the municipalities was all that was considered. Literally hundreds of kilometres of territory between the municipalities was left out, which means that the Algoma District School Board gets significantly less money.

The question is, do you understand that, and if you do, will you give direction to your ministry or the EIC or somebody to meet with the board to change that, or failing that, will you come up to the Algoma district and take a ride on the bus with some of us between, for example, Blind River and Sault Ste Marie or Sault Ste Marie and Hornepayne so that you understand fully and in a more personal way the issue at stake here?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I have had the privilege, and an enjoyable one it was, to visit many of those communities in his area. We quite understand that school boards in communities like the north do have significant geographical challenges. That's one of the reasons why the way we finance education specifically recognizes that, so that boards which have long distances and big geographic areas get compensated from that. But I'd be very pleased to have officials meet with his school board. I appreciate his bringing this issue forward because we are continuing to look at ways that we can improve the way we finance the boards and try to make sure that the monies they receive are indeed meeting the local needs, so I appreciate the suggestion from him.

VISITORS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know the House would like to welcome Lazarre Gaël, who is here from Belgium on an educational training experience, and he's in the company of his cousins, Joe and Gloria Siddock of Blind River.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That's not a point of order, but we do welcome them.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to make a motion regarding this evening's sitting.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Klees: I move that notwithstanding the order of the House dated November 22, 1999, the House shall not sit this evening from 6:45 to 9:30 pm.

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

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the consumers, feel gas prices are too high throughout Ontario;

"Whereas we, the consumers, support the Ontario Liberal caucus's attempt to have the Mike Harris government introduce predatory gas pricing legislation;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want the Mike Harris government to act so that the consumer can get a break at the pumps rather than going broke at them;

"Whereas we, the consumers, are fuming at being hosed at the pumps and want Mike Harris to gauge our anger;

"Furthermore, we, the consumers, want Mike Harris to know we want to be able to go to the pumps and fill our gas tanks without emptying our pockets;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass predatory gas pricing legislation," as introduced by the Liberal member from St Catharines, and to pass the gas price watchdog bill as introduced by the Liberal member for Eglinton-Lawrence, "in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps."

I affix my signature to this petition.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I have a number of petitions concerning municipal restructuring titled "Bring Back Haldimand-Norfolk Counties."

"Whereas we, the undersigned, do not want a region-wide, single-tier supercity; and

"Whereas we support the 'two county' model representing two single-tier cities (one each for Haldimand and Norfolk); and

"Whereas we believe this model will give us a government that is closer to the voters, providing the greatest degree of 'accountability' by our elected representatives; greatly reduce the number of politicians; greatly reduce taxes through the elimination of multiple administrations, services that are repeated six and seven times; and produce further cost savings through adjusted service delivery methods; and

"Whereas the tax revenue of the Nanticoke Industrial Centre is to be divided equitably (based on population) between each of the two new counties;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to bring back Norfolk and Haldimand counties."

I clearly agree with this and affix my signature to it.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a certified 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 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 outlets;

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

I have also signed the petition.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Petitions continue to come in by the thousands, literally, signatures related to the northern health travel grant and our need to have a review of that program. I'll read the petition I have in front of me.

"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.”

I thank the people for sending the petitions. As I say, we've had thousands, and I'm pleased to add my name to that petition.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition here that I received from citizens of Alexandria and Green Valley.

“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 affix my signature to this petition.

1530

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 1999, on the motion for second reading of 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak on this particular bill, another omnibus bill by this government, which really for all intents and purposes is a cleanup bill. It's a bill that does some damage control where the budget that was introduced last year by this government is concerned. I want to say at the outset that a lot of what those of us on this side of the House in the NDP caucus want to say about this bill was said so very well yesterday by our finance critic in his presentation to the House. What I will do today is elaborate on some of the points that he so effectively brought out and put on the record.

What we have here for all intents and purposes is a piece of legislation, a mishmash of things that the government has had to very quickly put together once it began to realize some of the difficulties that are happening out there, initiated primarily by the legislation they've brought down and the changes they've made in their four years, and in particular the downloading they've done of services to the municipalities.

If you listen to this government, you would think they are concerned, first and foremost, about the issue of debt and deficit, and that everything they're doing by way of changes in legislation and shifting of responsibility is taking us down a road that will see us, at the end of the day, be more responsible and more accountable where debt is concerned. But the sad fact of the matter is that in reality that isn't where we're going.

Our finance critic, the member for Hamilton West, very correctly said yesterday, rounding off some figures, that when we were the government, for very legitimate reasons, the debt of the province rose to some \$80 billion to \$85 billion. We were government at a time, if you remember, when there was a recession out there that was worldwide in nature, that was equal to the Great Depression in many significant ways. We were challenged, as a government, to be responsible in front of those realities, to make sure that programs stayed in place to support families and working people as they shifted from one job to another or had no job at all, to make sure that the fabric, the very framework upon which this province was built over a number of years—recognizing that the economy of Ontario is strong and has always been strong and will continue to be strong, because we are, after all, the industrial heartland of the country, we could run some deficit and some debt to get us through that difficult period and then at the end of the day get back to managing the books in a way that saw us then bring the deficit down and pay off the debt.

When the Conservatives were elected in 1995, we all thought that's what they were going to do, that they were going to take what they described at the time as a very

poor record of fiscal management and fix it. But in fact what we found was that the debt that was built up in those five years when we were the government, to some \$80 billion to \$85 billion, has now risen exponentially in the last four years, when the economy of this country, I remind people, has been booming. The members of the government are not shy to let us know that, to talk about that, to tell us about that. The economy of Ontario has been literally booming in the last four years, yet still the debt that the province is facing has gone up again by some \$40 billion. In my view that's quite unconscionable. You might ask yourself the question, why has that happened? It seems, when you look at the record of this government, that they're not interested in bringing the deficit and the debt down at all. What they're interested in is making sure that their friends and benefactors are better off, are getting tax breaks, are able to wheel and deal out there in the economy unencumbered by government, by having to pay taxes or by red tape or whatever else gets in their way, so they can make the big bucks that the government feels they so rightly deserve. To hang with government deficit and debt.

Surprisingly, in this province, we have a situation where we proposed, as some of you will remember, in the platform that we laid out in 1995, to in fact have no deficit. Imagine—we, the New Democrats, the social democrats of this place, proposed in our election campaign material of 1995 that we would have the deficit under control and to zero within a matter of two years by managing responsibly and accountably. This government said they would have it under control in a year or two as well, when they ran in 1995. We find out now, as we move in on the millennium, that they had no plan whatsoever to bring the deficit and debt down. In fact, they've run it up from somewhere over \$80 billion to \$120 billion.

This bill is about their attempt, after the fact, to try to find some ways to at least bring the deficit under some control, so they don't continue to keep running up the debt. We know, and they know if they're being honest with us, that to run up the debt in the way they have, they've had to go out and borrow that money. So when they tell us that we were mortgaging the future of our children to provide programs and make sure people were looked after in those very difficult times of 1990 to 1995, in fact these are the folks who are mortgaging—in some very good times—the future of this province and the future of our children, when they shouldn't be. So if we're talking about who's being responsible and who's being irresponsible, let the facts fall where they may. People can make up their own minds and judge for themselves. But I suggest to you that the reality is far different than the spin that you'll hear from the government and the folks across the way.

So we have a piece of work here that has in it some rather interesting components that are put together to help deal with the debt that continues to grow, with the deficit that we continue to run, and to paper over, for the time being anyway, some of the problems that municipi-

palities are going to face in the next year as they try to balance their budgets, now that the government has dumped the cost of almost everything onto their backs and onto the backs of property taxpayers.

Before I go any further on some of the very negative aspects of this—and there are a whole whack of them; I won't get to all of them because I don't have enough time here this afternoon. Some of my colleagues and I'm sure some of the Liberals will point to some of the shortcomings in this bill and some of the damaging effects that will happen down the road if we end up passing this bill. I just want to comment on one small piece that could be some good news if it's done properly. I would suggest that "done properly" will not be by leadership from this level of government. "Done properly," if it happens at all—if in fact we finally get this legislation passed—will happen because there are some really good people out there in communities across this province, and in particular in my own community, waiting for this legislation to empower them to go out and begin to do some work on behalf of small businesses and entrepreneurs and investors in those parts of the province who actually want to create some new opportunity, invite some new investment and stimulate some of our own small and medium-sized business people to actually take some chances and some risks and fire up the economy.

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This government has absolutely no plan in place for economic development or economic diversification or economic evolution in this province. All the good news that we've seen and heard and felt in Ontario, most of it in southern Ontario I have to say—northern Ontario is a completely different picture altogether—is driven by the fact that the American economy continues to plug along on all cylinders.

When and if the American economy begins to slow down or, as my colleague from Hamilton West said last night, "goes into the can," we're in big trouble here in Ontario because there's nothing happening any more in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. That's why there's seldom a question from this side of the House to the minister responsible for economic development and trade, because there's nothing going on. There's absolutely nothing going on over there. But in this bill we see an effort by the government to put in place a piece of legislation they've been toying with for quite some time now to give communities' small business investment funds a chance to actually get out there and do their work.

This program, for all intents and purposes to this point anyway, was actually picked up by this government because there was lots of criticism levelled by them re the labour-sponsored investment funds. They thought they might do something different that reflected more their value and their priority and their approach to how the economy might be in some small way stimulated. So they slammed the labour-sponsored investment funds, which by the way are beginning to catch fire and do some really interesting things around the province and invest in

some opportunities that I think will pay dividends down the road to all who have trusted their money to them, but the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act that this government has been attempting to put in place for some number of years now has been for all intents and purposes a bit of a bust.

There are groups out there, as I said, in my own community led by people like Mr Dan Hollingsworth and Deane Stinson, who have been working very hard at the grassroots level, at the community level, to try and find some positive pieces, some constructive elements of that bill so they could put it in place.

They're waiting for this bill to pass. They want to make sure that the time lines involved here are such that they will in fact be able to incorporate and get their program underway so they can help some people, because the economy in northern Ontario right now is not very good and people are having a very difficult time keeping things together and making ends meet.

If this government doesn't do something in the next little while to indicate that it has a concern, that it recognizes we have a problem and that they are going to initiate some plan and actually beef up the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, I suggest to you, when you consider the debt we've now incurred and the deficit we continue to run and the fact that this government continues to borrow money to fund that and to literally throw money away by way of this tax break to their rich friends and benefactors, we're all in the not-too-distant future going to be struggling to make ends meet, not just the north end of the province.

In many significant ways, what this bill should be about is introducing by way of a budget bill some new initiative, some all-encompassing, comprehensive strategic plan as to how this province is going to take advantage of the resources we have available to us in this province, and have had for a number of years, to get us to a place where we are again leading the world in our ingenuity and intelligence and technology and productivity.

But no, it's not about that. This bill is about finding ways to make sure that this government, at least for a one-time hit, has the money that it needs to make the budget of next year look good again.

Those of us who are close to our communities know that the only way this government was able to make its budget of last year look in any way positive or constructive, or not as destructive as it actually was, was to flow one-time money to communities, to cash-manage a whole lot of difficulties that were out there that communities were indicating they needed help with. They're not going to cash-manage in quite the same way this year the way they did last year, but there are in here some provisions that will help them deal with some of the backlash that they're going to get.

For example, they're going to move the actual implementation date of the download of ambulance services to municipalities. There are municipalities out there waiting for the other shoe to fall re how they're going to pay for a whole lot of the programs that they're now being asked

to deliver and how they're going to deliver those programs in the end.

This government has at least taken a little bit of the heat off. In this act they're going to move the actual implementation date for ambulance services to be turned over to municipalities for another year. So there's a little relief, a little pressure off the backs of the municipalities. It gives them just a wee bit more room to manoeuvre and takes this government off the hook just ever so slightly. I'm sure we'll see lots more of that in the next while as municipalities come, cap in hand, looking for the resources they need to do the things that they're being asked to do now, because the money is just not there. You can only go to the property taxpayer so often and then they buckle under the pressure.

The other thing they're doing for municipalities by way of this act which is rather interesting but is in keeping with the track record and the approach of this government where it comes to the question of deficit and debt and how they pay for their programs and, most importantly, how they pay for this wonderful tax break they've given to their friends and benefactors is that they are now going to ease the restrictions a bit, let up a bit on municipalities where it comes to their ability to borrow. So not only are we going to see the province now in debt to the tune of some \$120 billion and growing as each day goes by, as we run deficits in this province to pay for the tax break, but we're now going to allow municipalities that want to do so to borrow more money, so that they in fact can get themselves into some significant and interesting debt.

The trend begins to solidify here and show its face. We have a problem. You can't download the kinds of services that this government has on to municipalities, on to the backs of property taxpayers, and expect that it's all going to be a wash at the end of the day, particularly by a government that is still running deficits and building up debt at the rate that the folks across the way are. It just doesn't add up. The dollars and cents don't add up, the numbers don't add up, and we're heading for some really difficult times that will be of a nature that I don't think we've ever seen in this province before.

This government, by way of legislation such as the piece that we're discussing here today, has thrown out a few carrots, has thrown out a few lifelines and points to other people—you know, "Why don't they do this or why don't they take advantage of that little thing that we did there?" or, "It's not our fault; we're not responsible; we are just trying to manage a very difficult fiscal situation for ourselves here." Their approach is obviously to take that difficult fiscal situation and dump it on somebody else.

Take, for example, the selling off of buildings. We heard during the election that they were going to sell off Highway 407 and we were told in the House here before the election that they were going to take all that money and pay down the debt. They promised that.

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But, no. It went into the general revenue fund and now this year, in order to deal with the deficit and some of the

challenges that they're facing fiscally, they're going to sell off more buildings. Not just vacant space or redundant buildings, but we're talking about selling off buildings that are full of government activity, for example, the Roberta Bondar Place in Sault Ste Marie. What a travesty that will be—a building that was named after the first woman astronaut that this country has had. We were so proud in Sault Ste Marie the day that we cut the ribbon on that building, but now we're going to sell it off. Why? Because this government needs a quick fix to deal with the very difficult fiscal situation that they themselves have exacerbated.

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth-Burlington): Again the member from Sault Ste Marie has indicated the same argument that we heard for the last four or five years, that basically you have to borrow to pay for the tax cut, that you have to cut programs to pay for the tax cut. I'm shocked to still hear that argument. I could see hearing that argument in 1995, perhaps, but that argument now flies in the face of the actual facts.

I'll read out to the member what happened to Ontario revenues after the tax cut started to be implemented. In 1996, we started implementing the tax cuts and you'll recall that this is the 30% income tax cut, along with the 69 other tax cuts, and now we're going to add 30 more. This is what actually happened to revenues.

In 1995-96, there was \$36 billion. The tax cut came in and revenues didn't go down; they went up by almost \$2 billion—\$38 billion was 1996-97.

In 1997-98, they went up again another \$2.5 billion, almost \$3 billion, to \$41 billion. In 1998-99, they went up another \$1 billion to \$42 billion. We didn't have to borrow anything for the tax cut. We didn't have to cut any government programs to pay for the tax cut.

What happened with the tax cut was that we got extra revenues. If you want to know why that happens, just take a look at the film industry. The film industry was floundering in 1995-96. Every budget had a tax cut that targeted the film industry. What happened there was that there was an exponential growth in that industry, to the point that whereas it was a disaster in 1995-96, Toronto was being called Hollywood North. Now there are 35,000 people there paying taxes. That's what's happened and why we have extra—

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): There were a couple of prominent professors who wrote a book about Canadian history and who destroyed Canadian history. I just heard a change of history from the member who just spoke. Everybody I've talked to who's a conservative economist says that you had to borrow money to pay for the tax cut and added \$21 billion to the debt. The Dominion Bond Rating Service, as conservative an organization as you can get, estimated that it would cost this government about \$5 billion a year in lost revenue in order to finance the tax cut. My good friend the member for Etobicoke Centre cautioned his government publicly—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Was it not publicly? Well, cautioned his government privately perhaps against this bizarre attitude of wanting to implement a tax cut before you'd balanced the budget. The more progressive and thoughtful members of the caucus, including the member for Etobicoke Centre, said to the Premier and the whiz kids in the back room, "Look, tax cuts may not be a bad idea, but we should balance the budget first." I agreed entirely with them. Ted Arnott was another one; Gary Carr was another one; I think Morley Kells and Bill Murdoch. All of these people were very wise about this, and I'm telling you, I'm still with them on that particular issue.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): I'm pleased to respond to the presentation from the member for Sault Ste Marie. I think he obviously touched a nerve in the crux of his argument around the fact that what has happened to the balance of debt in this province is a very important one.

I am shocked to hear the response from the member from Wentworth who is saying: "We didn't have to borrow money to pay for the tax cut. We didn't have to cut government programs to pay for the tax cut. It's excess revenue. It's just flowing in." Then why, I say to the member, did we continue to increase the debt? The debt has gone from \$88 billion to \$121 billion during your watch. Take a look at that, for folks who profess to be so fiscally responsible.

One of the things that is really quite stunning in this bill is the promise that is broken about where money being raised from the sale of government assets is going to go. You committed, you promised that every penny raised through the sale of government assets would go to paying down the debt, this burgeoning debt at this point in time. Yet we find in this bill that's before us right now that that promise is to be broken, that you are going to take that money and move it into general government revenue, something you said you would never do.

We understand why you are doing that. We understand that when you took the \$3.1 billion from the sale of the 407, you used it for ongoing current payments. That's only one-time money. It doesn't come in every year. When you sell a road or a highway, you get paid once for it. When you spend that and you have that as part of your budgeted expenditures, next year you've got to find the money again to continue to support that budget plan. So you're breaking one of your fundamental promises. There wouldn't be that economic squeeze on you to find that money and to break your promise and use the money from sale of assets if in fact the member from Wentworth was correct.

The member from Sault Ste Marie, I think, has made a very valid point here. I've yet to hear anything to refute it from the government side.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Enjoyable, it was; accurate, I'm not so sure.

The first thing is, it's always interesting and curious to hear the member for St Catharines talk about government financing. The beauty of being a Liberal is that you never

have to worry about what you said yesterday. He never worries.

In 1995, under the leadership of Lyn McLeod, that party was the one that campaigned on tax cuts. You called for 5% tax cuts.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, no. They called for a 5% tax cut. You were the guys who called for that. Our tax cut was larger, I admit, but under the same principle, it would apply. So don't ever worry about what you said yesterday when you can say something different today, because it's a Liberal.

It's got to be a stretch when we're going to start taking economic theory from Bob Rae's NDP government. With fairness, nobody could have balanced that budget year over year at a \$12-billion deficit—not a soul. There was going to be debt accumulated regardless of what the government did. Now you may argue, as you did, tax cuts, in opposition or in favour, but the fact of the matter remains that you left a \$12-billion deficit. If we wanted to balance, year over year, and not put a nickel towards the debt, we would have had to savage education, savage health care, savage community and social services, and you would have stood in your places condemning us for such a thing. So you get it both ways, which in my opinion is not very fair or even-handed.

Finally, did you hear the one where he said he was going to balance the budget, if elected, in two years? You were going to balance the budget, if you were elected, in two years. Pardon me, but I don't know how many people out there are going to take much thought and consideration to an NDP promise about balancing a budget when you couldn't balance it for the five years you were in office.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes to respond.

Mr Martin: I want to thank the members from Wentworth-Burlington, St Catharines, Beaches-East York and Etobicoke Centre for responding and putting on the table some of their own thoughts. It's good to have that kind of debate.

I go back to the point I was making, which is that this government purports to be fiscally responsible. They know all about balancing budgets and how to run government, and they're going to do it better than anybody else, yet here we are, \$120 billion in debt, \$40 billion above what we were when they took over. That debt went up. They cut taxes, they cut programs.

What happened, member for Etobicoke Centre? Who ran up that debt? Is Bob Rae still in the Premier's office, in some cupboard somewhere, coming out at night when everybody goes home and running up the debt? Is that what's happening? No, that's not what's happening. It's that you guys don't have a clue. You brought in tax breaks when we couldn't afford them. If you'd just thought for a second and done what the member for St Catharines said, let the thing run for a couple of years, keep everything in control, let the revenues come in, take advantage of the good economy that you've been privi-

leged to govern under and then at the end of the day, when the budget is balanced, whenever that happened—we put our program to balance that budget out in the public realm much before the election ever happened, and nobody challenged it. Nobody said, "That's not going to work," or "That's wrong," or "This is off-base." Nobody did, including yourselves, in that election. So to suggest for a second that we didn't have a program that was going to balance the budget in the year that we said is a little bit after the fact.

The fact of the matter is you've got a debt that is \$40 billion more than it was when you came into power and you're shifting the responsibility now on to the municipalities. That's what it's all about.

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The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'll be sharing my time with the honourable member for Waterloo-Wellington, who will also provide the summarizing two-minute response.

It's interesting to hear the opposition talk about what we did, particularly the NDP. It was interesting to hear the agreeable reference from the member from Sault Ste Marie, a friend from my old hometown, to the member from St Catharines. They said they agreed. It's something that we always suspected: The NDP are in fact in bed with the Liberals—philosophically speaking, of course, with all due respect to the individuals.

The interesting thing is that this bill is designed to protect Ontario families from irresponsible government spending that results in deficits and accumulating debt. I happened to have been privileged to hear a comment from the previous Premier—I hope the member from Sault Ste Marie hears this—Bob Rae, who spoke at an insurance brokers' conference this past couple of months. He said he found there was one positive thing that the Mike Harris government had. He said it was something that Mike Harris had that they did not have. Do you know what it was? It was a vision for this province, a vision of where the province would go. I have the direct quote from the former leader and I'd be happy to provide it to you in either audio or transcript format. That's what he said.

This bill provides penalties to the Premier and members of cabinet in the first year in which a deficit occurs. I can't believe—this is awesome accountability. A government has never had accountability unless you went to the ballot box, and in that case, in a lot of cases, the people didn't understand what was happening. But under this bill a deficit can only be run under extraordinary circumstances, such as a natural disaster or a war, and I hope we don't get into either of those.

Let's talk about the personal income tax rate. In 1980, a one-earner Ontario family with two children earning \$21,600 paid about \$3,100 in net personal income tax with statutory payroll deductions. In 1995, adjusting for inflation, a family would have had to earn \$43,665 and pay \$6,265 in taxes to be as well off as they were in 1980. Instead, this family would have paid \$10,600 in net

personal income tax and payroll taxes. So as a result of the rising tax rate, the elimination of deductions and benefits and the end of the full indexation of the tax system, while this family's income doubled, the taxes more than tripled.

From a party that governed for five years, with the hottest economy in the history of this province for a five-year period, from 1985 to 1990, I was astounded that they actually would increase taxes well over 30 times, when the money was rolling in the door like water out of the tap.

We have to look at the percentage of the GDP that this province was experiencing in terms of personal income taxes. Let's look at Japan: 5.7% of GDP in personal income tax; the UK: 9.3% of GDP in personal income tax; let's look at the US: 10.7% of the GDP is paid in personal tax. How much is it in Ontario? It was 13.9% before this government brought in tax breaks for the common person.

It was interesting to note that Mike Harris, as a rookie Premier in 1995, attended his first premiers' conference with nine other premiers. What happened was that Mike, even though he'd been in politics many years, felt a little strange. Let's face it: He was now the Premier of the largest province in this country. It was the first time he was at the premiers' table at the Prime Minister's conference. He was the only one who spoke about tax cuts, the benefit of tax cuts and what tax cuts could do—create jobs, stimulate the economy and so forth and get us towards balancing the budget—the only one.

In 1999, his fourth premiers' conference with the Prime Minister, guess what? He didn't have to do a sales job on anybody because they bought into the concept. They bought the theory. Ralph Klein wasn't a lonely voice in the wilderness. The other premiers—of all three party stripes, I'm pleased to say—bought into the whole argument about tax reductions. Where was the message here? The message was not only for their own governments but also for the federal government because they had money rolling in the door.

I just want to make a reference, if I can, to some of the taxes that the Liberals and NDP brought in. You know, the other day there was a howl about gasoline prices and how we should be reducing the gasoline taxes. Our Minister of Finance I thought handled it very well. He talked about how in 1988 the Liberals increased the gasoline tax by a cent per litre; the retail sales tax was increased by a percentage point, to 8%. In 1989 they increased the gasoline tax again, by two cents a litre; the fuel tax was increased by two cents a litre. The Ontario personal income tax increased to 53% of the basic federal tax. The Liberals introduced the employer health tax, which was levied on all Ontario employers, replacing a participatory program that we called OHIP where we all took a share contributing to our health care; that infamous tire tax; and, worst of all, they killed development in most larger communities with that infamous commercial concentration levy—unbelievable.

That's only the Liberals. Let's talk about the NDP. In 1991 gasoline and diesel fuel taxes were increased by 3.4 cents per litre. The surtax increased from 10% to 14% in excess of \$10,000. In 1992, they increased it again, to 54.5% of the federal tax, and then upped it again in 1993, to 55%. In 1993 the Ontario personal income tax rate increased to 58% of basic federal tax. That meant we were working well into the month of July just to have some proper net take-home pay—unbelievable.

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I reiterate a comment that was made by federal Finance Minister Paul Martin in his 1998 federal budget: "Canadians have paid to see the movie 'The Deficit.' They don't want to see the sequel." This isn't a Conservative comment made by a PC member of the Ontario Legislature. This is a comment made by Finance Minister Paul Martin from the federal government. We don't want to see it. So how was the federal government able to balance the budget? On the backs of the success of our Ontario economy. That's where the dollars come rolling in to the federal coffers. So now that he has the excess, he's a typical Liberal. Is he going to reduce it and return the funds? Doesn't sound like it. We haven't seen anything yet. What do they continue to do? They continue to tax, they continue to keep the high taxes, and we haven't seen a nickel go towards the reduction of the debt yet.

To conclude, yet again the statement that Minister Eves made in the press release on the budget on November 2: "Today's statement exemplifies the difference between the Ontario approach and that of the federal Liberals. We believe that tax cuts create a strong economy. They'd prefer to make Canadians wait for their tax break."

Watch the TV program *West Wing* and you'll find an episode where two Democrats were arguing about what they were going to do with their surplus. The woman said, "We'd like to have it back. I'd like to go out and buy a VCR or a stereo system with my \$700 or \$800 back," and the policy adviser to the President said: "No, you can't do that. We don't trust you to do that." "Why not?" "Because we're Democrats." Read into that, folks, "Liberal."

I will turn the podium over to my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington and thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak, on behalf of my constituents in Waterloo-Wellington, to 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, moved by the Honourable Ernie Eves on November 16, 1999. I want to thank my colleague the member for Brampton Centre for yielding this time. I want to put a few comments on the record this afternoon in support of this bill. It's a bill that merits the support of all members of this House.

It does a number of things. First and foremost it is a first step in terms of the government's planned 20%

reduction in the personal income tax rate, bringing the rate down to 39.5% of the basic federal tax payable for 1999, and reducing it to 38.5% of basic federal tax for the year 2000. It improves the child care supplement for working families. It improves access to capital for small business through improvements to the community small business investment fund program. It helps young families purchase their first home through improvements to the land transfer tax refund program. It encourages farmers through the program of the retail sales tax rebate on building materials for farms. It also reduces red tape in a significant way by replacing the employer health tax instalments with a once-a-year remittance for employers with annual payrolls of \$600,000 or less, which will be of substantial benefit to a great many small business people in this province.

This bill remains true to our record of listening to Ontarians, setting our targets and acting on their advice as we work to achieve the goals that we've set for ourselves. This bill is an essential step towards made-in-Ontario prosperity, and in my view this means creating more jobs that are higher-paying and more secure, making Ontario the best place in the world to do business and to raise a family. It's a vision of prosperity aimed at increasing the quality of life for all Ontario residents.

In the past, this government has set high standards and promised to do many things that the pundits and the sceptics and most particularly the opposition parties said couldn't be done or wouldn't work. However, the government has achieved many of these goals and now Ontarians expect us to continue to set the bar even higher: to broaden the scope of prosperity for more people, to further strengthen the economy and to entrench a system that can afford to be compassionate now and well into the future.

High standards and achievement have generated higher expectations of government by Ontarians. Ontario now has the lowest provincial income tax rate at the same time as we have the highest job growth rate of any province in Canada. This is no coincidence, for we know that tax cuts encourage and support job creation. A government that serves its citizens first recognizes that tax money is their money and that when too much is taken or when this is taken for granted, the whole system of government will suffer. We have helped turn this system around by recognizing this fact. Through our program of tax cuts and sound fiscal management, and by working to create a regulatory environment that fosters growth, this has been accomplished.

These measures include cutting taxes 69 times since we took office, and 99 if you include the tax cuts that were announced in the 1999 budget. This government has made a commitment to begin taking the first steps towards paying down the provincial debt once the deficit is gone, something I strongly support, Mr Speaker, as I know you do, from the resolutions that we both brought forward in the previous Parliament.

The government has eliminated the capital tax for an additional 45,000 businesses and has reduced it for many

others. The government has cut the small business tax in half, to 4.75% by the year 2006. The government has eliminated the employer health payroll tax on many small businesses. We have set up a permanent red tape watchdog to prevent and eliminate job-killing regulations.

We have allocated new resources to Ontario Exports Inc, to help small and medium-sized businesses grow in international markets and expand their export base. We have expanded our network of small business self-help offices and enterprise centres which help individuals start, plan, run or expand their small business. I would pay tribute to the member for Brampton Centre, for it was his idea to convert many of these small business self-help offices into enterprise centres involving private sector partners and local municipalities.

We have learned that to be successful in the new economy, employers and employees must be innovative. They must be able to acquire the skills they need on a global stage within technologically driven marketplaces. They must be able to compete over the long run. In doing so, they contribute to their own success and that of our province.

Ontario is developing partnerships to bolster this kind of success. Through the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's strategic skills initiative, we are working to support job creation by providing the training and skills that both the workforce and industry need to grow. Last year, the strategic skills initiative was a one-year, \$30-million program in strengthening our workforce; now, it's a \$100-million multi-year investment.

Last Friday, I had the privilege of being at Mohawk College in Hamilton and I announced, on behalf of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the first call for proposals for the additional \$100-million program for future years.

These partnerships are a key to addressing the skills gap. Many employers have told me they would expand and create even more new jobs if only they had the skilled labour available to fill the jobs they want to create. The strategic skills initiative is working to eliminate these bottlenecks to job growth at places like Conestoga College in Kitchener and Confederation College in the north, where partnerships have been launched.

The request-for-proposal process opens on December 1, 1999, and the ministry looks forward to developing more job-creating and high-skills training partnerships in the new year.

As a result of these and many other efforts, we have seen Ontario move much closer to its potential in terms of prosperity and a higher quality of life for all of us. Since this government took office in 1995, we have helped to encourage the creation of over 600,000 new jobs. There are over 430,000 fewer people making do on welfare, and more hope is on the way as we double our work-for-welfare targets.

Ontario leads the country in job growth. Housing starts have soared, and our consumer spending leads the nation. Today, Ontario has one of the strongest econo-

mies in the industrialized world, leading not just the rest of Canada but all of the G7 nations in economic growth.

My constituents in Waterloo region are very fortunate—and Wellington too—because of the strong economy in our area. The area has become a job-creating leader here in Ontario and throughout the nation. Recent statistics indicate that the 5.9% jobless rate in Waterloo region is the sixth-lowest among 25 cities that Statistics Canada surveys. For my constituents, higher prosperity is being fuelled by higher confidence in the province.

Earlier this month, I was in New Hamburg for the groundbreaking ceremony for Ontario Drive and Gear. This is a company that produces gears for equipment used by other businesses, along with their flagship product that many members will know about, the Argo all-terrain vehicle. I was pleased to join with my friend Joerg Stieber, president of Ontario Drive and Gear, and his staff, for that ceremony. Their success is cause for celebration for the company, for its employees, for the community of New Hamburg and for the riding of Waterloo-Wellington as a whole.

Where our local economy is concerned, this expansion is yet another strong vote of confidence in one of the province's best areas to do business. With this expansion will come more high-skilled, high-paying jobs, which is always a reason to celebrate.

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I think of Ontario Drive and Gear as a cornerstone industry, a barometer of economic success. Many of their products are used by other growing industries. So it's safe to say that when their orders are full and they need to expand, it's a good sign that the Ontario economy is booming and that we are on the right track.

As the MPP for Waterloo-Wellington and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, it was heartening to hear the support of the people of New Hamburg for what our government is doing to help businesses grow. In their support they called for more of the same from this government, for further progress, the kind of progress that would be achieved as a result of this legislation, Bill 14.

I was pleased to join the Premier, my honourable friend the member for Guelph-Wellington, and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade this fall at the grand opening ceremonies of Denso Manufacturing in Guelph. This was yet another sign of a strong economy and it is an operation that will provide many high-paying job opportunities for my constituents.

My time has expired, but I want to encourage all members of the House to support Bill 14.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I listened with interest to the speeches by the member from Brampton Centre and the member from Waterloo-Wellington, and I got to thinking to myself, what about the 10 lost years? Go back 10 years, to 1989. The people in this province who were working had more disposable income 10 years ago. Your Report to Taxpayers tells us that. That's what it said. People had more money in their

pockets in 1989 than they have in 1999, with your own figures.

When we're talking about reducing taxes, we see you talk about payroll taxes. You don't talk about the fact that your government endorsed an increase in Canada pension premiums. They were there. They borrowed money from it. They said, "Canada pension plan premiums should go up." That's the Mike Harris government.

As we look at all these interesting things and the fact that we now owe, over the last 10 years, another \$80 billion, we're spending \$2 billion more than we were in 1995 on interest payments. This is your record.

But the real record is at Prince Charles elementary school in Sault Ste Marie, where I was with the chairman of the board and the principal, and learned that their special education students had eight educational assistants helping them a mere two years ago. For the same students, we now have two. That is the real legacy of your government.

It isn't just that you insist on taxing future taxpayers through running your huge deficits for the last five years; you're attacking our children today. When you run a deficit, you tax our kids, and you're hurting our kids today. That is the legacy of your government.

Ms Lankin: It's a pleasure to respond to my friend from Waterloo-Wellington, who is always so reasonable and calm in his presentation. I note that he began his remarks with a few comments about what's in the bill and then went on to a litany of his views on the record of the Harris government.

It's fine to be selective. I might choose to select some other things, like the 5% cut to all social service agencies, the complete cut to support for second-stage housing for women fleeing abusive situations, or the three years of cuts to hospital budgets that left them in a crisis which they're still trying to come out of, dealing with your restructuring plans. They're now hospitals with deficits.

You talk about what you've done at the provincial level. By downloading the deficit you've created problems in municipalities and in school boards. We could talk about the billion dollars of cuts to school boards, with another \$800 million to come.

But I actually want to bring the member back to the bill. He did make reference to a few items that were in this bill, and for the public's sake, it's an omnibus bill. It covers a lot of ministries, a lot of pieces of legislation, and no one can cover all of those items, but I want to ask the member about two items in particular and ask if he would respond to me on that.

One is the provision to do away with successive rights for employees of the Ontario Realty Corp. In any private sector business that is put up for sale, if it's a unionized workforce with a contract, just like a buyer would take a look at assets and liabilities and take on whatever assets or liabilities or debt there is, they take on the responsibility to the employees. Yet this government, with the stroke of a pen, is going to allow ORC to be sold off to the private sector and to say that the union contract will

be torn up at that moment and there is no obligation to carry that on. I think that is horrendous treatment of the employees and I'd like you to respond to that.

The other thing is, why are you breaking your promise with respect to all of the money from the sale of assets going to reduction of debt? Why are you, the Harris government, now saying you need that money for ongoing general revenue?

Mr David Young (Willowdale): It's an honour to rise and comment on this very important debate dealing with More Tax Cuts for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity Act. It was certainly interesting for me to hear the comments of my fellow members on this side of the floor, from Brampton Centre and from Waterloo-Wellington.

I thought what I would do in the brief time that I have is reflect upon some of the experiences I had on the campaign trail, experiences that speak very directly to the success, the prosperity that this province has experienced over the last four and half years, and why we had that success.

Let's talk about the experience that we had on Finch Avenue when, walking with a supporter of mine in the early days of the campaign, we came across a group of young people, six or seven, sitting on a porch, ages probably between 20 and 25. These young people said to me in very emphatic terms that they had absolutely no hesitation in voting for Mr Harris, voting for this government to have another four or five years in office. Why did they feel that way? They were very clear. They said it in a very few words. They said clearly: "Because we have jobs; because Mr Harris got us jobs." It really is that simple.

The growth, the prosperity that has been experienced reaches out to all, but particularly to the youth of this province, who had such a high level of despair during the previous 10 years, those 10 lost years.

Interjections.

Mr Young: I proceeded along the street to yet another residence, where there was another young person who was talking about and contemplating a move to the United States. He was in the computer field, and he said very clearly that he would be changing his residence, that he would be moving to the United States if our government was not re-elected, because he was sick and tired of paying more taxes than the American equivalent within his company.

That is why we have introduced 30 more tax cuts. That is why I'm supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I just wanted to remind the House that it's almost as bad to interject from your seat as it is when you're away from your seat.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I won't say it's a pleasure to rise and speak to this budget, because I'm very concerned about the direction that this government is going.

The honourable member speaks about the children and the youth and the future. I think he's mistaken, because government is bent and determined on tax breaks but what it's leading to is debt. You're giving tax breaks.

You're trying to lead towards balancing your budget, which you haven't done, but it's at the expense of the future. I think you need to be conscious of that. We need to not only think about today, but we need to think about the future generations, the debt, the legacy. What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind for the future? I think it's a terrible legacy to leave a debt that has grown by over \$20 billion over the past few years for future generations.

I think too you need to be concerned that it's a shell game that your government plays. You try and do something, but you pass it off to the municipalities. Downloading to municipalities is not being responsible. As government, you should be responsible. You're not being responsible. Putting things onto the property tax base is not the answer.

Dealing with the assets of this country, those assets that every one of us in this room and all the future generations paid for, you promised that those assets would go towards paying down that debt. But no, we're seeing those assets going into and being used and sold for general revenue, and that's mistake. That's a serious mistake. You're not thinking about the future. You're only thinking about the present and it's very, very serious what you're doing.

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And the growth, the claim that you have for growth in this province—so much of it is due to the health care that we have, and the American economy. But you're going to hurt that too, because look at what you've done to health care. Those great things that we enjoy are not going to be there for the future because of your policies.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mr Arnott: I'm responding as well on behalf of the member for Brampton, who initiated the speech that I concluded. I want to thank the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, the member for Beaches-East York, the member for Willowdale and also the new member for Elgin-Middlesex-London for their contributions and their questions and comments.

First of all, to my friend the member for Algoma-Manitoulin and the comments that he made in going back to 1989. I'm not surprised he would do that because of course he was part of that government in 1989 that was defeated in 1990 when I was first elected.

I remember the motivation that made me run in 1990. I was concerned about high taxes, high government spending, creating a spending regime that we couldn't sustain, couldn't afford. After the election and the New Democrats were elected, we soon saw a deficit of about \$7 billion or \$8 billion overnight, just like that. It's rather remarkable that the Liberals continue to claim great credit for the fact that they had a budget that was balanced, when in fact the reality is something very different. I would challenge the member for Algoma-Manitoulin in that respect and would suggest that the Liberal government of those days, while they enjoyed some great measure of prosperity in the late 1980s, squandered that prosperity.

In term of the comments by the member for Beaches-East York, she asked a couple of questions, called this an omnibus bill. It's 170 pages, I think, and I wouldn't dispute that. It brings together a lot of various proposals that are consistent with our budget and our overall program.

She indicated there were three years of cuts to hospitals, which isn't correct. There were two years of cuts early in our mandate, but in the third year planned cuts were shelved. Beyond that, it's my understanding that we're spending more on hospital budgets today than we were in 1995.

There were two questions that you asked and I'd like to get to those. We are changing the Ontario Realty Corp in many respects. We're trying to change the portfolio of the real estate that we own so that we're not holding a lot of surplus properties, such as golf courses and so forth.

I've run out of time, but thank you very much.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) : C'est un plaisir pour moi, au nom des citoyens et citoyennes de Glengarry-Prescott et Russell, de prendre part au débat du projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre le budget de 1999, un budget qui a été présenté à la veille de l'annonce du déclenchement de l'élection du 3 juin dernier. Nous savons que le budget a été présenté le 4 mai, un budget qui est bel et bien un projet d'élection.

Maintenant, le gouvernement veut nous donner les grandes lignes du contenu de ce projet de loi et apporter des changements majeurs. Ce débat nous permet de signaler au gouvernement notre mécontentement de ce budget.

En premier lieu, je peux constater que plusieurs personnes sont en faveur de ce budget puisque l'on parle de coupures d'impôt personnel de 20 %. Cela porte souvent à confusion puisque lorsque l'on parle de 20 % de réduction, beaucoup de gens pensent que nous allons avoir une réduction de 20 % sur nos impôts personnels en entier. Il s'agit d'y penser.

Ce gouvernement de l'Ontario a endetté cette province de plus de 21 \$ milliards depuis l'élection de 1995. Il en a coûté au-delà de 10 \$ milliards pour rembourser le 30 % d'impôt personnel qu'on a réduit dans les cinq premières années.

La dette de la province maintenant se situe à 109 \$ milliards. Notre cote de crédit est passée de AAA à AA-depuis la venue du gouvernement conservateur. Cette descente de cote de crédit va coûter aux payeurs de taxes de la province au-delà de 5 \$ milliards de plus sur nos emprunts.

Il faut se rappeler que le gouvernement libéral sous le leadership de David Peterson a été le seul depuis nombre d'années à pouvoir balancer un budget. Cela est arrivé en 1990 lorsque nous avons eu un surplus de 90 \$ millions.

Des voix.

M. Lalonde : Cela affecte beaucoup le gouvernement conservateur, puisqu'on nous dit que c'est faux. Nous n'avons qu'à référer à la bibliothèque de l'Assemblée

législative, dans le rapport de l'auditeur, et nous allons le constater.

Aujourd'hui, nous passons à l'analyse de ce budget. Laissez-moi vous dire que, depuis la présentation du projet de loi 14 en première lecture le 17 novembre dernier, nous avons déjà commencé à annoncer des coupures supplémentaires : 309 \$ millions étaient annoncés jeudi dernier, dans plusieurs domaines.

Dans les municipalités, nous allons encore procéder à des délestages, et j'annonce à nos journalistes de ma région depuis deux mois que nous pouvons nous attendre à une autre semaine «méga,» comme nous avons connue en 1997.

Ce gouvernement essaie de balancer les budgets, mais il est presque impossible pour eux de le faire sans procéder à faire des emprunts à long terme. Nous allons vendre de nos équités ou nous défaire de nos équités. Nous avons procédé à la vente de la 407, au coût de 3,1 \$ milliards. Nous allons vendre beaucoup d'édifices provinciaux.

Nous avons transféré une série de services aux municipalités, mais qui devra payer à long terme ? C'est toujours le seul payeur de taxes, qu'il est vraiment dans ce cas-ci. Le tout va être envoyé aux municipalités. C'est un délestage que nous appelons «downloading».

Maintenant, je regarde dans le domaine de la santé, ou même avant de passer au domaine de la santé, j'aimerais dire que le projet de loi 79 qui était censé réduire le fardeau de la taxe commerciale à nos gens d'affaires, 399 municipalités n'ont pas fait parvenir leurs factures de taxes finales en 1998 et celles de 1999. Donc, nous devrions procéder avec des emprunts à la banque.

Je regarde dans le domaine de la santé, dans le système des ambulances. Actuellement, le gouvernement avait pris la décision en 1998 de transférer la totalité des coûts de l'ambulance. C'était un montant équivalent à 30,45 \$ par tête en Ontario. Mais, ce qui n'est pas mentionné, c'est que, lorsqu'on veut transférer le tout aux municipalités, nous n'avons pas inclus le coût des assurances, le coût des frais locaux, le coût de location d'édifices pour les services d'ambulance.

Je regarde dans ma circonscription. Le service d'ambulance sur fin de semaine, le samedi et le dimanche, nous n'avons pas de services ambulanciers au base d'ambulances. On doit avoir tous nos employés sur appel. Cela veut dire que — je regarde l'ambulance qui est située à Rockland, par exemple — si un accident survient à Bourget, on doit partir se rendre à Bourget, 20 minutes pour y aller, ensuite se rendre à l'hôpital, un autre 35 minutes, ce qui veut dire un délai de 35 minutes, plus les 20. On est presque rendu à une heure.

Ce n'est pas un service adéquat. Ce n'est pas le genre de coupures que les citoyens de l'Ontario sont prêts à accepter.

Je regarde, dans ce cas-ci, dans la région immédiate, Rockland, Clarence, Wendover et dans la région de Russell, nous avons un service d'ambulance. Si une des ambulances est partie sur la route, on doit faire appel à

l'ambulance qui vient d'Orléans, ce qui voudrait dire, encore là, un temps d'attente de jusqu'à une heure.

Nous avons transféré une responsabilité. Nous avons décidé de prendre en charge leur administration. Le gouvernement a gardé l'administration ; donc, une municipalité n'a pas le contrôle. Mais afin de satisfaire aux gouvernements municipaux, nous avons dit, «Maintenant, on va se rendre jusqu'à l'an 2001 afin de garder l'administration. À partir de 2001 vous allez avoir la responsabilité.» Cela n'est pas un service adéquat.

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Je regarde en plus de ça les cliniques chez nous. Avec les coupures gouvernementales, actuellement on a fait l'annonce de quatre fermetures de cliniques de radiographie, quatre sur six. Une cinquième est sur le bord. On attend le résultat. Encore là, une réduction de service pour satisfaire quelques personnes avec une réduction d'impôt échelonnée sur quatre ans de 20% qui est annoncée.

Lorsque je regarde la restructuration des hôpitaux, encore là le rapport de l'auditeur général le démontre bien. Cette procédure va coûter aux payeurs de taxes 1,8 \$ milliard. Lorsque nous regardons les coupures qui nous avons été annoncées la semaine dernière, ce sont des coupures de 309 \$ milliards, mais le tout est à venir.

Lorsque je regarde dans la santé — je vais continuer — le pauvre M. Lucien Desjardins de Curran avait une tumeur cancéreuse sur un sein. Il a dû se rendre à l'hôpital. Pour la chirurgie, on lui a demandé de payer en avance 675 \$, sans ça on ne pouvait pas procéder, dont 400 \$ pour avoir l'utilisation de la table et 275 \$ pour le médecin. Est-ce que c'est ça un bon service de santé ?

Lorsque je regarde dans le domaine de l'éducation encore, on a dit que c'est une fuite la semaine passée de coupures de 800 \$ millions. Mais nous savons que le gouvernement veut actuellement couper les services dans le domaine des malentendants, dans le domaine des aveugles, la privatisation de collèges, universités, écoles. Encore là, seulement les riches pourront en bénéficier.

Récemment, on a parlé du collègue d'Alfred. Encore, nous sommes en attente. Mais aujourd'hui même, j'ai reçu un document qui nous dit que dorénavant les abattoirs vont être obligés de payer 50 % du coût des frais des inspecteurs qui doivent visiter nos abattoirs pour faire les inspections des viandes en Ontario. N'est-ce pas vrai que c'est le consommateur qui devrait payer à la fin ? On a demandé aux abattoirs d'apporter des changements qui coûtent au-delà de 100 000 \$ à 200 000 \$ pour les rénovations qu'ils doivent faire. C'est jeudi dernier qu'on a fait l'annonce que dorénavant les inspections devraient être payées à 50 % par les opérateurs des abattoirs.

Je regarde les bureaux régionaux de l'agriculture. Nous en avons un dans notre région et un dans Avonmore, qui est dans Stormont-Dundas. On m'a dit qu'il y a une possibilité qu'il soit coupé.

La 417, encore là, un accident est arrivé la semaine dernière. Dû au fait des coupures gouvernementales, nous n'avons personne maintenant en devoir 24 heures par

jour depuis le 1^{er} novembre dernier, qui était un service qui existait dans le passé.

Le transfert de la 17 aux municipalités : Prescott-Russell devra défrayer au-delà de 9 \$ millions dans une période de trois ans, et la région de Glengarry-Stormont-Dundas, plusieurs millions de dollars.

Je vais donner maintenant la chance à un de mes collègues, le député de Don Valley-Est, qui va continuer avec ses objections à ce projet de loi.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): It's indeed a privilege to be here and join the debate on behalf of all the residents of Don Valley East. I would say to all members of this House, they should listen to the words of the member from Prescott-Russell, a former mayor. He certainly understands the effect of downloading, and that is a part of this bill.

I often hear the government members talk and debate about the bill, but they say very little about what's contained within it. Bill 14 is an omnibus bill. It affects 22 different pieces of legislation. I'm going to be talking a little bit about what's in this bill and some of the things that have been left out.

The first thing I'd like to comment on is the title of the bill. Like most bills, it's quite deceptive. I want to always ask, who thinks up the titles to these things? Some kind of ministry of disinformation or something like that? Perhaps the 60-odd people employed within the Premier's office? It is Orwellian in nature the way these bills are entitled. But as is often the case, the Harris government says one thing and does something entirely different.

Interestingly enough, part I of this bill talks about the Ambulance Act. The Ambulance Act is very interesting. The government's plan is to download ambulance services on to local municipalities. When they asked David Crombie and the panel, handpicked by the Premier, to make some determinations about what would be appropriate to be on the property tax base, the panel was unanimous and they put it in writing, "We are opposed to this kind of measure and we are unanimous in our decision." What does the government do? We get Bill 14, which in fact downloads the cost of an essential, vital health service, the ambulance service, on to municipal taxpayers.

I've heard members in this House purport to debate Bill 14. Of course, I haven't heard any of the members talk about what this is going to mean to emergency health services in this province and to local taxpayers. It is grossly a mistake. It has been pointed out by the government's own experts, by Mr Crombie and others. I really wonder about the priorities of this government. I think it does show that the Harris government says something on the one hand; they do something almost entirely different.

The other aspect is the promise that the sale and disposition of any government assets would go directly toward the debt. Also contained within Bill 14 is something which bypasses that promise the government made. I haven't heard any of the government members com-

ment and say: "Mea culpa. We've broken our promise, again. We're going to put the sale of any lands into general government revenues."

Hon Mr Stockwell: Where's that promise?

Mr Caplan: The Minister of Labour asked where the promise is contained. In the 1995 Common Sense Revolution. The member should know that, being his own campaign document, but conveniently wants to forget promises they've made.

Let me provide another concrete example, in this whole vein of downloading, the area of housing. Many announcements have been made by government ministers. Many press releases have been put out there. But the reality is that there are no new provincial dollars going into housing, only monies that have been transferred from the federal government. They just recycle federal dollars and then try to claim the credit for it.

It's even worse. Minister after minister makes some fantastic claim that the province will be providing help to Ontarians who are homeless or on the verge of becoming homeless. Today in the house the minister even claimed that 10,000 new rent supplement units are going to be created, with federal money of course, yet provincial data show that since December of last year, 3,300 rent supplement units have been eliminated by the Harris government. Again, we say something on the one hand; we do something entirely different. It's a repeated pattern and it's something this House has seen

In their election document, the government promised to bring in shelter allowances, and one of the first acts of this government was to cut shelter allowances.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Why do we have to pay welfare for refugees and Ottawa lets them in?

Mr Caplan: I hear the Attorney General. He's very sorry that the government has broken their promise as well. It gets even worse. The Harris government is intent on transferring housing down to municipalities, just adding further and further costs.

As I said, Bill 14 transfers 50% of ambulance services, and more on the way, down to municipalities, down to municipal taxpayers. It means a cut in service. It means more costs for municipal taxpayers.

The transfer on social housing will do the same. The Harris government, contrary to their own experts, their own Who Does What panel, has essentially skimmed about \$58 million of federal money for the risk for this housing.

What have they done? They said, "Terrific, we're going to take \$29 million and put it into a capital reserve fund, not transfer it on to the municipalities along with the risks, along with the administration, along with the costs." The Harris government is skimming that money off the top, taking it away from municipalities. The other half of the money is totally unaccounted for. When asked in estimates about this yesterday, there was no reply from the government. It is incredibly shameful. I believe that Mike Harris plans on stealing this \$29 million from the municipalities and leaving municipal taxpayers to hold the bag.

I say to Ontarians, "Do you want any further proof?" Mike Harris has downloaded the cost of hostels and shelters on to municipalities. The province used to pay 100% of the cost of hostels and shelters. They said, "Nope, that's not what we're going to do. We'll now pay for 80% and we'll ask municipal taxpayers to pay for an additional 20%"—a further download. Interestingly enough, what they did surreptitiously, what they did quietly, was cap the amount they spent on hostels. So the city of Toronto is now paying closer to 30% of the cost. So the government says one thing and they do something else. Municipal taxpayers are left picking up the cost that this government is bent on offloading onto them, and Mike Harris is stealing the money from municipalities like the city of Toronto.

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Also, the whole issue of downloading is worth examining. This week the region of Peel unveiled the results of a technical audit on the housing stock and the associated costs that would come with maintaining it. I should add—

Hon Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: "Stealing" is out of order. You can't accuse the Premier of stealing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): I didn't find anything out of order. He was making a general comment that I found acceptable.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Point of order, Mr Speaker: Are you telling me that if you say the Premier is stealing, you're not out of order?

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry, I didn't find it a point of order.

Mr Caplan: I would add that the Provincial Auditor also highlighted this, for the ministry to do these technical audits just to find out what the cost of this download on to municipalities would be. Interestingly enough, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing never performed the technical audits. But Peel did, anyway. The region of Peel did the audits, and what did they find? Their conclusion is very dramatic.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am very confused, because in this House in the past, when reference has been made to stealing, that has been ruled out of order. As a member of this House, I really do believe it's important that we retain the integrity of this place. I would ask you to rule on whether it's appropriate for the member to withdraw his statement.

The Acting Speaker: I've already ruled on that point and I've ruled it not out of order.

Mr Caplan: The region of Peel's taxpayers are being asked to pay \$57 million just to break even. If you extend this to all the municipalities across Ontario, that's \$1 billion that the Harris government has forced on to local taxpayers, left them holding the bag. I can see the government members are very upset about this. They want to protect their taxpayers—

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): It's with some pleasure that I get a chance to respond to what was said in the previous speech, because I can certainly see the ire—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'm asking the members of the government to please calm down. The member from James Bay is trying to present—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: If you don't calm down, I'll have to name you.

Mr Bisson: I was just saying it's interesting to note the reaction of the government to the comments that the member from Oriole made—Don Valley East, as it's called now. The government says, "You can do and say anything you want over there." That's the point; that's why we get mad on this side. These guys do what they want without regard for the democratic process.

I take a look at the last five years in this place. We have a government who decided by way of decree that it was going to amalgamate all of the cities around Toronto, even though the people of the cities of Toronto had referendums where they said, "No, do not merge our cities into one." This government didn't listen. All of a sudden the member from Bedrock—or Etobicoke; I forget the name of the riding. Your indulgence, Mr Speaker, Bedrock is not the right—

The Acting Speaker: Will you please take your seat. The member should refer to other members by their ridings.

Mr Bisson: I apologize to the member across the way. I was trying to find the name of the riding. The only name that came to me was "Yabba dabba doo," and I really apologize to the member across the way—the member for Etobicoke, I think it is.

There's a frustration, not only on the part of the members of the opposition, but also by the public, because this government, quite frankly, goes ahead and does what it wants. It doesn't listen to anybody. Then they accuse us in the opposition of doing only what we want. I think we are a little bit more democratic than that, and I think the government should do the same.

Hon Mr Stockwell: To try to deal with the debate that's before us today, I think what the member was doing was simply forgetting one very important fact when he was outlining his dissertation here today. Yes, there were some transfers. No one denies there were transfers. All municipalities know there were transfers. But in your rush to outline the issue, you left out a very integral part of the debate, and I don't think it's the fairest approach to take to the debate. Yes, ambulances were transferred down. We appreciate that. You may have argument with that, and I understand. Yes, social housing was transferred down. You may have argument with that as well, and I appreciate that argument. But to leave it to the people out there that this was all that was done is profoundly unfair. You know, as I know, the transfer included passing up costs for part of education.

Mr Caplan: One quarter.

Hon Mr Stockwell: My friend, whether or not you can determine exact dollars and cents, you simply omitted to provide that information, as if all that happened was that provincial transfers went one way. There is some discrepancy by region about exactly the dollars and cents that were transferred and taken away. I know in my area there is some debate that maybe the municipalities got stuck with more costs, but there are a number of municipalities out there that did better than Toronto, that received more dollars in transfers than they got taken back. The argument isn't whether or not the dollars and cents; the argument is that you have the gall to stand there and pretend it didn't happen. You have the gall to stand there and tell the whole world that all that was done was pass-downs.

Ms Lankin: Pot calling the kettle black.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't want to hear from the member from Beaches. You weren't here earlier, and I think if you had been here earlier, you would have heard the comments that were made that were completely inappropriate and unacceptable. I wouldn't expect them from you, nor would I make those comments myself. So I would suggest that the government benches have reason to be upset when a member says—

The Acting Speaker: Further comments and questions?

Mr Peters: I just want to compliment my honourable friend from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell for his comments.

I think a lot of the members of this government lose sight of the important role municipalities play. You have not treated municipalities with any respect. Municipalities are the level of government closest to the people. You have constantly downloaded, downloaded, downloaded. Sure, you've got your community reinvestment fund that's propping them up, but we know you've got \$600 million more to cut and those community reinvestment funds are going to disappear. That's when we're going to see those property taxes rise and those new user fees come along.

Look in this budget. The Ontario Realty Corp is taking those individuals away from public service. We've heard about it in this House and we're seeing the problems that are taking place down there. At least as public servants they are accountable to the people of this province and to this Legislature, but in taking them away and putting them into a private agency we're losing that accountability. Taking away the Toronto Stock Exchange and turning that into a for-profit agency is not the direction we should be going.

Something else you should be extremely concerned about is the property tax changes. You talked about how wonderful you're making things for municipalities. You have caused so much confusion with the property tax changes that have taken place in this province. You've got it in this budget that it's like Big Brother is watching, because municipalities are going to have to send information to the province to make sure they're preparing their tax bills in the proper way. It's very dangerous. We

talked about the debt earlier. Because of all the property tax changes that your government has implemented, which you think are so wonderful, you're giving municipalities that room to go and borrow more money. You shouldn't be doing that. That is not a responsible way to govern and deal with the tax dollars in this province. I think those changes that you're making are going to come back and haunt the future generations of this province.

Ms Lankin: I guess the member from Don Valley East provoked a response from the member from Etobicoke Centre. You can tell when you've got the former Speaker's attention and you've triggered his temper when he starts yelling, "I don't want to hear from the member for Beaches-East York." Well, sorry, here I am.

In response to his comments that I wasn't here, he well knows this precinct, and where I was immediately outside, has these proceedings so that members can follow and can continue their work. So that apology is accepted from the member.

1700

What provoked that response from him towards me was that I said, "That's like the pot calling the kettle black." I think all too often in this House people are very selective about the information they put forward, and I wouldn't point fingers across at that side because I think it happens all too often and I hear it every day in question period in responses from ministers in this place.

Two issues that I continue to want to raise and to have some response on—and I asked your friend and my friend from Waterloo-Wellington, and he was unable to respond to me. Perhaps the members from the Liberal caucus have comment on this. None of the government members have raised two issues that are in this bill as they speak to it—talking about being selective about what you want to talk about—one, the fact that you are taking away successor rights for employees of the Ontario Realty Corp. You choose, if you are to sell that, to strip them of their contract-negotiated rights. Every private sector company that is put up for sale, when a company buys it they have to look at the assets and liabilities and the status of the company, including any contract it has with its employees. You are stripping and doing away with the successor rights of those employees, and no one here will stand up and defend that and say why.

The second issue is the promise that you as a government made in the Common Sense Revolution and the Blueprint that every penny from the sale of government assets would go directly towards paying down the debt, that not a penny of that would go into consolidated revenues and the general fund. In this bill, you explicitly have a provision that says cabinet can direct that money into general revenue. Just tell me why.

The Acting Speaker: Response, member for Don Valley East.

Mr Caplan: It's very interesting listening to the comments, and I'd like to thank the members for Timmins-James Bay, Etobicoke Centre, Elgin-Middlesex-London and Beaches-East York for their comments. No fact that I

presented is untrue. In fact, everything that I said is absolutely accurate and I stand behind every word. To hear the member for Etobicoke Centre try to present some kind of other facts is simply—

Interjection.

Mr Caplan: You may not want to hear it, my friend, but I must tell you that you cannot be selective in what you hear and what you say. This government has broken its promise on several occasions, and I've highlighted where they've done that. In fact, this government has also taken advantage of municipal taxpayers. They have off-loaded responsibilities—

Hon Mr Stockwell: Stop stealing. We don't want to hear you any more.

The Acting Speaker: Stock the clock. I would ask the member for Etobicoke Centre to withdraw that remark. It was directed at the member, and it's totally unacceptable in this place.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I withdraw.

Mr Caplan: I would ask him to back up any of his statements. I would ask him to show us which municipalities have gained in this whole transfer of responsibilities and municipal downloading, because he can't and he knows he can't, and I have absolutely shown that to be the truth.

The government members also selectively do not say that this government has added \$21 billion to the debt, with another \$4 billion which has been added—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Etobicoke Centre knows, because he was in this chair before, that you refer to members by their riding and not by their name, and particularly their last name in the way that you did.

Mr Caplan: I know that it's an embarrassment to this government that their credit rating is the same as it was under Bob Rae and the NDP, and that's very hard for them to take.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): I am pleased to rise this afternoon to speak on behalf of the constituents of Thornhill on 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.

All of us remember how Ontario suffered in the early 1990s. Our families all lived daily with the fear of job loss and all too many of us had friends and family members who struggled to find work and feed their families in a high-tax, high-deficit economy with no growth or jobs.

It's hard enough to make ends meet on what you get paid; it's even harder when you don't have a job. For years, Ontario families were getting poorer because of ever-increasing taxes, and those same high taxes were driving jobs and investment out of Ontario. Because of our tax cut, as well as the strong economic growth it has helped to stimulate, a typical two-income family making \$60,000 will have \$1,385 more each year to spend however they want.

If we could only convince the federal Liberals to cut taxes, all Ontarians would be better off. The federal Liberals still don't get it. Tax cuts create jobs.

Business people and economists agree that payroll taxes are one of the major barriers to job creation. When Mike Harris proposed a 30% tax cut in the 1995 election, the Liberals and the NDP said it could not be done. They both wanted to go back to the same system that hadn't worked for either of them: trying to boost the economy by hiking taxes. Every time the NDP raised taxes, their revenues actually fell, but they never seemed to learn that tax cuts create jobs and stimulate the economy.

Thanks to Mike Harris's strong leadership, Ontario taxes went down 69 times and the take-home pay for working families went up for the first time in a decade. At the same time, these cuts also fuelled 615,000 net new jobs since 1995—the biggest job increase in Canadian history.

With Ontario taxpayers keeping more of their hard-earned money, they now have money to spend on more than just the basic necessities. In my riding of Thornhill this increased disposable income has flowed into many numerous local businesses, which in turn have been able to grow and increase sales and hire staff.

Let me give some examples here today. This theory really does work for all Ontarians, both small and large businesses.

Spa Ambience Salon started out in 1994 as a small sole-proprietorship with two employees. Under our government's leadership and initial tax cutting during our first mandate, Spa Ambience Salon has seen an increase in clients seeking the services provided by the salon. Today they have grown to a 1,400-square-foot complex, employing seven people.

At Seven View Chrysler in Concord, owner Pat Magarelli has spoken with me about the growth in the automotive industry and his dealership in particular. He has noted that sales of new cars have increased over the past few years. People have extra money and are more optimistic about their futures. The goal of obtaining a vehicle has now become a reality. Joe Magarelli, the service manager, has told me that due to the increase in sales, they've had to increase staff in their service department, which has resulted in more jobs for people in Thornhill and the people of Ontario.

Peter Eliopoulos, co-owner of Peter and Paul's Restaurant has seen an improved economy in Ontario directly benefiting his operation. Not only have bookings and events increased over the past years, his company has increased floor space and staffing. This requirement has led to the construction of Bellagio Banquet Hall in Concord. This new facility meant that Mr Eliopoulos had to hire new staff, purchase furniture and on-going business supplies for his hall.

None of this would have been possible in Concord if those living in the surrounding area did not have the money at their disposal. None of these success stories would have occurred in Thornhill had it not been for the foresight of the Harris government to cut taxes.

The previous Liberal and NDP governments believed that by increasing taxes they would stimulate the economy into a growth mode. Taxing and spending, as we all know, do nothing but kill jobs and hamper the hope of the average Ontarian. With less money in my constituents' pockets, they were only able to cover their day-to-day basic expenses and were not able to purchase extras.

Without the tax cut programs initiated by our government, both small and medium-sized businesses such as Spa Ambience Salon, Seven View Chrysler and Bellagio Banquet Hall would not have been able to grow in business, hire more people or enter the future looking forward to continual prosperity.

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As a government committed to our promise, we reduced Ontario's personal income tax rate 30% in our first term. We will reduce tax rates a further 20% and cut the provincial share of property taxes by 20%. These new tax cuts will help Ontario create in excess of 825,000 jobs over five years.

Fuelled by our tax cuts, Ontario has moved into a period of strong economic growth. Last year alone our economy expanded by 4.2%, double the rate of the rest of Canada. Ontario's turnaround in the last four years is a direct result of hard-working Ontarians and strong leadership of Mike Harris. In this short time, we have been able to reverse the high unemployment created by years of Liberal and NDP tax hikes. Due to low interest rates and a strong competitive position, consumer spending, housing demands and business investment have gone up.

With an increase in disposable income, more Ontarians are now able to upgrade themselves from being renters to owning their own homes. The down payment for a new home is no longer seen as a distant dream but a definite reality that is attainable. This is an opportunity to own their own home, of which more people are taking advantage.

In Thornhill, new subdivisions of single-family dwelling units and condominiums are rising quickly. A local small business, a plumbing company, Vitullo Bros Plumbing, started off in just the plumbing industry. Five years ago they increased their business and they developed Century Grove Homes. They are now in the building industry. In the last four years they have built 70 homes. I've spoken to Mr Vitullo and he's told me that the sales are growing rapidly. In the last two or three years the economy has been booming. Mortgage rates are stable. More people are being able to get mortgages and more people are buying homes. He's also involved in residential and commercial developments.

This development would not proceed if it were not for the tax cuts which have provided more money for Ontarians. This growth of building has also provided stability for many construction workers who are now reaping the benefits and prosperity fuelled by our government's tax cuts.

Ontario business investment reached \$38.5 billion last year. This is a significant increase over the past few years. Markham, which is in York region, will be the

home of a new \$125-million software development laboratory for IBM. The Thornhill community in my neighbouring riding will also benefit from this growth.

The new subdivisions I spoke of earlier will help provide housing for all the new employees. The local merchants will see increased business. All of this will provide revenue that will help spur growth and prosperity to Ontarians.

Some have said that the increased economy in Ontario has been a result of our southern neighbours. I'd like to quote the Canadian Bond Rating Service, May 1998:

"Ontario taxpayers ... have now begun to benefit from tax reductions, business involvement and renewed consumer-led growth. Tax relief measures have contributed to consumer-led growth, job creation and reduced unemployment."

To conclude, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to speak on Bill 14.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I certainly want to have the opportunity to comment on the remarks by the member for Thornhill. We welcome her to the Legislature. I appreciate that she's certainly selling the message that the government has asked her to sell and to send out to her constituents, but it's interesting, the things that she doesn't care to mention.

She makes no reference at all to the massive increase in the debt that's been incurred under this government and the irresponsible actions as a result of that or the fact that the money has had to be borrowed in order to pay for the tax cut.

I'm also fascinated by the fact that as the member for Thornhill I'm sure she's hearing from many constituents who are using the 407, the public-private partnership that clearly is hurting many of her constituents. As the transportation critic, I know that we're hearing from a large number of people who are absolutely furious about the fact that the government, which likes to brag about this particular sale, has really burned the users of that system for the next 99 years; the fact that the tolls are going up without any real notice; the fact that people's driving licences can be taken away by this government if they don't pay the fees; the fact that there is this particular sweetheart deal between the government and the private consortium.

I would think that indeed she would be hearing a great deal about that. I would be curious to hear her comments on that, the fact that the government is acting as a Cadillac collection agency for this private consortium. I can tell you that a lot of her own constituents are contacting us, very upset about this deal, very upset about the fact that it's costing them an enormous amount, and they can't get through to the 407 ETR office at all. You can't get through. It's an enormous problem. It's been a real rip-off. They viewed it as being this deal and closed the door on it. It would be interesting to hear her comments on that.

As I said, I appreciate that she wants to send the message out that she does, but I think that is one of the con-

cerns her own constituents would have, the very, very raw deal that her constituents and many others across this part of the province have had with the 407.

Ms Lankin: I too join in welcoming the member from Thornhill to the Legislature. I'm pleased to respond to her remarks.

I noted that again, without talking a lot about the substance that's in the bill, like many government members she spent a lot of time talking on things like the economic record. One of the things I heard her talk about was some of the companies, Chrysler and Spa Ambience Salon, and that those investments would not have been there without her government's actions and her government's reduction in taxes. I know the member wasn't here prior to this election, but I always find it curious how the members opposite refuse to acknowledge the simple fact that 1994 saw the most significant amount, the highest amount ever of private sector investment in the province of Ontario.

That was before your government was elected. It was as we were beginning to come out of a recession, driven by fortunately—thank God, finally—changes in the Bank of Canada with respect to interest rates and our monetary policy, and a booming US economy. Why won't you acknowledge the role that played? Why do you play this silly game of pretending that it's simply your tax cuts that have fuelled the economy? Quite frankly, if you listened to the economists, the economists all suggest that while there is some stimulative effect from any tax cut, a tax cut that would have gone, for example, to sales tax would have been much more stimulative than a tax cut to income tax.

As you know now, 36% of the value of your income tax cut has gone to the wealthiest 6%. Those are not people who usually immediately go out and spend that. That might be in investments, it might be in savings, it may be in luxury items bought from offshore; it's not money that immediately recycles into the economy. So to say that all of that economic activity is due to the stimulative effect of the tax cuts just doesn't hold any water in terms of economists' views.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I would like to congratulate the member for Thornhill for pointing out certain economic fundamentals. I wonder sometimes whether the members across the way are getting the message. They say we're not getting it. If we're not getting it, I'd go back to the fundamental premise: If everything was so great during the last 10 years with the general idea that higher tax regimes brought you more exports, more growth, more jobs, more tax revenue—it certainly brought that in for both of the former regimes, because they also ramped up the provincial debt to nearly \$100 billion. We're all equally responsible, if you want to look at trying to concede certain realities.

The member for Beaches-East York points out the Bank of Canada interest rates, and certainly they played a key role. I'd be one of the first to mention that, but tax reductions have a major, fundamental influence to play as well. All you have to do is go and talk to your friends and neighbours in whatever sector of the economy, if they're

working—and a large number of people are today. I was talking to a friend of mine before I came over to this session this afternoon. I was asking him what was happening in his particular sector. He said, “You know, John, what is happening is that four of my close friends are leaving this country and they’re going to Australia,” not the United States. I said, “How come?” He said, “Generally because your tax rates across are reduced.” That’s the key message here.

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I’d also like to congratulate the Speaker for his selective hearing in the way in which this debate is going on. I hope he elevates those standards coming up shortly.

The Acting Speaker: I will ask the member to withdraw that comment and to offer apology to the Chair here.

Mr Hastings: I will not withdraw my comments.

The Acting Speaker: Then you’ll be named. Withdraw the comment and apologize or be named.

I want to give the member one further opportunity to withdraw and apologize or be named. Okay, I’m naming the member.

Mr Hastings was escorted from the Chamber.

The Acting Speaker: Further comments and questions?

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): First of all, I would like to say that it was certainly a privilege for me in my experience before being elected to this House to call the member for Thornhill a colleague, and I continue to be very happy and proud to be a colleague of the member from Thornhill.

I want to make some comments about statements the member made earlier. I couldn’t help note the statement that was made that from her perspective tax cuts create jobs. For me, today especially, that does not sit very well, especially with the recent news in my riding that 243 jobs have been lost. I don’t believe that the tax cuts of this government are going to make those people feel any better now that they are out of work. These are hard-working, highly trained workers. Yes, they have a tax cut but they are out of a job.

I heard comments made about the average citizen and what the tax cuts have meant to average citizens, and as I stated last night in the House, when statements are made by the government, they forget to complete the statement. Last night we heard about more money in the pockets of Ontarians, but we didn’t hear the part about the more debt we now have. We hear about tax cuts and more money in the pockets of Ontarians, but we don’t hear about the cuts to services that people in Ontario value, and cuts to essential services.

Services in health care: We now have people not receiving cancer treatment within the prescribed period of time. Cuts in education: Students in special education programs in my riding are not getting the services they need and deserve, because boards are not adequately supported in those areas.

If you want to talk about tax cuts, finish the phrase and say, “And we’ve had to do it by cutting services to the people of Ontario.”

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mrs Molinari: I’d like to thank the members from Thunder Bay-Superior North, Beaches-East York and Etobicoke North, and the member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, and as the member mentioned, she and I were colleagues some time ago and sat on the same side and now we’re on opposite sides, and certainly our views differ on a number of issues.

I’d like to address a few of the points that have been mentioned. With respect to the 407, members of Thornhill and the constituency there are very pleased to have an alternative for transportation to be able to travel, rather than the roads that are there, so they’re very happy to be able to have that as an alternative.

I want to talk a little bit about the economy and the growth of the economy over the last two years. Yes, it’s been stated that our southern borders have contributed to that, but all of the businesses that have started up would not have been able to continue had the economy not continued to grow.

I recall going back during the campaign, and some of the other members may have experienced similar, trying to find a campaign office, and all of the landlords had said that before 1995 there was so much space available and now, in 1999, there was hardly any space available just finding an office. Finding a constituency office was a similar problem. My office is located on Yonge Street. There is very little space on Yonge Street. That shows that the economy has been growing. People are now in business, there are not many vacant areas available out there.

So that has all contributed to the fuelling to the economy. We can’t say that it’s just because of our southern borders. A lot of it has to do with the tax cuts that have created jobs. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gravelle: I’m glad to join the debate today on Bill 14. Certainly there are a number of areas—I know we only have a very short period of time to speak in the Legislature these days, only 10 minutes.

Mr Bradley: Are we down to 10 minutes?

Mr Gravelle: We’re down to 10 minutes, which is very unfortunate, so I’ll try to get my remarks in.

There are certain aspects of Bill 14, which as you know is really an omnibus bill that covers a variety of aspects of the government, that are pretty important to everybody; for example, the Ambulance Act. They’ve got changes to the Ambulance Act. They’re extending by a year the downloading of their responsibilities to the municipalities, and I think the question that really needs to be asked is why are they doing it in the first place. The provision of our ambulance services I believe very much is a provincial responsibility in the first place and should have remained so. I think what we are doing is leading ourselves into a situation where assessment-rich communities might have a better ability to support the land ambulance service in the future as opposed to those that

are assessment-poor. I very much worry about it. To me it should be a seamless system—ambulances are part of the health care system—so I've objected to that from the very beginning and I think that's important.

As my colleague from Kingston and the Islands said last night, when he made reference to the land transfer tax rebate being extended to the first-time buyers of new homes, it's something that should be extended to first-time buyers of existing homes. I think it would make a huge difference to people and I have often thought that was the case. Many constituents have contacted me about that particular aspect of the program. I think it should be extended to first-time buyers of existing homes.

There are so many things in this particular legislation that make you really see what's not there, and there are some very real disappointments. I am very pleased that there is indeed \$5 million that was set aside in the budget we saw back in May related to services who are diagnosed with autism. In Thunder Bay I have constituents with a child who has been diagnosed with autism and who are very keen to access some of those funds, and I hope those services do come to my part of the province. It's not a lot of money but we're glad to see it.

The problem is—and I hope that the Minister of Community and Social Services is listening, whoever is responsible for it—what we need to ensure is that there is real flexibility in terms of the criteria of how those funds can be accessed. I know that in the case of my constituents they have found an extraordinary program for their child which is making a huge difference. As you know it is important, when a child is diagnosed with autism, to have the program put in place very early to help them as much as possible. This particular family, which I have fought hard for, have found a program that really suits their child in a very positive way in the United States and I'm very much hoping that will be supported by this particular program. They have found a program that works. It happens to be in the United States and I hope there is support for that.

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What it brings me to as well is that what we've seen as a result of some of this government's actions is that in the headlong rush and determination to provide tax cuts—tax cuts which of course appeal to people on a very visceral level, there's no question about it—we've seen some enormous cuts to the system, and some of the cuts that concern me very much are very clearly to those people who are most vulnerable in our society. I can tell you that I have some very great concerns about the funding envelope for the associations—

Interjections.

Mr Gravelle: I'd prefer not to be heckled. I'm going to be talking about people who are very vulnerable who are receiving help from the government but in very diminished amounts. Last week, for example, I met with the board of the Geraldton District Association for Community Living, an organization that is doing wonderful work with many of the clients they have in the Geraldton district, but their very real concern is that the support

they need will not be there. There is one particular constituent, and I've been given permission to use her name, Chantal Trepanier, who has had very many difficulties over the years. As a result of being taken care of and having assistance given to her by the Geraldton District Association for Community Living she has really made extraordinary progress in terms of her living arrangements, her enjoyment of life, her relationship with her parents.

My concern, very much so, is that the support the ministry needs to provide will not be there for Chantal, that there will be a determination that that's more than they're willing to provide. I think that's very wrong. The government has a responsibility to help those who are vulnerable, especially those who can be helped by those services. I will certainly be speaking to the minister about it. In fact, I have a meeting tomorrow morning with somebody in Thunder Bay, in the ministry, related to this issue.

I really want to advocate, as strongly as I can, that that support be there. I can tell you that the same pressures are on the association in Thunder Bay, the Lakehead Association for Community Living, and all other associations that are trying to provide services and have people live lives of dignity.

My youngest brother has Down's syndrome. We love my brother Mark very much. We are very grateful for the help that we get from the Lakehead Association for Community Living. He lives in a group home. He has a wonderful life. Our worries are that the support will be withdrawn, that there won't be the full 24-hour support, that there will be more of a focus on: How can you cut corners? How can you find a way to provide less support?

That worries all of us and it should worry the government as well. I'm afraid that's what the focus has been, looking at the bottom line, how you can save money, rather than how you can provide service. That's a real mix-up in priorities. I hope the government members are sensitive to that.

There's also the whole issue in terms of special education funding which concerns me very much. I had the opportunity last week to speak in the Legislature about that in terms of the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board. The fact is that they are literally working as best they can with the Ministry of Education. What's happening is that they are very carefully and in great detail documenting the needs for the people who are the students who are in the system, but the ministry is not prepared to support that at this time, which is an extraordinary worry for the parents and for the children themselves.

They have an absolute right to have the government support them. We need to have that intensive support amount, not just frozen but fitting the needs that are in place.

I must tell you that I am very concerned about that. We've heard it in the Legislature. All across the province, those concerns are very real.

With the little time I have left, I want to be sure that I talk about the fact that one of the disappointments we had in the budget this year, and we don't see it in this bill either, is that in terms of the northern health travel grant, we have not seen any recognition by the ministry or the minister that it is a terribly underfunded program and very inadequately funded in terms of the need.

What we do know is that the government made a decision about six months ago that they were going to provide funds so that cancer patients from southwestern Ontario, southern Ontario, who were not able to receive treatment in time were able to go and access the services in Thunder Bay at the Northwestern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre. We're pleased that the regional cancer centre was able to help look after those people who deserve to have the treatment in the right period of time. There's no question about it.

What was upsetting to us was that the government chose to say, "We're going to give you the opportunity to go to Thunder Bay and we're going to pay all your expenses; we're going to pay for your travel; we're going to pay for your accommodation; we're going to pay for your food," whereas if you live in northern Ontario—Speaker, you will know about this yourself—and you are not able to access the medical services you need in your community and you need to travel elsewhere, there is a very limited amount which is allowed under the northern health travel grant.

What we have are stories upon stories of constituents who have had to shell out thousands of dollars to receive that care. I just, right now, spoke to a constituent from Red Rock, Liz Harvey-Foulds, who was telling me about her daughter Laura who is having some difficulties accessing the heritage fund program because she had to receive private physiotherapy services.

The point is that the program is underfunded, the program is inadequate. It's not fair that those of us who are not able to access service and have to go down to Toronto, or even to Thunder Bay from Geraldton or Longlac or Marathon, are not able to receive the support they deserve.

My colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Lyn McLeod, and I have launched a petition campaign. We've had thousands upon thousands of signatures. I think we're getting close to 10,000 signatures. We've had support from almost every municipality in northwestern Ontario asking the minister to look at that. We will continue to ask her to do that, because we believe that until the medical services are available, this program should be helping people out to a much greater degree. It's something that I feel very strongly about.

We know there are a number of programs that quite literally the ministry could do more for. We have great concerns simply about the funding for our regional hospital in Thunder Bay. We know that we need to receive what everyone else in the province has received, which is 70% funding for the capital construction of provincially approved projects. At this stage, that has not yet been confirmed by the ministry, and I have great worries about

that. We have great concerns about physician shortages. We have great concerns about the fact that nurse practitioners are not being funded the way they need to be and are not being used.

Mr Bradley: Ophthalmologists.

Mr Gravelle: Ophthalmologists. The member for St Catharines points that out as well.

There are real problems. I'm concerned about the physiotherapy services in northwestern Ontario no longer being supported by the government. I trust that will be corrected as they remove the G-code status.

There are lots of concerns. I regret my time has come to an end. It's unbelievable that we only have this amount of time to express our concerns to our constituents.

Mr Bradley: I think you should have more time.

Mr Gravelle: The member for St Catharines thinks I should have more time. I wish I did. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this bill.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to take just a moment to introduce some guests from the Ontario Association of Community Based Boards for Acquired Brain Injury Services.

In the gallery today we have Deb Delorme, who is the executive director of Dale Brain Injury Services of London and a board member of the Ontario Association of Community Based Boards for Acquired Brain Injury Services; Joanne Bregman, who is a board member and former participant in Dale Brain Injury Services of London, and Joanne's parents, Robert and Agnes Bregman; Marcia Smith, who is a board member of Dale Brain Injury Services of London; and Mike Quinlan, who is a board member of both Dale Brain Injury Services of London and the Ontario Association of Community Based Boards for Acquired Brain Injury Services.

I hope my colleagues will welcome them to this House this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order, but we're always happy when people visit us here in the House.

Comments and questions?

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I wanted to respond to the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North and his speech on the budget. I have a few points that I would like to make. I wanted to compliment him on his speech. It would seem to me that if he can't say in 10 minutes what he has to say, he should shorten it or something. But to complain that 10 minutes is too short, I'm not going to stand here and say that my two minutes is.

I think he's absolutely right in one way, and that is that, yes, while we've been governing for the last four and five years, there has been a deficit each year, albeit declining in the same method as we said it would four and a half years ago.

That's not to say that it hasn't increased; it has. I heard a speaker across say that it was between \$80 billion and \$85 billion. We could throw these figures around, but you'll remember your budget document that you released before the election campaign in 1995 said \$88 billion. So

we'll take that figure and subtract it from \$121 billion, and that is over the period of 1994 to the year 2000. You'll know that that's six years, and this present government has been in here for four, so the other two years would explain part of that increase.

The other one, of course, is that we have done properly and put up front the debt for Ontario Hydro, put it onto our books, and that will explain how that debt shows from \$88 billion to \$121 billion; six years, and we've been here four. I just wanted to make that point.

1740

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier) : I am pleased to have a chance to talk on Bill 14. I would like to congratulate my colleague from Thunder Bay-Superior North on his remarks on this budget bill.

This government, from what I hear, is always saying all they provide for all Ontarians. Par contre, si je pense à ma communauté francophone, je m'inquiète. Pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, ce gouvernement a annoncé des coupures drastiques pour les francophones.

Premièrement, on a décidé de couper 3,5 \$ millions à l'Université de Guelph. Le collège d'agriculture d'Alfred relève de l'Université de Guelph. Encore là, ce sont les francophones qui vont être pénalisés parce qu'on se doit de couper et on va aller couper au collège d'Alfred. Impensable.

On a coupé aussi un montant assez important à l'Office des affaires francophones. On a coupé le programme qui était le plus intéressant, qui était très valable pour les Franco-Ontariens et les Franco-Ontariennes, le développement économique. On a besoin de ce développement économique, et c'est le programme où on est allé sabrer. Alors, je suis bien inquiète de voir ce qui arrive et j'espère que ce gouvernement va penser aux coupures qu'il fait. Si on dit qu'on veut tout donner aux Ontariens, bien, pensons à la communauté francophone.

Mr Young: I've listened intently to the debate over the last short while on this very important bill, and I think one can summarize it very clearly in this way: It's generally acknowledged that the economy of this province is red-hot. There is clearly a dispute between the two sides of the Legislature as to why that is so, but I don't think anyone in this chamber today or at any time would deny that we have an economy that is second to none in this country and that is far better than those of most states.

We saw even in the Toronto Star most recently how we had been outstripping the performance and the economic growth in the United States, and we're very proud of that. We're very proud of the hundreds of thousands of people who are off the welfare rolls. We're very proud of the 43,600 new jobs that were created just in the month of October, and the in excess of 600,000 that have been created since we took office.

What I hear from the other side of the Legislature—and I can understand their concern, albeit misplaced and misinformed—is that they are concerned about quality of life. They are saying to you, Mr Speaker, that the cost is too great.

I had the honour of being in the YMCA recently in the greater Toronto area, and I have in my hand here their annual report from this last fiscal year. It's most interesting that the YMCA now in this current year is finding that the number of people who require financial assistance is markedly down, by 3,000, yet the number of people served at this recreational facility is up by 112,000. I think that speaks very clearly to the issue of quality of life. I'm pleased that because more people are working, because they have more money in their pocket, they are enjoying their life in a fashion that we all hope to.

Mr Bradley: It's quite obvious that it's the low dollar and low interest rates which have fuelled the economy, in addition to the huge demand coming from the United States. I know the Premier has sent a letter to President Bill Clinton thanking him for his economic policies, which have benefited immensely the province of Ontario.

I was waiting for the member—he didn't have time in 10 minutes to talk about the comments of the member for Brampton Centre on food banks. There's the Harris government, as large as life—

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Has the member from St Catharines got proof of that statement? Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr Bradley: He's not going to use up my time, I hope.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order.

Mr Galt: Would the member for St Catharines table the letter that he's referring to that's been sent to Mr Clinton?

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order.

Member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: Thank you very much. I know you'll put the time back on the clock.

I wondered. I looked and I said they were, as large as life, attacking the food banks today, the Harris government, but will they attack the big banks, the Bank of Commerce, CIBC, Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Royal Bank, all of whom are putting the boots to people out the door while making unprecedented profits? But you people on that side, the member for Willowdale and his friends, are people who obviously think this is the way things should be, that they should make unprecedented profits while they bully their people out the door and provide lousy service to the people of this province.

I also want to say that they're as large as life, Mike Harris and his friends, as large as life standing up to those food bank people like that, but when it comes to dealing with the oil barons, with the corporate captains of the gasoline industry, they're like pussycats. I saw the Premier today with a tiger cat; well he's a pussycat when it comes to dealing with the oil barons and the captains of the oil industry out there.

I know the member didn't have time to talk about that. I'm sorry.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Gravelle: I'd like to thank the members for Ottawa-Vanier, St Catharines, Perth-Middlesex and

Willowdale for their comments. I want to thank the member for Perth-Middlesex particularly for confirming the debt in the last four years, the huge debt that was there. I appreciate your confirming to the people of Ontario the massive debt that has been added on since 1995. That was very useful I think, for people to hear that.

Member for Ottawa-Vanier, I really appreciate your remarks in particular. Because of the limited time I have, there are so many issues I couldn't get to, and when you talked about the cost to francophone services, I must say that too has relevance to my riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North. There are many francophones living in my riding and I am working on my French. I want to tell them if they're listening that I'm trying my very best, so merci. I appreciate your comments.

Ms Lankin: That's it? How about merci beaucoup?

Interjections.

Mr Gravelle: Certainly I've got a very long way to go, you're right. You see, with a name like Gravelle, I've got to work on it. My grandparents were from Quebec.

The member for Willowdale, I think you're right about the fact that we're very concerned. I don't think one can be criticized for that, I hope. I'm very concerned about the fact that we have constituents such as the ones I talked about in my remarks who are in need of service and whose lives have been changed in a very positive way as a result of the services that have been provided through the government of Ontario that may be removed as a result of the cuts.

It's very important that everyone in the Legislature recognize that's one of our responsibilities, to be able to help people improve their lives. You talk about it all the time. What I'm describing are situations of people who really have had their lives turned around in a positive way, and Chantal Trepanier in Geraldton is an example of that. I want to be very sure that support remains. I think it's important that it does. So I want you to understand that's where my concern comes from and I think it's fair game to expect the government to continue that support.

The member for St Catharines is very helpful, as always in pointing out the fact that the Premier should certainly be thanking Bill Clinton for the fact that the economy is reacting the way it is and, as always, his comments are much appreciated.

All I can tell you is that it means a great deal to me that I represent my constituents, and all of them equally, something that I'm not so sure this government does. I think it has those it cares for more than others. That to me is wrong and I'm glad to have had an opportunity to make some remarks today.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Lankin: Just before I begin, I say to the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North that I understand he says he's working on his French and he thought he'd give it a try and he said merci. One of the things you can do is learn a word a day. So let's add beaucoup to it, merci beaucoup. It's just to increase the vocabulary there. I've

been a student of French too and I'm paralyzed when I get up in the House to try and use it. I'm very sympathetic.

On the bill that we have before us today, there's been a lot of debate that has gone on, as often happens in this House, where people stray off the bill and talk about broader issues. That happens on all sides.

Mr Bradley: I hate that.

Ms Lankin: The member for St Catharines says he hates when that happens. I know, that was tongue in cheek, he said that tongue in cheek.

It is, though, at times very difficult therefore to convey to the members of the public the importance of some of the pieces of legislation that are before us and some of the elements in the bills that are problematic. I know that the member from Perth said, "If you can't say it in 10 minutes, then you can't say it at all," or, "You should give up on that." I beg to differ with him. A bill like this is very complex, an omnibus piece of legislation. He will know that means there are many pieces of legislation that are being changed, amended by this particular bill. There's a lot of content here. With most of the speeches that we hear from those we look to to explain their intent with the bill, the government members, about broad government programs, we really aren't having a lot of information provided to the general public about the content of the bill.

The bill itself, as I indicated, is an omnibus legislation. I just want to highlight the number of pieces of legislation in Ontario that are affected by this bill, that this bill will amend if it is passed in this Legislature:

Part I amends the Ambulance Act; part II, the Assessment Act; part III, Capital Investment Plan Act, 1993; part IV, Commodity Futures Act; part V, Community Small Business Investment Funds Act.

I'll forget the parts and just read on in terms of the pieces of legislation: the Corporations Tax Act; Education Act; Electricity Act, 1998; Employer Health Tax Act; Fair Municipal Finance Act, 1997; Financial Administration Act; Income Tax Act; Land Transfer Tax Act; Local Roads Boards Act; Ministry of Government Services Act; Municipal Act; Northern Services Boards Act; Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act; Provincial Land Tax Act; Retail Sales Tax Act and complementary amendments; Securities Act; Toronto Stock Exchange Act and complementary amendments; and then the commencement and short title of the bill.

1750

The advent of omnibus legislation as we know it today in this House began under the first term of the Harris government. It is a technique, a tactical approach on the part of government, to deal with a lot of pieces of legislation at the same time.

I have some sympathy where you are talking about a series of technical amendments or housekeeping amendments or bringing some things up to date, because often in the life of the Legislative Assembly, pieces of legislation like that would await time on the legislative agenda. Ministries would have legitimate requests to legislators to

review their piece of legislation, to make updating amendments, yet there would be no time in a busy agenda with a lot of major policy or political items on the list for these items to be dealt with. So there is some I guess sympathy for those types of amendments to different pieces of legislation to be banded together in an omnibus act.

I do say, although I know that this has been ruled in order and, by virtue of rules, has been determined to be a procedure that this government wants to and can proceed with, that when it contains controversial pieces embedded in what are otherwise technical amendments, it really gives cause for concern about the process of airing and debating legislation, and in fact developing good legislation and good public policy.

In the debate that has gone on so far, I've had an opportunity in a couple of the responses in question period to raise two sections of the act with which I am particularly concerned; one in particular, and I'll spend most of my time on that. I have yet to have a government member respond. No one will talk about these sections or explain them. I think there is a shortfall in the democratic process when that's the case, when you can't get the government on record as to why certain things are being done.

Let me speak specifically to section 15 of the act, which deals with the Ministry of Government Services Act. Not in the amendments itself in terms of new words being put in the act, but in sections being repealed under the existing act, we find that this piece of legislation will take away rights from the workers of the Ontario Realty Corp.

The Ontario Realty Corp is a relatively new agency. It is a spinoff from the former Ministry of Government Services that was responsible for all land and property management in the province of Ontario. I had the honour at one time to be the Minister of Government Services and have some familiarity with the work that was done there and is now done under the Ontario Realty Corp. This government has moved it out even further away from government and has stated an intention to sell off parts of the portfolio, to reshape the portfolio of asset holdings of that agency, and to look at the privatization of that agency.

The changes in this legislation would, if ORC is privatized, take away the successor rights of the employees. The employees of the Ontario Realty Corp are currently members of a union. They have a collective agreement. They have certified under the laws of the province their union and their bargaining agent. They have gone through negotiations. They have an agreement which both sides must live up to. Rights and obligations are spelled out therein.

In the private sector, whenever a company is sold, a buyer must come in and do a due-diligence exercise and take a look at what it is they are proposing to buy and make an assessment about the value. When they are doing the evaluations, they include in that not just the assets that they see on the face of the company books, but

the liabilities: if there are debts, if there are outstanding loans, if there are obligations.

One of the obligations in the private sector that must be lived up to is the obligation of a contract to the employees. It is sold along with the business. Why is that a fine standard in the private sector, but in the public sector, when the government is the employer—or in this case the quasi-employer by having spun this off to an agency—why is it OK for them with a stroke of a pen to write off the rights and the obligations and responsibilities to the employees therein? It's not just the salary levels. It's vacation, it is benefits, it is seniority, it is rights of promotion. All of those things that are hard-won through collective bargaining are just being written off and signed away.

I believe the purpose of that would be to increase the value of the asset, because you can say to the buyer: "Come on, take this. There are no obligations to the employees. You'll start from square one. There will be no union. There will be no obligations of a contract. You can do what you will out there and see what happens in the open market." Why should that government employer be able to increase the value of its assets, in this case, at the expense of the employees?

I remember many years ago an interest arbitration award that was looking at public sector salaries and was looking at equating them to private sector where the right to strike exists. This was in a non-right-to-strike sector. A very prominent arbitrator, one of the top arbitrators of the day—and I might get this wrong because it's a long time ago, but I believe it was Ken Swan at the time; it was one of the prominent arbitrators—wrote that we cannot expect that public services will be delivered at the cost or the expense of public sector workers and their salaries or their benefits, that you have to have fairness and equity between the open private market and what happens in a free-market condition and what happens in the more controlled public sector.

By this act, the government is taking away from employees rights duly won under existing laws and they have yet to stand and defend why. I find that very disturbing. I find it very disturbing that we can't have a debate in this Legislature about the propriety of that sort of action on the part of a government. I find it disturbing that it is buried in an omnibus bill and that nobody on the government side—and members who have been here know I have raised this how many times asking speakers: "Please speak to this issue. You're defending the bill. You're here to defend the bill on the part of the government; you're speaking in favour of it. Explain this to me."

One member whom I spoke to just in a side conversation said: "Well, I went and checked and I understand it's not an issue because they're going to downsize anyway, they're going to lay off the employees anyway." I hope that message is going to get out now to the employees, but it doesn't matter how many employees are left at the end of your downsizing exercise; they still have rights under a contract and their downsizing will be governed

by the rights under that contract. Again, I find this disturbing and I wish the government would respond to it.

The second issue that I just want to raise briefly is to point out that in this bill you break a promise. I don't think it's such a big thing, what you're proposing here. When you sell assets, you said that every dollar would go to paying down the debt. You're saying you have the right, or cabinet has the right, to put it in general reve-

nues. Fine with me. But stand up and take responsibility and finally, please, someone just admit that this is a broken promise, that you've changed your mind.

The Acting Speaker: It being almost 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 of the clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1758.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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

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Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
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Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
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		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.

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Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
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Garfield Dunlop, Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy,
Frances Lankin, David Young
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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Mercredi 24 novembre 1999

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