



**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)**

Monday 29 November 1999

Lundi 29 novembre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 November 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 novembre 1999

*The House met at 1334.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BLAIR TULLY

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I rise today for a sombre purpose. On June 6 this year, Ontarians suffered a tragic and untimely loss when one of our finest public servants, Mr Blair Tully, lost his courageous battle with cancer. He was just 53 years old.

Blair was a dedicated servant of three communities: Ontario, Cabbagetown and, most importantly, his family. Blair served five different ministries in the Ontario government. Three times he was appointed deputy minister. I first met him when he was a dynamic young deputy at tourism, where I was executive assistant to Minister Hugh O'Neil. An economist by trade, Blair served governments of all political stripes and was eulogized by Premiers Davis, Peterson and Rae.

Blair Tully expanded the definition of public service beyond the realm of public policy development. He served with equal enthusiasm as a volunteer in his home community of Cabbagetown. His community has commemorated this commitment by renaming its annual fundraising run Blair's Run.

Finally, Blair was a devoted servant to his most intimate community, his family. Here was where he made his greatest mark. The last time I saw him, he was buying hockey equipment for his son. Blair was ever the hockey dad, even as he fought cancer.

Blair's wife, Marilyn, and two sons, Keegan and Marshal, are with us today in the west members' gallery. I would like to extend condolences on behalf of all Ontarians.

BONNIE LEDSON

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): I am pleased to rise today to honour my constituent Bonnie Ledson. The Caledon Chamber of Commerce has chosen her to be Caledon's Woman of the Year for 1999.

Bonnie Ledson was an elementary teacher for 37 years with the Peel Board of Education. She also served as vice-principal for Alloa Public School and as principal at

Williams Parkway Public School. Bonnie retired from teaching in March 1998.

Over the years, Bonnie has been involved in numerous community organizations, including serving on the board of directors of Family Transition Place and on the Headwaters Health Care Centre fundraising committee. Bonnie's enthusiasm has brought in several major donations for the Headwaters Health Care Centre's "Bring in the CAT" campaign, which will bring a CAT scanner to the local hospital. Bonnie has also served with the Caledon Meals on Wheels program. Last year she hosted the first annual Caledon Community Services Christmas open house.

Despite these numerous activities, Bonnie is a devoted family member. Her daughter, Vicki Stafford, who nominated her for this award, says that Bonnie has always been her mentor as well as her mother. Vicki went on to say that without her mother's constant support to the family, Bonnie's husband, George Ledson, would not have achieved such success with his business, Cavalier Transportation in Bolton.

As you can see, Bonnie has achieved the perfect balance of career and family life that we all strive for. She has also been able to assist the community in countless ways. I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize Bonnie Ledson in the Legislature today.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I'd like to put the Harris government on notice that their laissez-faire attitude towards the northern economy is not working. While we may see some job growth in southern Ontario, the same is not occurring at all in northern Ontario. I remind the Minister of Northern Development and Mines that this year the papermaker Abitibi Consolidated in Iroquois Falls laid off 240 workers. Now that company is looking at reducing another paper machine, which would lay off an additional 200 workers. If that were to happen, it would make Iroquois Falls a ghost town. Businesses are already closing as that layoff starts to take its effect in Iroquois Falls. Any further layoffs are going to hurt that town.

I ask the Minister of Northern Development and Mines—I want to go see him in a couple of minutes, and I'm glad he's here—to take a more proactive approach, working with the companies, especially the resource-based companies that are the basis of our economy in the

north, to make sure we can retain those jobs, and to help them expand and modernize some of those plants that have been with us for a long time.

The world is changing, and our economy is changing. But in northern Ontario the resource industry is still our base. We have to make sure those companies are competitive worldwide, because all sorts of companies are now creating paper.

I would say to the minister—and I'm going to talk to him later and I hope he can meet with the mayor of Iroquois Falls, Ken Graham, either this week or this weekend, when he comes up to Sudbury—we have to do something to preserve those jobs in Iroquois Falls.

1340

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): On Friday, special adviser Hugh Thomas made public his final recommendations on restructuring in Sudbury. Needless to say, I have serious concerns with the proposed plan.

The new single city of Sudbury wipes out the seven outlying area municipalities, all of which have unique historical and linguistic differences. The six new potential wards do not reflect shared communities of interest, especially when it comes to their rural versus urban makeup.

The new city with a population of 163,000 people is geographically larger than Toronto, yet the adviser recommends governance by 12 part-time councillors, two per ward, plus a mayor elected at large. It's ridiculous to expect 12 part-time councillors to manage all of the issues concerning planning, development, public health, conservation, library and utility services etc by one committee of council. Any savings from the fewer politicians will clearly go to the hiring of more middle and senior managers who will be running the new corporation with no accountability to the voters.

The transition costs are estimated at \$18 million, and the adviser made it clear that in the event the Harris government did not fund this as a loan, the new city should apply existing reserves to pick up the costs. Wrong. If the Harris government is going to force this restructuring and amalgamation, then this same government can pick up all of the costs associated with it. Our regional chair is writing to the minister to make this point.

Clearly, the level of anticipated savings will be used to sell this deal. If only it were so. As the Harris government continues to download services onto municipalities, residents should not be fooled into believing they will see any tax relief.

DEAL PROGRAM

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): It's my pleasure to share with you an encouraging story about today's youth from my home riding of Carleton-Gloucester.

Several students from Gloucester High School, in partnership with other schools from around the world and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, have joined together to create a Web site specifically tailored for other school-aged children. The Drug Education and Awareness for Life program, or DEAL for short, is a unique opportunity for students to participate in both an interactive as well as an educational experience.

DEAL allows for the students in Gloucester High to become active in the fight against drugs and in promoting a positive message. The students involved in this project have learned valuable lessons in teamwork, problem solving and managing change. While the Web site undergoes constant updates, students have kept on top of technological change and learned about the intricacies of Web design, undoubtedly a necessary skill for the future.

In short, this initiative allows for some very real hands-on learning. It highlights the commitment that this government has made in ensuring that the province's classrooms are adequately funded to provide students with such learning opportunities.

While we often hear about the negative elements of today's youth, there are, as evidenced by this case, many positives flowing from Ontario's younger population. I, for one, applaud the initiatives taking place in Carleton-Gloucester. The business and technology department and students from Gloucester High School should be applauded for their proactiveness in such a worthwhile and positive initiative.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I am very concerned about the state of the health care system in my riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North. Deep cuts to our area hospitals have left many of them with serious deficits which threaten services and then reverberate throughout the entire system.

The serious shortage of general practitioners is leaving a large number of my constituents without a family doctor, and access to our dwindling specialist complement translates into long waiting periods for appointments or forced travel to far-off centres. This shortage is also affecting our hospital care in Thunder Bay right now, as physician burnout may result in the shifting of services that we all had hoped to maintain on our two present hospitals sites.

The fact is that much of the hope for improvement to health care in our region is tied to the construction of our new acute care hospital in Thunder Bay. Many of us truly believe that our physician crisis will be much improved once our new site is up and running, but we need the government's help to ensure this vital project moves forward. While the Minister of Health has acknowledged that the restructuring of the hospital system across the province requires more capital funding, she has not yet acknowledged that need in Thunder Bay.

Minister, regardless of any previous understanding of the Thunder Bay hospital agreement, you must recognize

that we need and deserve the same level of capital funding for our new hospital as you have granted to every other ministry-approved project across the province.

Seventy per cent funding support from the province is crucial to our ability to move forward. We need the Premier and the Minister of Health to at least put us on an equal footing with the rest of the province. Anything less will seriously damage our ability to move this vital project forward.

CHRISTKINDL MARKET

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): Each year Festivals and Events Ontario, a provincial organization which provides support to festival and event organizers, presents awards to honour excellence. This year, the award for best new festival or event in Ontario was bestowed on Kitchener's Christkindl Market.

Now in its third year, Christkindl Market will be held at the Kitchener City Hall from Thursday, December 9, through Sunday, December 12.

The Kitchener event commemorates a cherished German tradition that is more than 400 years old. The Christkindl markets grew as the custom of giving gifts at Christmas became widespread. They became a popular venue for the sale of toys and other presents for children, for craft and other gift items and for seasonal food specialties. Today Christkindl markets are world-renowned for their ceremonies, festivities and entertainment, as well as their outstanding selections of gifts and food.

Kitchener's Christkindl Market rivals any European market. Approximately 80 vendors offer visitors the opportunity to view and purchase a wide variety of hand-crafted wood toys, intricate Christmas ornaments, carved and decorated cherubs and angels, handmade fabric dolls, nutcrackers, glass work, folk art and other seasonal items.

Others will tempt you with barbecued sausages, goulash soup, apple cider, sauerkraut, perogies, cabbage rolls, stollen, mulled wine, schnapps, grog and roast chicken.

There will also be free entertainment.

Mr Speaker, I invite you and all members of the Legislature to join me at Kitchener's Christkindl Market to discover why Festivals and Events Ontario chose it as the best new festival or event. You will not be disappointed.

DOCTORS' SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My community of Sudbury and the northeast continues to reel from the government's inaction on the physician shortage problem. In Sudbury alone, we are short an outlandish 26 specialists. We need cardiologists, neurologists, gynecologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, ophthalmologists—you name the specialist; we have a shortage in Sudbury.

What makes this tragedy even worse is that we in the north have given the minister the solutions to our problems.

Dr David Boyle is in the gallery today. He, along with several northeastern doctors, has co-authored two reports entitled, *From Crisis to Stability*. These documents provide the answers to the shortage of doctors in our community.

"In the north, by the north, for the north" is another project which supplies to this problem. Devised by northerners, it will work for northerners. But again, the government refuses to fund this initiative properly.

Let's be honest here, today. Dalton McGuinty and the northern Ontario Liberal caucus have given you solutions to this acute problem. If you refuse to listen to us, then listen to the experts who are in the gallery today, listen to our northern doctors. The reality is: Our doctors in the north have the answers. We need the government to listen to these experts and make the commitment today to fund "In the North, by the North, for the North" and the solution as found in *From Crisis to Stability*. To do anything less is to show disdain and discrimination against northerners and their doctors.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Today, I am pleased to stand in the House to congratulate those people in Durham riding who are involved in our government's Community Partnership projects as part of the International Year of Older Persons.

The seven members of Durham's IYOP committee received an excellent response from a variety of community organizations. Many creative ideas on how to commemorate this very special year were put forward. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank in public the dedicated individuals who served on this committee: Annabelle Sissons; Harold Hammond; Mavis Carlton; Kent and Doug Fardale; Sheri Jackson and Sally Barrie.

What was so encouraging to me was to see the projects that were undertaken that involved and benefited the entire community not just seniors. People like Gweneth Thompson, Wayne Burrell and Bill Bagnell—people of all ages, as the theme entails. I was privileged to attend several IYOP events throughout the celebration with all of my constituents.

The organizations that participated in this program were the Bowmanville Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion; Big Brothers, Clarington; the Blackstock recreation complex; Community Memorial Hospital Foundation; Port Perry Senior Citizens' Club; Marnwood Lifecare Centre; the Clarington Older Adult Association and many more.

It was a privilege and a pleasure that our minister, Cam Jackson, and our Premier initiated this for all 130 ridings across this province.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED INTERIOR DESIGNERS OF ONTARIO ACT, 1999

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr6, An Act respecting the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario.

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

Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Eves, Ernie L.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wilson, Jim
Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Young, David

The Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on November 30 and December 1, 1999, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Parsons, Ernie
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Lankin, Frances	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	
Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 48; the nays are 37.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Yes.

To which committee shall the bill be referred?

Interjection.

The Speaker: The bill has been referred to the general government committee.

DEFERRED VOTES

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 11, An Act to reduce red tape, to promote good government through better management of Ministries and agencies and to improve customer service by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting four new Acts / Projet de loi 11, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives, à promouvoir un bon gouvernement par une meilleure gestion des ministères et organismes et à améliorer le service à la clientèle en modifiant ou abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant quatre nouvelles lois.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1352 to 1357.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise and be recognized the by Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Skarica, Toni

ORAL QUESTIONS

HÔPITAL MONTFORT MONTFORD HOSPITAL

M. Dalton McGuinty (chef de l'opposition): Ma première question aujourd'hui est pour la ministre de la Santé.

Pendant trois ans vous vous en êtes prise au seul hôpital d'enseignement de langue française en Ontario, l'hôpital Montfort. D'abord, vous avez essayé de le fermer. Ensuite, vous avez réduit son budget et son mandat. Vous avez constamment attaqué sa tradition qui est d'offrir des soins de qualité tout en formant des professionnels de la santé qui parlent français.

Aujourd'hui, les tribunaux ont dit que vous avez tort. Les tribunaux ont déterminé que vos attaques arrogantes contre cet hôpital sont en fait des attaques contre la communauté francophone.

Madame la ministre, admettez-vous maintenant que vous avez tort ?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Yes, I understand that today the divisional court has announced the decision regarding Montfort Hospital's application for judicial review of the HSRC directives, and I understand that these directions have been set aside. The Divisional Court today has asked the commission to reconsider its decision to the hospital, and it is my understanding that the commission will be reviewing the decision and they will be making recommendations to me shortly.

M. McGuinty : C'est déjà assez que les tribunaux soient obligés de protéger les droits fondamentaux, les droits élémentaires de la population, parce que le gouvernement ne le fait pas. Mais dans ce cas-ci, on parle d'un gouvernement qui a attaqué les droits des francophones, un groupe minoritaire ici en Ontario, qui devraient avoir la protection de leur gouvernement et non pas une attaque.

Pendant près de trois ans, vous vous êtes attaqués à cet hôpital. Allez-vous enfin cesser vos attaques contre les francophones de l'Ontario et allez-vous vous engager à redonner à Montfort son statut d'hôpital d'enseignement offrant tous les services ?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, I would indicate that the directions that were issued had been done so by the Health Services Restructuring Commission. They are going to be reviewing the decision and they will be making recommendations.

I think it's important also to remember that we in Ontario have undertaken a significant strengthening of our health resources. In fact, we were the very last province to undertake the restructuring. As a result of this initiative, we are continuing to see a strengthening of our health system, our hospital system. We are expanding the number of cancer centres, the number of cardiac care centres, and the funding for the priorities programs as well. We will do everything we can to ensure that people in Ontario have access to the quality services they need and deserve.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you attacked the Montfort Hospital and, by so doing, the courts have ruled today that when you did that, you attacked the rights of francophones to health care in their own language and the rights of francophones to training in their own language. You can no longer hide behind the Health Services Restructuring Commission. The ball is in your court.

Francophones don't look to some commission to protect their rights as a minority group in Ontario. They look to you and they look to your government. They said you were badly mistaken, that you did not stand up and protect the rights of francophones in Ontario to health care in their own language and to education in their own language. Will you now do what you should have done back then? Will you restore the Montfort Hospital to a full-service, French-language teaching hospital and, by so doing, stand up for francophone rights in Ontario?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, I just stress the fact that the commission has undertaken to make directions which will respond to the needs of our changing population.

Unfortunately, previous Liberal and NDP governments refused to undertake this task; they took the easy way out and they allowed the health system to move forward without responding.

Certainly we will await the recommendation and decision of the commission. Our government is prepared to work with each and every hospital in order to ensure that the needs of the patients are met.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): The second question is also for the Minister of Health. Minister, I want to talk to you about a growing health care crisis in Ontario, and some would argue, the most serious and grievous crisis of all, and that is the fact that today, according to your own ministry officials, there are 99 communities which are suffering from doctor shortages. That means thousands and thousands of Ontario families are having to resort to emergency hospital care, or worse, they're doing without completely.

Your government has been on watch for five years in connection with this matter. You have done nothing but stand aside as a somewhat disinterested onlooker as this problem has continued to become more and more pressing. When are you going to make announcement in this House to do something specifically that's going to address this problem in a real and concrete way?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition refuses to acknowledge the fact that our government has actually taken unprecedented, very significant steps to increase the distribution of physicians in this province.

Also, if the leader takes a look at the report that ICES released recently, the number of physicians in this province has actually increased in the past seven years. The problem is distribution. We have a problem of distribution, and we have a problem of very much changing patterns of physician practice. That's why we have asked Dr McKendry to take a look at the scope of the problem, because simply increasing the number of physicians is still not going to ensure that the physicians locate in the areas where they are needed. We're still going to have the issue there in the urban, the north and the rural. We want to—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time has expired. Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Let's take a look at some of the facts here, Minister. In 1996 there were 63 underserved communities in Ontario; today there are 99. In 1996 we were short fewer than 100 doctors in Ontario; today we are short 422. That's in excess of a 400% increase on your watch. You guys have been in charge for over four years now and this matter is getting worse and worse every day, to the point where one in four Ontarians does not have access to a family doctor. That, Madam Minister, is a crisis.

When are you going to do something to lend some real assistance to those thousands and thousands of Ontario families who can't get access to a family doctor in their own community?

1410

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, I would just stress that our government has actually taken unprecedented, positive steps forward that certainly were not undertaken by previous governments. In fact, we have a \$30-million initiative that helps with coverage in small hospitals. Also, if you take a look at the statistics, you will see that in northern Ontario, as a result of our positive initiatives, we have actually increased the supply of physicians in the north.

We will continue to work with the Ontario Medical Association. We will continue to work with the Ontario Hospital Association. We will continue to do what we can to see this continuing increase of physicians in the north and in the urban and rural areas, and with the co-operation of the—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time has expired. Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: If you want to talk co-operation, we have put forward a number of positive policy proposals which you have failed to act on. You've done nothing. When it comes to this matter, you've done nothing more than take out observer status. You are a disinterested, removed onlooker.

We've had a 400% increase in the number of doctors that we are short in this province. Here's an idea that we have put forward before. One in four practising doctors today in Ontario are foreign-trained. There are hundreds, possibly thousands, of other international medical graduates living in Ontario who could be providing health care today were it not for barriers to licensing. We have put forward a very good idea to help those doctors begin to practise here in Ontario without in any way lowering standards, and ensuring that our own children have opportunities in our own medical schools. We've done that. It's a positive proposal and you have failed to act on it.

When are you going to admit that when it comes to the doctor shortage in Ontario, you intend to do nothing except stand by as a disinterested observer?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would indicate that our government has taken a leadership role. In fact, this past September when we were at the federal-provincial health ministers' conference, I raised this issue as a priority. All of the provinces and territories did agree that we would move forward and we would be presenting a report in the early new year to see how, collaboratively, we could address this issue.

Also, I would just like to read a couple of quotes of recognition for the work that our government has done.

Calvin Gutkin, the chief executive officer of the College of Family Physicians, writes on November 16: "We have confidence that recent strategies being addressed by your government—including ... primary care reform pilot projects" and other innovative solutions

"are, without a doubt, the appropriate directions to be taking."

I would hasten to add that people throughout the province—

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

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. As you know, the Ontario Municipal Board is in the process right now of making a very important decision, that decision being how many city councillors there should be in the new city of Toronto, the megacity. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw that your Minister of Municipal Affairs, just as the OMB is trying to make this decision, publicly writes a letter advocating what the decision should be.

Can you tell me, Deputy Premier, is it now the norm with your government that you ignore judicial independence, that you routinely tell judges and other quasi-judicial tribunals how they should decide cases?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I don't know of any such letter. If he's referring to the letter that the Minister of Municipal Affairs wrote to the mayor of Toronto dated November 24, the letter doesn't say any such thing. It asks the mayor of Toronto what action, if any, he and Toronto council are going to take with respect to reduction of council size. He will know, undoubtedly, that is not the issue that's before the OMB. The minister didn't write to the OMB; he wrote to the mayor of the city of Toronto.

Mr Hampton: The Deputy Premier knows that judicial independence demands that while a judge or a quasi-judicial tribunal is trying to make a decision, a cabinet minister isn't out there publicly advocating what the decision should be. As soon as a cabinet minister does that, you take away judicial independence.

I'm not the only one who believes that. Your Premier has said, "It would be inappropriate to intervene in any quasi-judicial body, and I would insist that members of the executive council not do that." Even one of the members of Toronto city council has said, "How can the minister ask us to look at making these kinds of changes when the matter is before a quasi-judicial tribunal?"

The members of the OMB aren't sequestered. They read the newspapers. They hear what the minister said. They hear what the minister is advocating. You must recognize that this is completely contrary to the rules of judicial independence. When are you going to ask the minister to resign, Deputy Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, the OMB has no jurisdiction whatsoever over council size. That is not the issue that's before the OMB. The issue before the OMB is dealing with ward boundaries. The OMB can't determine council size. It has no legal jurisdiction with which to do so. The only two bodies that could possibly do that would be that the city of Toronto could ask the province of Ontario to do something about council size. Ultimately,

the legislation would have to be passed here in this House by the government of Ontario.

Mr Hampton: Deputy Premier, I find it remarkable that when your Premier or you or the Attorney General or the Solicitor General is asked any question about Ipperwash, you immediately respond, "This matter is before the consideration of a judge; we have no comment." But when it comes to a position that your government wants to force on someone else, you're out there telling the press very publicly; you're out there telling the OMB members.

You know that the OMB members are in fact appointed by the minister responsible for municipal affairs. You know that the municipal affairs minister has almost direct control over the OMB in terms of its operation. You know that the members of the OMB are going to receive this signal.

The question is this: Do you believe in judicial independence, or is your government routinely going to tell quasi-judicial decision-makers and judges how to make up their minds?

Hon Mr Eves: Yes, I believe in judicial independence, but the letter that the minister wrote to the mayor of Toronto has absolutely nothing to do with judicial independence and has absolutely nothing to do with the very issue before the OMB.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is to the Minister of Health. You will know that because of the health care needs of Hamiltonians, the pressures of that service that's required, the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp is coming up \$40 million short due to your cuts. They stood up to your bullying, much like our school board has, and said to you that the health care of Hamiltonians comes first, not your bottom-line budget-cutting to feed your free gift to your wealthy friends.

We have now received a copy of a document that states that in order to deal with these fiscal pressures that you're placing on our hospital boards, they are now going to make it a priority to focus their policy on "the earliest possible discharge of patients from the hospital." It says that patients have to be moved out of emergency and into in-patient wards, and that these moves will occur at any time and "may well result in a patient located in a hall or sunroom." Further, it says that they will not be adding any staff to accommodate these transfers.

Minister, my questions to you: (1) Is this type of policy acceptable to you under any condition; and (2) will you ensure there's enough funding for the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp so they don't have to—

1420

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

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Regarding the issue of health in Hamilton, as the member well knows, we have actually been increasing funding for hospitals. This fiscal year

we've increased funding for patient care by nearly \$400 million in new funding. Last year hospitals received \$6.83 billion, and this year they'll be receiving \$7.2 billion.

We are investing in new priority areas: nursing, emergency rooms, neonatal care, cancer services and cardiac care.

The member also knows that we have been working with the hospital in Hamilton, just as we are working with other hospitals throughout the province, in order to resolve any issues and ensure that they can provide the high quality of patient care that is needed.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): Minister, that's nice PR, but you're missing the point here. This is a policy on acute bed access. It's being implemented on December 6, 1999. It talks about the reality of patients being rotated out of emergency, into hallways, into sunrooms, into rooms that are "closed" and no staff being added. There's a deficit here. There's a deficit in hospitals across the province.

I was in Windsor a week ago. The hospitals there are facing a combined \$16-million deficit. All of these hospitals are saying they have met your efficiency requirement. They can't cut any more without neglecting the health needs of the patients in their regions.

This policy just doesn't fly. Are you going to accept, because of the cuts you made originally in hospital funding, because restructuring hasn't moved forward fast enough, because you haven't invested in the community, that patients' health needs are not going to be met, that patients are going to be left in hallways and left in sunrooms by now official policy? Is that acceptable to you?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member full well knows, our government has made a tremendous commitment to health care. We have increased funding from \$17.4 billion to \$20.6 billion, and certainly our number one priority is always to ensure that patients receive high-quality care, and I'm sure that hospital CEOs throughout Ontario are working with their staff to ensure that all patients will continue to do so.

In fact, I just indicate that today hospitals receive 40% of the ministry expenditure of \$20.6 billion. The Ottawa Citizen on November 1 said, "Certainly the province cannot be faulted for its overall level of support for hospitals, since it's spending \$7.2 billion a year on them."

We'll continue to work with the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre and every other hospital to ensure that patient care is—

The Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

VISITOR

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I know you will want to acknowledge in the members' gallery today the presence of a former member of this House, and a former minister

of the crown, and the president of our party, Mr Greg Sorbara.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That's not a point of order. I had that on my list to do.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. You told the Ontario Hospital Association last week that there's no shortage of physicians in this province, and in this Legislature last week you used a recent report from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences to back up that statement.

As my leader has said, denying that there's a physician shortage in this province is simply denying what is reality for people in communities across Ontario. But the report that you keep referring to does not say there is no doctor shortage. What the report says is that the decision about how many doctors we should have is a social policy decision. The author of the report says that the decision about whether we should have more doctors is a judgment, and that puts the ball right back in your court. It is clearly a question of your government's priorities. It is a question of whether you believe that 25% of the people in this province should be without a family doctor.

Minister, will you stop misusing reports in order to defend your government's refusal to make the most basic health care needs of Ontarians a priority? Will you acknowledge that there's not just a distribution problem but a problem of shortage of physicians?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member well knows, our government has identified health as a priority. In fact, that's why the spending has increased. Again, I stress it's increased from \$17.4 billion to \$20.6 billion.

Also, in order to identify the true scope of the issue in the province of Ontario, whether we're dealing with distribution or whether we're dealing with supply, that was the reason we asked Dr Robert McKendry to take on the task of taking a look at all of the information, including the most recent ICES report, and identifying for us the scope of the problem and the cause of the problem. We await his report. That report will be coming this year. Once his report is issued, we will move forward with short-term solutions and we will put in place long-term solutions as well.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, we said that you would use the McKendry study in order to stall on dealing with this crucial issue. We're right. It was due the end of September. It's the end of November; we're still waiting for the report. But in the meantime, people across this province cannot get access to a doctor when they need one. They believe there is a physician shortage and they are right.

The Chan report tells us why people can't get a family doctor, why they have to wait to see specialists. The report says there are fewer physicians per capita than there were in 1993-94. It says the number of full-time

family doctors practising in Ontario is decreasing. It says more people are going into subspecialties instead of general medicine or general surgery. It says that new graduates are leaving the province and that our physician population is aging. Family doctors are no longer doing obstetrics and minor surgery and emergency coverage, as they might have done when they were younger. Put all of that together and surely you can understand we have a physician shortage.

Will you understand that until we fix the supply problem, we cannot fix the distribution problem? How much longer are you going to avoid dealing with this critical issue?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member opposite knows, since 1995 we have been putting in place many initiatives. In fact, it's thanks to our initiatives that in her community in northern Ontario we actually have more physicians today than we've had in the past. That's the reason why we have Dr McKendry doing the report, because, as she has indicated, there are many causes. So let's accurately identify them, let's see how large it is and let's move forward and continue to provide the incentive programs that are necessary to provide people with the physicians and the specialists they need throughout Ontario.

In fact, it was our member Helen Johns who put forward the initiative of ensuring that tuition be made available to students who wanted to practice in underserved areas. We are developing that recommendation and we will be bringing that forward.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): My question is to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. Ontario, and more specifically Ottawa, is the centre for biotechnology initiatives. Biotechnology is an industry that is growing and having a very important impact.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member take his seat. Order. I cannot hear the question.

Mr Coburn: Biotechnology is an industry that is growing and having a very important impact on the people of Ontario and the world. Minister, what are we doing to ensure the innovations created by Ontarians and by residents of Ottawa in this important field are being supported and advanced?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Biotechnology, in spite of the controversy about genetically modified foods that is swirling around these days, is a very important part of the Ontario economy. In fact, experts expect this \$300-million sector in Ontario today to grow to about \$1 billion worth of economic activity and to create about 6,500 more highly skilled jobs.

To spur along this growth, earlier this month, on behalf of the government, I announced in Ottawa a \$20-million biotechnology commercialization fund. We

hope that Ottawa and areas like Kingston, Hamilton, Guelph, London and Toronto will take the opportunity to apply to this \$20-million fund—it grows to \$40 million with private and public sector support—and that they will help us help our young scientists get their biotechnology ideas off the benches and into goods and services the people want to buy so we can create even more highly skilled—

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The Speaker: Order. Minister, time. Supplementary?

Mr Coburn: Minister, along with biotechnology, scientific developments are crucial to the advancement of medical research. Ottawa is a very important centre for this type of research. Minister, how is the government—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat. Order. I cannot hear the question. The member for Windsor West, please come to order. Supplementary.

Mr Coburn: Minister, how is the government ensuring that our leaders in research are able to continue and advance their crucial work?

Hon Mr Wilson: I'd like to thank the honourable member again. His area of the province indeed has a number of—some of our best and brightest researchers live in the Ottawa area. To support their research and to help us turn the brain drain into a brain gain in this province I was recently in Ottawa, at the University of Ottawa, to present \$4.6 million as the government's share of a multimillion-dollar project for the regional protein chemistry centre at the Loeb Health Research Institute.

I had the honour of meeting, for the second time, the Prime Minister's brother, Dr Michel Chrétien, who heads up that institute, who came from Quebec 18 months ago to help us with our brain drain problem. He's just absolutely delighted that he's been able to renovate the entire Loeb institute, if any of you have the opportunity to visit that centre, and to buy the new machinery that will ensure that his bright, young researchers are on the leading edge in creating that economic prosperity and jobs for this province. Also, \$2.6 million went to the medical—

The Speaker: Order. I'm afraid the minister's time has expired.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Health and it concerns the cost of hospital restructuring in my community of Pembroke.

Three years ago—and it wasn't quite three years ago—when your Health Services Restructuring Commission ordered the closure of the Pembroke Civic Hospital, it did so, it said, on the basis of a professional analysis which suggested that all hospital services in Pembroke could be consolidated at the remaining site for a total capital cost of \$5 million. Less than three years later, with the Civic Hospital closed, the estimated capital costs of renovating the remaining Pembroke General

Hospital are not \$5 million, they're not \$10 million, they're not \$15 million. At last report they are \$24 million.

The local cost of that rehabilitation or that renovation using your existing formula would be \$8 million that will have to be paid for by the people of Pembroke and area. What specific additional financial assistance are you prepared to offer the people of Pembroke and area so that they will not be crushed by this—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Minister of Health.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm certainly pleased to indicate that if I take a look at the funding that has been provided for Pembroke General Hospital, I see that there is new funding in the amount of approximately \$8 million. In fact, there has been the base allocation increase there of 1%. There's been money for the 60-hour stay. There's been Y2K funding, emergency room funding, extra money for nurses, restructuring reimbursement, transition funding, additional one-time funding. Certainly I think this indicates that we are continuing to increase the funding. If the member has an additional issue that he believes needs to be addressed, we'd certainly be willing to meet with him.

Mr Conway: I hope the entire House heard those numbers, because I live in a small Ontario city and our capital costs for hospital restructuring now stand at nearly five times what was projected just three years ago, meaning that our local share is not \$1.5 million but it's going to be \$8 million. That is going to crush my community of, if you take the surrounding area, approximately 30,000 people.

The Minister is right, there have been funds provided, but the fact remains that the capital costs are skyrocketing. So the supplementary is this: Since our local share is now at \$8 million, one and a half times what the entire project cost was estimated to be but three years ago, what additional financial assistance is the Minister of Health prepared to do to save my community from being crushed by this now extraordinary local share of what I repeat is now a five-times increase in the capital costs that were projected just three years ago?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We are certainly prepared to do what other communities have asked us to do. We will work with you; we will take a look and review those figures, and obviously take a look at the needs. In instances, as you know, we have increased our own allocation for the restructuring of hospitals in this province. As we've indicated, we estimate it will cost approximately \$3.3 billion. The Ontario Hospital Association has estimated it's going to cost about \$3.2 billion. We have set that money aside, and we are prepared to work with your community.

TORONTO COUNCIL

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): My question is to the Minister of Labour. The city of Toronto

outside workers recently ratified a new collective agreement, their first agreement with the newly amalgamated city of Toronto. I understand the city's inside workers are currently in negotiations.

I also read with interest your comments in the Toronto Sun on the weekend, where you offered support for reducing the size of council. You are quoted as saying, "I think 58 is too many."

What impact would this change have on the city's collective bargaining process, and will it affect the city's many hard-working employees?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Thank you very much for the question. Obviously, any reduction in the number of members of council in the city of Toronto would have little, if any, impact on the decisions that have been taken by the previous council. There's going to have to be a negotiated settlement between the inside workers and the council itself.

My comments related to the fact that I simply think the city council today is too large. It would make more sense to me that the size of the council should be brought down some from 58. It makes more sense from a financial point of view, on cost to the taxpayers, but I also think it would make the council work more effectively and efficiently.

The impact on the unions would be nothing; the impact on the future unions wouldn't be anything other than negotiating with a smaller council. But the impact for the taxpayers would be significant. The savings would be significant, and I think council would work more efficiently and effectively, thereby operating with a little bit more thoughtfulness to the costs to the taxpayers of the city of Toronto.

Mr Newman: The hard-working people of my riding are always interested in seeing tax reductions and service efficiencies. Minister, you've served as a municipal councillor and you've served as an MPP. What more can be done to protect the residents in your riding of Etobicoke Centre, my riding of Scarborough Southwest and the other 20 ridings within the city of Toronto from the double-digit tax increases that the city has warned may be in the offing in the next few years?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I hear the barking and barracking with respect to the debt etc. The simple fact of the matter is there has been no provincial government that was prepared to go to the table and accept responsibility for the changes to the city of Toronto such as this provincial government. When it came to interest-free loans, this government ponied up the money for the city of Toronto. When it came to flat-out grants, this government ponied up the money for the city of Toronto. When it came to capital costs of the TTC, this government came forward and paid a significant portion of those capital costs. When it comes time for this government to show its commitment to the city of Toronto, it has consistently, unequivocally showed up with a commitment to protect the taxpayers. I don't think it's unreasonable that a

reduction in councillors would take place, considering the number they have in place now.

As I've said in the past, the only thing you're famous for across the floor is the commercial concentration tax, a blight on the city of Toronto. They've got a lot to thank us for. I'm not so sure about you.

1440

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a question to the Deputy Premier again. Two days ago I indicated I'm going to introduce a private member's bill entitled the Toronto Waterfront Fair Housing Act. The reason I'm going to introduce it is because we have to have a legal mechanism, whether the Olympics take place or not, to ensure that any housing that is built along the Toronto waterfront includes not just the well-off but lower-income families, modest-income families and middle-income families. We know that if we leave this whole decision to market forces, the only housing that will be built will be upper-income housing.

What are you willing to do to ensure that the housing that is going to be built on the Toronto waterfront includes lower-, modest- and middle-income families, not just the well-off.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I noted your proposed solution to the affordable housing problem, especially with respect to Toronto's waterfront. I can assure you of one thing, that we won't be doing what your party did, and that is wasting the taxpayers' money on a boondoggle called non-profit housing.

During the watch of the government of which the honourable member was a member of the executive council, consultants were paid some \$300 million over 10 years—between the Peterson and the Rae governments—architects were paid \$550 million in fees, lawyers were paid \$50 million in fees, but we really didn't do a whole heck of a lot in helping the people who were supposed to be helped—

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): You really want to talk about consultants, Minister of Finance?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Deputy Premier, take your seat.

The member for Windsor West, this is your last warning please.

Supplementary.

Mr Hampton: I heard a lot of discussion there, but the reality is I didn't hear a thing about housing for lower-income families, modest-income families and middle-income families.

Your government has essentially killed rent control in this province. It has been driving rents up by 13% over the last two years in this city. You have no affordable housing strategy whatsoever, the federal government has no affordable housing strategy, and it means that tens of thousands of families are now either homeless or they're at risk of being homeless.

I'm asking. I'm giving you a suggestion about how you can ensure that housing that is to be built on the waterfront includes not just the well-off but lower-, modest- and middle-income families. If you don't like my suggestion, what is your suggestion? The private sector is saying they won't do it. They want to make money off it and there's no money in providing housing for lower-, modest- and middle-income families. What's your solution?

Hon Mr Eves: Here are some of the things the government has done: We've eliminated the first \$2,000 of PST on new rental unit development. We've created a new, lower tax class for property rental. We've committed to use public land to create a minimum of 500 units of affordable housing. We have placed limits on the scope of services for which municipalities can levy development charges. We have streamlined the planning and approval process in the province of Ontario and we have rationalized large sections of the Ontario building code. We are talking to our counterparts in Ottawa and our counterparts in Toronto to come up with a solution in which all three levels of government can participate. We are making some strides and effort in that direction.

The honourable member can argue that the results haven't been quick enough, they're not there, but I can tell you one thing we're not going to do is we're not going to do what the Toronto Star said in 1995, "Non-profit housing is a money tap opened in the name of the poor by the Liberal government in 1986 and cranked to a wide open gusher by the NDP"—

The Speaker: Order. The Deputy Premier's time has expired.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question for the Minister of Health with respect to doctor shortages.

Earlier in this question period you referenced Dr Chan, the author of the ICES report, and let me tell you what Dr Chan had to say about your efforts as Minister of Health in the Windsor-Essex-Kent and Lambton areas. He said, "This report demonstrates with some pretty clear statistics the extensive problem in your region." He goes on to say that that problem has worsened under your government. He says that the problem has gone from 35 family physicians to 55 physicians.

Minister, as much as you might like to deny it, you are the government, you have been the minister, you have had the opportunity for some time to address a very serious problem in my community and in the communities of southwestern Ontario. What do you say to the tens of thousands of people in that region of this province who can't access a family doctor? What do you say to them when they call our offices looking for help?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member well knows, the report indicates and we have said that there is an issue of distribution. Unfortunately there are communities in this

province that do have shortages. In fact, this issue is one of very long standing and we are the very first government to address this long-standing issue.

We continue to put in place new initiatives. We have a community development officer program, we have an agreement for 20 northern communities, we continue to provide incentives, we have locum programs and Dr McKendry is further examining the whole issue of supply and distribution. We will continue to ensure that Windsor and other communities, as a result of the work being done by Dr McKendry—

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

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): Minister, all your initiatives have failed. APP and the primary care pilot projects have failed. The doctor shortage in rural Ontario is worse than ever.

For the first time, southwestern Ontario has the most critical shortage in the province. You have had nearly five years to fix it. You have failed rural Ontario. The Chatham-Kent Health Alliance has told you that thousands of citizens have no access to the most basic health care services, but you don't listen. We have the highest heart and stroke incidence in Chatham-Kent and Essex and the worst doctor shortage.

When are you going to listen to the many experts who have given you solutions that will bring back quality health care to rural Ontario?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government actually has listened. In fact, we appointed Dr McKendry because there was a recognition that many reports had been circulated, and information had been gathered by many different people and associations. However, we had the courage to initiate a fact-finding commission. He will be bringing forward the exact scope and cause of the problem, and that will enable us, for the first time in the history of this province, to move forward and ensure that we have long-term strategies to address the entire issue of health professionals in the province.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for my honourable friend the Minister of Education. The young people of Ontario today are one of our greatest resources. The education reforms the government has recently implemented will provide students with greater advantages and better chances for success once they graduate.

However, some of my constituents are concerned that today's students also need practical, real-life experience to prepare them for future success. School provides sound fundamentals, but education shouldn't begin and end in the classroom, especially when there is so much to be gained through community activities.

Will the minister tell the House what the government is doing to ensure that students indeed get real-life work and volunteer experience during their tenure at school?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I thank the member for Waterloo-Wellington for the question. He certainly has gone out of his way to make sure I stay informed of the issues of education in his riding and his community.

He is quite right that it is very important for our high school students not only to get a better curriculum, better education, better knowledge and skills while they are at school—indeed the goal of our secondary school reform is to do this, with the improved curriculum that's starting in grade 9 this year and will be phased through the rest of the high school years—but also to get them out of the classroom to have experiences that might help contribute to their making better career choices and also give them the experience they may need to take those steps, whether it's to post-secondary or directly into the workplace.

One of the improvements is our mandatory community involvement process, where they have to spend at least 40 hours in the community. It promotes good citizenship. It helps others. They learn about career choices, and they also network for future employment.

1450

Mr Arnott: It is true that volunteerism makes our community strong, and I'm sure my constituents in Waterloo-Wellington would agree with this statement. They would also be very pleased that the government is helping to instill values in young people that promote a community spirit that I am sure will stay with our students after they graduate.

I am also very interested in what the government is doing to help high-school students enter the working world. Students will encounter a very fast-paced global economy when they graduate that is more innovative, rapidly changing and more challenging than ever.

My supplementary question to the minister is this: What is the government doing to prepare students for these challenges and opportunities?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Simply giving them the volunteer opportunities for community involvement is one step, but we need to do more to link them up with employment opportunities as they leave secondary school and go to post-secondary or wherever they might choose to go.

One of the ways we're doing that is an initiative called Passport to Prosperity, which was introduced by my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Dianne Cunningham, and myself in conjunction with a number of major employer groups, both private sector and public sector, for example, the YMCA, Bell Canada, the Durham District School Board, General Mills. What they are doing is recruiting employers in their community to help give students in high school more co-op opportunities, more job shadowing, more experiences that help them make more intelligent choices about the careers they want and also give them experience that will help them get jobs when they leave the education sector.

It's a very positive initiative, and we're very pleased with how well it's going. I'd like to thank all the

members in the employment community who are helping us do it.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, the member for Wentworth-Burlington, Toni Skarica, went out on a limb before the provincial election in June and made a bold promise to his constituents. He vowed that as long as he was MPP for the newly configured riding of Wentworth-Burlington, the Tories would not impose a megacity on Hamilton-Wentworth.

He said: "Those were my words, and I tend to stick by them. So my crisis is not so much to do with the super-city but with integrity and keeping your word."

"Skarica said he extracted a promise from his government not to impose a restructuring solution on the region because a local solution would ultimately be found. Mr Skarica said, 'I had to have the understanding before I agreed to run.'"

My question to the Deputy Premier is, who in your government gave that specific promise and commitment to the member for Wentworth-Burlington?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I know of no such commitment that was made to not only the member from Wentworth-Hamilton but any other member, for that regard. But you will quite understand and appreciate and know that the municipal restructuring process was reported back, with respect to those four municipalities and areas under consideration, to the government late last week. The government obviously will be taking the advice of the advisers into account and will be proceeding in due course.

Mr Colle: I hope, Deputy Premier, that you are not accusing your member of lying to the people of his community. I hope you're not doing that, because he says today himself, "The big principle here is, we pride ourselves, our government, that when we make a commitment we keep it. A promise made is a promise kept," said Mr Skarica today.

The promise here was not to do this, and so this is a broken promise. Again, the member for Wentworth-Burlington ran on that promise the a super-city would not be imposed. He repeated this promise to his voters over and over and over again. He said to them, "If you elect me, I have that commitment that it will never be imposed."

Again, are you accusing the member of lying to the people of Wentworth-Burlington during the election?

Hon Mr Eves: I might say at the outset that the honourable member seems to be (a) placing words in my mouth and (b) imputing motive to the honourable member for Wentworth-Burlington. He might want to re-think how he has phrased his question and the wording he's using in his question.

Having said that, I am not accusing the member for Wentworth-Burlington of anything. Every member in this Legislature speaks for his or her constituents, as the case

may be. They bring forward an opinion or a position as to what they believe is important with respect to their constituents. Certainly an issue such as municipal restructuring would be a very volatile issue in some areas with some people. Every member has their own opinions; every constituent has his or her own opinions. I am certainly not accusing the member for Wentworth-Burlington of anything. If the honourable member is, he might want to say so.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Chair of Management Board. Back in 1997 the National Survey Institute carried out a study in Canada on how Canadians viewed their customer service, particularly the customer service they received from government. It's unfortunate and disappointing to find out that only 40% of Canadians were satisfied with the quality of service that they received from government at that time.

Minister, can you tell us what our government has done to respond to the results of that study and what steps have been taken to improve customer service for Ontarians?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): To the member for Northumberland, it's a very important subject that he brings up. If I recall correctly, the study that he refers to mentioned, not unexpectedly, that the public expects the same high level of service from government as they receive from the private sector. They want timeliness in the responses; they want knowledgeable and competent staff; they want courtesy and fair treatment in getting what they need when they need it.

Our government has responded to these demands and made it a priority to put taxpayers' interests first. We've heard from the public that they want service when and where and how they need it. In fact, because of some of our improvements and initiatives of listening to the public, last year the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management awarded the Ontario government the gold medal for its approach to improving government service.

Mr Galt: Thank you, Minister. I certainly remember the conference that you're making reference to, when our government won the gold award, and at the same conference the federal government won a bronze. In fact, I worked very closely with the team that developed the recommendations for the improvement of customer service and my report, Ontario Delivers, was the impetus, in the presentation of it, that went into the winning of this award.

Minister, can you tell us how Ontario is implementing those recommendations in the report and in fact delivering better service for Ontarians?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I would like to mention for the members of the opposition and those who might be watching on TV and say thank you to the member for

Northumberland for his hard work and dedication to improving service to the Ontario public.

We've implemented a number of initiatives to provide flexibility and convenience; for example, self-serve electronic kiosks that provide fast and easier service for many government programs, such as getting licence plate stickers, paying fines, changing one's address, and even renewing an Outdoors Card; also Publications Ontario online, where you can order government publications seven days a week, 24 hours a day. There are also Ontario Business Connects terminals that allow you to instantaneously register an unincorporated business rather than having to fill out multiple forms. There are numerous examples of how we're beginning to improve government service.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, your government is denying opportunities to anyone who isn't among the richest of the rich. In fact, you've cut \$500 million from the university system and the university has transferred that burden to the student to pay.

My concern is a serious one. I tell you that what you have done is to change the qualifications for post-secondary education. It was once determined by ability of the student; now it's the income of parents.

Minister, in Ontario today, if you are rich, you are entitled to opportunity. Is that your vision of what you want to see happening in Ontario?

1500

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I think the member realizes that forever in this province governments have been committed to ensuring an accessible, high-quality post-secondary education experience for Ontario's students.

With regard to his concern about the cutting of funding, the budget for post-secondary education in this province this year is higher than ever before. In fact, next year it goes from a high of \$3.5 billion to a high of \$4 billion. With regard to accessibility, there is no government that has spent the kinds of dollars we have on helping people who need support to enter the post-secondary system. This year alone it's higher than any other government. I would suggest to the member that this is a very insincere message that he's putting forward.

Mr Marchese: Minister, Cathy Gaultier is a third-year Ryerson student, and already she has been forced to borrow \$24,000. That's the reality we're dealing with in terms of accessibility. Your most recent cuts to post-secondary education mean she can't finish her degrees. What you have done is burden her with an astronomical debt—but not just her; many other people like her. These are middle-class students we are talking about.

Minister, in your Ontario, if you're Cathy Gaultier or another modest- or middle-income family student, the

door to higher learning is slammed in your face. That's the reality Cathy Gaultier is subjected to and that's the reality many middle-class students are subjected to. Is that your vision of Ontario, Minister?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: We are committed to ensuring that for every student who wants to go on to our post-secondary programs, we have an accessible, high-quality post-secondary education sector. The member should know that in the area of student assistance, this government has invested more money than any other government.

With respect to the individual, I would hope that she would get in touch with my office and perhaps we could talk about the financial challenges she faces.

HAMILTON TIGER-CATS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe I have the agreement of the three House leaders to introduce, by virtue of unanimous consent, a motion regarding the win of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

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

Mr Christopherson: I formally introduce this resolution that reads as follows:

I move that it be resolved that this House send a letter of congratulations to the Hamilton Tiger-Cats and the mayor of Hamilton in recognition of their stellar performance in bringing the Grey Cup home to Hamilton.

I introduce this on my own behalf but also on behalf of Dominic Agostino, the member for Hamilton East; Marie Bountrogianni from Hamilton Mountain; Toni Skarica from Wentworth-Burlington; and Brad Clark from Stoney Creek.

Let me be very brief and just say that in typical Hamilton style, the Ti-Cats showed their grit, their determination, their offensive policy and their defensive policy. They've made us in Hamilton and the surrounding communities very proud of that fantastic win over the Stampeders. Let me say that they played an honourable game and they should feel good about the fact that they played a game as well as they did. But we sure feel a whole lot better about the fact that we won and the Grey Cup indeed is coming back to Ontario, back to hometown Hamilton, and we're just busting at the seams with pride. Oskie Wee Wee.

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

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities."

I have the signatures of least another hundred concerned citizens and I'll add my own signature in full support of their concerns.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

"Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driving licence fees; and

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

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

This is signed by a number of constituents in my riding. I agree with this petition and I affix my signature to it.

WORKFARE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government plans to expand workfare, force more people off welfare yet they have not produced any quantitative evidence that the Ontario Works program is helping people to get jobs;

“Whereas the provincial government now threatens municipalities with reduced funding for their social assistance responsibilities if they do not comply with workfare regulations;

“Whereas we, the undersigned, oppose the regressive and deliberate policy of victimizing the poor, weakening working conditions for all workers through workfare by paying them less to do the same work and with fewer rights than paid workers and forcing them to accept short-term training that does not lead to decent-paying jobs;

Therefore, “We, the undersigned, commit ourselves and our organizations to educate, organize and activate around the issue of workfare through the creation of workfare-free zones across the province until we stop workfare;

Further, “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind all Ontario Works legislation and that all Ontario Works programs be halted.”

I support this petition and add my name to those of the petitioners.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Mr Speaker, I just wanted to clarify from you whether all of the new petition rules are now in effect, if you could tell me when they were actually imposed.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Yes, they have been in effect for a little over a week now.

Mr Bradley: Would you be able to tell me precisely the date that was?

The Speaker: I don't remember the date, but it has been in effect. Petitions?

Mr Bradley: And what do you think of those rules?

The Speaker: Petitions?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, with respect to the member from St Catharines, I have the same concern that the overarching control of the petition process is somewhat limiting to members whose contributions may not otherwise be very remarkable.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On petitions as a point of order, if I may, Mr Speaker: I do think that you might wish to ask the government House leader to address the issue of problems that have been created for the, as well as for members. As you know, I have been presenting the same petition in this House from the first day the House came back. It's exactly the same petition. I have copies coming in literally on a daily basis. Theoretically, if I bring each one in each day, the

table has to review it and stamp it before it can be presented. It's the identical petition. Surely if the petition is unchanged, it doesn't need to take the time of the table.

The Speaker: You know I said we would be monitoring the situation. It actually has been working very well. I appreciate the support of all the members in keeping with our standing orders, and I thank the member as well. Petitions?

1510

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I want to add that I realize it could become a problem also. But for the short term it is solvable, because I have more petitions, and these were forwarded to me by Cathy Walker of the CAW on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of CAW members.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who die from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances known as carcinogens; and

“Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes, and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to these carcinogens; and

“Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances in the workplace; and

“Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

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

“That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer and that the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for an analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation.”

On behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus, I add my name to those of these petitioners.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating 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, when Bill 14 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That the order for third reading of the bill may then immediately be called. When the order for third reading is called, the remainder of the sessional day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At 5:55 pm or 9:25 pm, as the case may be on such day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment;

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding, "Deferred Votes"; and

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

As we move forward on this legislation, I think it's very clear that there is urgency to deal with this legislation. I think that, as we've heard debate on both sides of the House relating to Bill 14, some things just never change. We continue still to hear from the opposition parties, both the Liberal as well as the NDP, that tax cuts are not important to the people of this province, that our government in the past should have done other things, that we should have focused on perhaps paying down the debt of the province, that we should have put more money into social services, that we should have put more money into education, that we should have done anything but make tax cuts a priority.

It's somewhat disappointing to continue to hear from members of this House, who should by now know better, because the facts are very clear—the actual impact in this province of the economic strategy that was introduced in this House by our government in 1995 of providing tax cuts to those who earn their paycheques through hard work, to those who invest in this province their own capital that they have earned and are willing to reinvest into the equity of this province. The opposition parties still don't get it. It was that very important stimulus to the economy that has in fact generated to date in excess of 600,000 new jobs, that has resulted in economic growth that among the G8 is unparalleled, that has put Ontario back in the driver's seat of prosperity.

For the first time in many years, there are young people who are graduating from university and college and they have the hope of a job. They have reason to believe that they, as young people in this province, will actually be able to take the training that they got in the college and the university and find a meaningful occupation, find a meaningful job where they can go out and create the same kind of hope and opportunity for themselves and their children as their fathers, their parents had done in the past.

I understand that there's partisanship involved here, and regardless of what our government comes forward with, there is going to be a reason to disagree or a reason or vote against it.

This is no longer a theoretical debate: Do tax cuts create jobs? With five years of history, five years of experience, we know that that in fact does happen.

The other very interesting predicament that the opposition parties have in our province is that to say that by creating tax cuts and allowing taxpayers to keep more of their own hard-earned money we're somehow robbing the provincial coffers of revenue is simply false, it's simply not true. The reality is that, as a result of the tax cuts, the jobs have been created and there actually is substantially more revenue to the provincial coffers by way of personal income taxes as well as corporate taxes. Perhaps that's a little bit too complex for some members opposite to grasp fully.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Pretty condescending over there.

Hon Mr Klees: But I think if the member for St Catharines will even speak to some of his own constituents who have experienced the last five years of tax cuts, who have experienced the fact that they actually take more money home at the end of a week than they did before—

Mr Bradley: And have no ophthalmologists to serve them.

Hon Mr Klees: —and even the ophthalmologists in St Catharines are grateful to this province, to this government for the tax breaks they're getting, because it's across the board. If you're earning \$20,000 in this province or \$200,000, this benefit of the tax cuts is benefiting everyone.

The member for St Catharines, I know, is having a really difficult time objecting to Bill 14. He's trying desperately to find some way to play the role of the opposition here, but I know that fundamentally he agrees, because in his heart and in his mind he knows that this is in fact in the best interests of the province of Ontario.

1520

Mr Bradley: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Surely the member for York-Mackenzie is not in a position—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Whatever it is, York, Newmarket, in that area. Surely the member cannot put words in my mouth and say what I think and I don't think. Surely you would rule against that.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That is not a point of order.

Hon Mr Klees: Actually, Speaker, it's the riding of Oak Ridges—that's Richmond Hill, Whitchurch-Stouffville and Markham north of 16th Avenue—a wonderful riding representative of this great province of ours. In the riding of Oak Ridges we have everything from dairy farms and cash crops to high-tech industry. I can tell you and I tell members of this Legislature that it doesn't matter which sector I speak to, it doesn't matter where I travel in my riding, there is an appreciation for the

policies of our government that are returning our province to the values that made this province great: a reliance on the individual in this province, a recognition and appreciation for the work ethic. Even more important than that I think is a recognition that in this House, as we're all elected, we have a responsibility to do today what should have been done years ago and have the courage to make decisions that will ensure a strong foundation economically and socially for generations to come.

We're moving into a new millennium, and I'm convinced that one of the reasons for the great optimism of people across this province as we turn the century is that they know we will be going into the century with a balanced budget, with hope and opportunity for our young people, with a vision for greatness for all in this province regardless of which community we come from, regardless of our background. People have come to this province looking for hope and opportunity. As a result of the foundations that have been laid, people in this province have that. I look forward to our government continuing to implement strong, economically sound legislation and policy that will benefit us all.

Mr Bradley: I guess what is very perturbing is not that we have a bill of this kind before us, because the government is quite entitled to bring forward its legislation and I know that is what the government intends to do. I don't mind that part of it. What I object to, and I know my friend from Durham East—or whatever the new riding might be. In fact what is happening is the government is simply ignoring this Legislature or utilizing it in whatever way it sees fit, and it does so in a very smug fashion.

Unfortunately, now that there are fewer members in the government caucus, we have fewer people who have an axe to grind with the government, so more of them are compliant. There was a time when you could count upon at least some of the members, you may recall, Mr Speaker, offering an objection to the fact that the government moved forward with a bulldozer each and every time it had legislation that it wanted to rush through the House.

The chief government whip says that the opposition is trying to slow this down. In other words, we're trying to take something longer than two days to discuss a piece of legislation. What I would say to that individual, the former member for York-Mackenzie, is that we're in a situation in Ontario where this House might as well be shut down. We might as well simply say to the government, "Here, you just table all your bills and they'll just be passed, and we'll save all kinds of money."

Of course, that's what a lot of people—not a lot of people but some of the people on the other side believe that this House is virtually irrelevant, that the government should simply proceed with its legislation and the heck with everybody else.

I wish that I could be in a situation where I could dispute today some of the portions of this particular time

allocation motion, because it is really anti-democratic to see this happening.

I am hoping the Speaker will, for instance—because we're talking on a procedural matter now—not allow this government to shove through four amalgamations; that is, in four parts of this province. I hope they won't use that chair to be able to pass four pieces of legislation in one, that, as I see happening with this bill, in shoving something through the Legislature at a speed beyond which is healthy for democracy, the government wouldn't turn around and say: "Well, you know that amalgamation in Sudbury and the one in Hamilton, the one in Ottawa and in Haldimand-Norfolk? We're going to throw it all into one bill and members can speak for 10 minutes on that." I think that would be extremely wrong.

The government is going to have all of its arguments in favour of why this should be so. I hope we, for once, see a landmark ruling on the part of a Speaker that would in fact not dwell on precedents of the past. I know precedents have an important place in this House, but surely a Speaker who is progressive, who truly cared about democracy, would break new ground on this and not simply accept from the table the precedents which are presented. Keen as the people at the table are to provide them, clever as the people at the table are—and I have great admiration for them—it isn't necessary that the Speaker always accept and simply read out what the table says.

The last Speaker we had, Mr Stockwell, made some innovative rulings in this House. I want to give him his fair credit for doing so. There were rulings with which I disagreed, but I thought he made some innovative rulings. What we will need, it seems to me, if this House is to be relevant in the future, are more innovative rulings, not simply these time allocation motions over and over again.

If the government were really concerned about this bill, they would have brought the Legislature back in the summer even, or at least at the beginning of September. Instead, we have the government delay, delay, delay. Seven days they sat all year until they came back near the end of October. Now they want to shove all the legislation through with a minimum of debate when many people are going to be preoccupied at this time of year with matters other than what is going on in the Legislative Assembly, where they normally would be watching what is going on here.

I can tell you that the state of the economy in Ontario, despite—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I also want to share some time. I didn't see a speaking list here this afternoon, and I saw only two of us in the House, so I want to make sure that my colleague from Prince Edward has that opportunity as well.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): Only two of you?

Mr Bradley: But the state of Ontario's economy has nothing to do with your tax cuts. It has everything to do with the state of the American economy.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): We're lucky.

Mr Bradley: You are. The member says he's lucky. I've seen it when other governments have been in power as well, to be honest with you, that the state of the American economy has a major impact. It's even more so today because we do more trade—

Hon Mr Klees: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I really do have to rise. The member's comments about the tax cuts not having had anything to do with the economy of Ontario—I really do believe that he was much better off when I was putting words into his mouth earlier in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): That's obviously not a point of order.

Mr Bradley: It's interesting to reveal what the government really believes to be true. The mythology which is presented by Guy Giorno, the person who gives—I hear now, I heard on Focus Ontario, that Guy Giorno gives permission for anybody to go on the show. You can't go on without Guy Giorno's permission.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I never asked for permission.

Mr Bradley: Well, that's why you got in trouble.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I didn't.

Mr Bradley: Oh, I heard all about it. I heard there was a lot of trouble because you didn't get Guy Giorno's permission to go on.

That's what I heard Robert Fisher say, and you will recall that Robert Fisher was the person who asked the Premier during the 1995 campaign, in May, "Is your health care policy going to result in any hospitals being closed in Ontario?" The Premier said—you'll recall this quote yourself—"Certainly, Robert, I can guarantee you I will not close hospitals."

Hon Mrs Ecker: That's not what he said. Read the whole thing.

Mr Bradley: "It is not my plan to close hospitals." That's what he said. I'm glad the Minister of Education brought that to my attention. I will repeat it again, because it was not word for word. He said, "Certainly, Robert, I can guarantee you it is not my plan to close hospitals." And what happened? We've had over 40 hospitals forced to merge or close in this province as a result.

1530

What we're seeing now, as you move forward with more and more tax cuts—and nobody's going to reverse the ones that are there. Don't worry about that. People aren't going to reverse that. What is happening now, though, unfortunately for the Minister of Education, who I think would like to do a good job on education and would like to have the resources—I'm not a person here who says that she's an evil person who wants to destroy education. Some people say it; I don't say that. I think she would like to have the resources. Well, you can't have the resources if you continue to give away the revenue sources that you have.

So what is happening now is we're seeing an erosion of many public institutions and many public services. It is the agenda of the right wing, and I note for my friends on the government side that either today or tomorrow the Premier of this province will be speaking to that mainstream, Main Street organization, the Fraser Institute, which of course is as right as Guy Giorno, who runs this government. We will have a situation with the right wing now where they're endeavouring to destroy the confidence in public institutions so that people will accept radical changes they wouldn't normally accept.

An example is the health care system. If you do not fund the health care system adequately, what you will have is a situation where people will in desperation say, "Yes, I will pay out of my own pocket." There is another option. The other option is that the government not continue to give these tax cuts, but rather invest in the health care system.

I should never be tempted to respond to the Minister of Education because she wins when I respond, of course, but I must say to her, why on earth would any federal government of any stripe give this government money so you'll just give it away in a tax cut? If a federal government—Conservative, Liberal or NDP, or whatever party; Reform, like your government—if a party were in power there to give money to you—

Hon Mrs Ecker: We'd give it to health care.

Mr Bradley: You wouldn't; you would give it away in a tax cut. You've got the money, but you give it away in a tax cut.

Hon Mr Stockwell: So we're not entitled to our fair share?

Mr Bradley: What I say to my friend the Minister of Labour, who wants to engage in debate because he has to rely now on his own members to lob questions at him because the opposition, of course, find him far too formidable, I suppose, to direct questions to him, is that that would not be the case at all. I am saying that as long as you are engaging in yet another round of tax cuts, it seems to me people shouldn't be giving you money.

If you weren't, if you said, "Look, we're not going to engage in yet another round of tax cuts. If you give us further money, if you provide further funding," as I think we're justified in receiving, "we will devote it to health care and to post-secondary education"—but you're giving away the money in a tax cut. You get it and then you give it in a tax cut and you smile and take credit and you dump on the municipalities after that.

Some people have a short memory. They were municipal councillors at one time. I recall that well, and I know what you do to those municipalities. Then you come along again destroying what might be in existence. You now want to destroy local government, because now the mantra of this government is, "You must impose these huge regions." Of course, to the round of applause of the cranky Reformers, you say, "We're going to get rid of politicians," as though somehow that's going to save a lot of money. Well, it isn't going to save money. What you're going to do is lose that local input that you

need to have in government. You are taking away the access that people have to government. That is what you are doing with these policies, and you're now going to impose around this province, in three out of four places, regional government.

I'm with Tony Skarica on this, in Hamilton-Wentworth. I may have some disagreements with people in the NDP and Liberal caucuses, but I happen to believe—especially those people who ran on this, who ran in Stoney Creek and in Dundas and places like that and said, “Look, I'm against one big government.” If I were part of a government that imposed that, I would be resigning from the caucus and being an independent in the House, if that were imposed on a specific area that I represented and I had run in the election on that basis. So I'm with them. I'll tell you, I've got people over here as well as over there who would disagree with me on that. I do not think the solution is one big government.

The St Catharines Standard, a Conrad Black-owned newspaper—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: The member for Etobicoke North was waiting for me to mention Conrad Black—is leading the charge on this particular issue, and I can understand it. Big newspapers normally do that. The reason they do it is they can wipe out all the small newspapers and have one big newspaper. So they're happy; they can toss the employees out on the sidelines. They can, as they would say, rationalize, or as the member for Etobicoke North would say, “right-size.” But I can tell you that, as a result, there are a lot of people who will lose their jobs, and it isn't necessarily good for the region.

I represent the largest municipality in Niagara. One of the options is to make St Catharines bigger by gobbling up adjacent municipalities. I don't agree with that. I think that when you have that kind of local accountability, the local access to elected representatives, that's good.

The other thing that will happen when you have one big government: What they recommend in Sudbury—somebody can tell me; is it 14 members?—one government and 14 members of council. Do you know who's going to be able to get elected to that? The wealthiest people, the people who can run the wealthiest campaigns. Whereas in other areas, if you have local government, you find that when they are elected by ward, the councillors tend to represent a better cross-section. Do I agree with them sometimes? No, I don't. Sometimes I agree; sometimes I don't agree. But all you're going to get is people who have the financial backing or financial wealth themselves to run and get elected, because money does have, whether you like it or not, a big effect.

They're going to be out canvassing for donations and I'll tell you who will be lining up to donate. The developers will be there, first in line. They'll be fighting with a few others who want to influence local government. And I say this as a lament to whatever government happens to be in power—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: —and I say this to my friend from Etobicoke North, who barracks over about other governments. Mine is not a point of partisanship; it's a point of principle. That's what's going to happen. So you don't have people on a local council who clearly represent a cross-section, as we have today, and it would be most unfortunate to have that happen.

We will likely see a bill attempted in this Legislature. I'll be calling upon the Speaker, a very progressive individual, a very enlightened individual, in the style of the last Speaker, to declare that bill out of order if indeed it is out of order, and I hope, as I say, that he doesn't rely entirely on some ancient precedent, but rather is innovative in the ruling that he makes, and understands that this House will mean nothing if you continue to allow these omnibus bills.

I'm not saying there's never an opportunity for an omnibus bill; there is. I'm not an impractical person. That is not one case where it should be. We may wish to vote in a different way on each one. The member for Stoney Creek may say, “Look, in Hamilton-Wentworth I would vote no.” Maybe in Sudbury he might vote yes. He's going to look and see what is best for each of these areas. But if it's only one bill, then quite obviously you're not going to be able to do that. That would be most unfortunate.

To go back to some of the provisions of this bill, what I see as a result of your constant mantra of tax cuts—and you've implemented some. You've received some credit for that. I'm not going to go back and fight that battle with you; that's something you've done. I may not have agreed with it at the time, but there it is. But you're getting into further tax cuts now and removing a lot of the resources that you would need, particularly—right now, you will continue to get revenue because the economy is good. But if the economy, as it inevitably does, starts to go down, you will find you're going to lose a lot of those revenues. You're going to be really strapped at a time when you need that base to be able to carry on government programs.

1540

I see too many government programs falling by the wayside. Should you examine them? Yes, certainly. For instance, look at the Red Tape Commission. I disagree with some of the things they've done; I agree with others. It's not unhealthy to look at programs. It's not unhealthy to look at projects. What is unhealthy is to continue to take from the government the resources it would have to intervene on behalf of ordinary folks in the province.

The wealthy will always do well by themselves. The powerful will do well for themselves. The people I worry about are the ordinary folks out there who don't have a lot of money or a lot of power to influence government, whatever government happens to be there or whatever level of government it happens to be. I think you're taking that away. I think you're really having an impact on the health care system.

I actually have a lot of empathy for the Minister of Health and for the Minister—

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): How about your federal cousins? They cut \$2.8 billion.

Mr Bradley: Well, I tell the member for Northumberland: If you're worried about the federal government, why don't you people run federally? Why don't you contest the next election? We are elected provincially to make decisions provincially. I'm saying that if I were given a preference to invest provincial funds in health care or give yet another tax cut—and I understand the difference between us—my choice would be to invest in the health care system.

I have watched the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education and others trying to defend situations over which they have no personal control. Quite obviously, they must do that. They're part of the government, and they must do it. But surely they should be given the resources to carry out their responsibilities.

I know that the Fraser Institute gang and some of the whiz kids who advise the government think it's a good idea to destabilize and discredit the public sector, to discredit public institutions and to erode confidence in those institutions so the public will accept such things as a two-tier health care system. I don't know how many members of the government caucus agree with that. Who am I to say whether you agree or disagree? I don't know that. I suspect there are some people who think it's a good idea and others who don't think it's a good idea. But that's going to be the consequence.

I say to my friend from Kitchener: When you see the polling that takes place, when you have that number of people who in desperation will say, "Yes, I will reach into my own pocket to deal with health care," I can tell you that that means there's an erosion of confidence in the health care system. There simply isn't the necessary investment in it by whoever happens to be investing in it. There isn't that investment in it. I think that's important.

I know there may be some on the other side who bow down to America, in terms of that being the paradise we should all look forward to. But I can tell you that one thing that has been a positive difference between Canadians and Americans has been our attitude towards public education and public health care. I think that governments of three political stripes have maintained their adherence to that, or tried to, over the years. Only now do we see that starting to change, unfortunately. We're always going to quarrel over how much or where money is allocated, but one of the things I've been proud of as a Canadian is that a person doesn't go bankrupt because of a health care situation, or shouldn't have to go bankrupt to put their kids through post-secondary education, that we have a publicly funded education system. I was glad, the other day, to hear the minister talk about it in that context, a publicly funded education system. What's important about that is it provides equality of opportunity. We cannot provide equality of outcomes. I cannot see that happening. Governments can't produce the outcome, but we can provide equality of opportunity so that kids from all backgrounds have at least an opportunity to

get ahead, to make something of themselves and to make a significant contribution to society.

When we erode the public school system in any way, because that's the system to which everybody has access—there are other systems to which others have access, but that's the one to which everybody has access—then a real problem arises. It's not that I hate the people on the other side, or think you are malicious or anything of that nature. I just think you're wrong in taking away from those public institutions the resources they need.

We in Canada again have been different from the Americans in that way, and generally speaking we've looked upon public services in a different way from the US. Drive into some of those US cities and you see very wealthy people living in gated communities; that is, there is somebody at the gate, almost with a gun, preventing you from getting in. No one is allowed into the neighbourhood except through special access and permission. It's as though it's a castle with walls around it. We haven't seen that in Canada. We see a bit of movement toward it but not much. I think that's positive for Canada, and I think people of all goodwill, of all political parties, should avoid that at all costs.

America is a great place to live if you have money. There are a lot of things you can buy, including top-notch health care services, top-notch education and other services—policing services are done sometimes on a private basis. So it certainly is a great place to live if you have money. But look at the disparity between the very rich and the very poor. Drive through one neighbourhood where the people are just destitute and then through another where the wealth is almost obscene.

Yes, in parts of Canada we have areas of which we shouldn't be justifiably proud, where people are forced to live in squalor and great difficulty. But it's not the way it is in the US. It's not nearly to the same degree, and we do have a social safety net that is extremely helpful to us in this country. I want you to know that I say the same to the federal government, that they should not be engaging in huge tax cuts. They're itching, they're being pushed by the National Post and CFTO and others and, unfortunately, I think you will see it happen.

I happen to believe—yes, there are certain circumstances. I remember the member for what used to be Scarborough-Ellesmere brought forward a proposal for a particular tax cut in a specific area, which I thought was reasonable. It was going to be extremely productive, and you would see a direct effect. There's nothing wrong with that. There are areas where you can use the taxation system for purposes of influencing the economy in a positive way—I think that's good. With an income tax cut, you cannot assure where it's going to go. With people at the bottom of the ladder, it's likely that it will go directly into the economy. But with people at the upper echelon, very often it will go to imported goods or to a holiday somewhere else. It's not going to be directly productive to the economy.

It may or may not be, but there's no guarantee of that. Even conservative economists were flabbergasted when this government decided to proceed with tax cuts while running a huge deficit. Was the deficit all your fault? No, it wasn't all your fault by any means. I think you could have addressed the deficit problem in a faster fashion if you hadn't given up that tax revenue as the Canadian Bond Rating Service said.

So I say, not just to you, but to your federal brother, the federal government, that they should not be wildly heading into tax cuts and removing revenues. Instead they should be reinvesting on behalf of the people of this country, in efficient services and in positive services for people. Wasting money? No, I disagree with wasting money. And that's where there's an honest difference as to what is an essential service and what is not. I understand that. But I watch the federal government and this government both looking at further tax cuts, and there may be room for some at the federal level, for instance, and specific instances to stimulate certain areas.

The minister of science and other things is here today, and I'm sure he's very concerned about such things as research and development. There can be mechanisms a government can use to help out, in terms of research and development. I want to say to some government members as well that you have made some tax cuts for small business that I think were positive. I'll say that in the House today; I think that's true.

What I'm concerned about is that you're going to erode that revenue base to such an extent that you will have to rely heavily on user fees, which prey hardest on those who are least able to pay, or you're going to get further into gambling revenues. You're just going to open the gates to further gambling.

I know that some members on the government benches have a conscience about that and have a very uneasy feeling about the constant expansion of gambling.

1550

There are some other members in the Liberal caucus who may wish to speak on this matter, so I shouldn't take all of the time, and won't. But I just want to say in my final remarks how concerned I am to see the constant changes to this House which make it less relevant every day.

I sat in a cabinet on the government side. Our members who weren't in cabinet and who hadn't served on this side of the House, the opposition side, used to think the opposition was obstreperous—is that a word? I think it is, yes, something like that, close to it; I have a hard time with my pronunciation—that it was a very juvenile exercise on the part of the opposition, that they were irresponsible and so on. I used to say to them that while they may dislike what the opposition is engaging in to slow down the government or try to persuade the government, that's an important role in democracy and that, yes, we have to take a little longer to do things. “Yes, we have to have more debate, more discussion, more input, and it will annoy you to do so, perhaps,” I'd

say to my colleagues when we were on the government side, “but it's essential in democracy.”

Every day I see something. Mr O'Toole and I were talking today about some bureaucracy arising around petitions and so on. I understand; I was as guilty as any of petitions which weren't as clear, concise and legitimate as they might be. Should that end? Yes. But I don't know if we go too far the other way, I think most members would agree, with trying to address that problem with other changes.

Anyway, I did promise. As I looked around, some of my colleagues said they might be interested in engaging in this debate, so I will conclude my remarks now and I guess it'll be passed on to the NDP or something.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): It is a pleasure to talk about the More Tax Cuts for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity Act. What a novel idea: tax cuts. Even though apparently we had a deficit, the Premier decided that tax cuts make a lot of sense for Ontarians. It was a novel idea because, how can you decrease the government's income coming in? But it did work in the sense that, just exactly like the Premier had said, the lowering of the taxes puts more money into average Ontarians' pockets, whereby they can go out and they can decide what's best for them, they can go out and decide what they should be buying.

People have decided to buy bigger-ticket items now. Even the people who used to work, even in 1994 and 1995, if they had jobs, had no confidence in the economy. They were not out there buying bigger-ticket items; they were just living from day to day. Now, because of these tax cuts, because of the better economy that these tax cuts have fuelled, people are out there.

Even in my own riding, Springdale, the housing market is booming. People are lined up to buy affordable housing, and beautiful houses are coming up. It's great. Because of the tax cuts in the last four years, 615,000 new jobs have been created. People have been coming in from other parts of the country; people have been coming in from other parts of the world. Five years ago, new immigrants coming into this country, coming into this province of ours, which is a great province, as I've seen, were wondering whether they'd made the right decision, whether they were in the right place. But since then we have implemented 69 tax cuts in the last four years, and now we're proposing to cut taxes 30 more times, a total of 99 tax cuts. So we've created 615,000 more jobs. More than 400,000 people have gotten off welfare and found themselves productive jobs.

As I said, people were questioning whether they'd made the right decision. I've met many constituents, and they have told me they're very happy. When I went door to door during the last election, before June 3, the people were so amazed they said: “Raminder, we're very happy to see you. We like your program.” Even though the other platforms—the 20/20 Liberal platform, the NDP platform—seemed to say some glowing things, people told me they do not believe in any of those, even though there are some glowing things about the economy and

taxes. They said, "In your platform previously, the Common Sense Revolution, you guys did exactly what you said you were going to do, and there's a credibility in this document and we want to bring back the same government again." We're very happy that we have been given that chance.

We want to assure the people, not only in my riding but in the whole of Ontario, that these tax cuts, which have created 615,000 more jobs, have actually brought the lowest unemployment rate in the history of Ontario, certainly for the last 10, 15 years. We want to continue that by reducing more taxes, and we will be creating 825,000 more jobs. That's the commitment. The people of Ontario have believed in our commitment, and we intend to stick by it.

At the same time, the tax cuts and increased jobs have no doubt created some problems, and I'll mention some of the problems they've created. It's a good problem. Many of the business people in my riding have come to me and they've complained, saying, "We can't get enough workers." There's a major problem. That kind of a problem we don't mind hearing about, because in essence these 615,000 jobs are high-tech jobs, they are good jobs. At the same time, we can't get enough people. So that's a good kind of problem that we hear about.

Over the summer, I also met many parliamentarians from different parts of the world. When I explained to them that this government had decided to cut the size of the government from 130 members to 103, they just could not believe that. They were amazed. How can a government cut back its own size? They were flabbergasted.

There are 59 government members; at the same time, there are 58 councillors in the city of Toronto. There are 59 members running the government of Ontario; there are 58 councillors running the city of Toronto. What a disparity. That's why we're recommending that the size of every level of government should be reduced. That we can do by putting more money into people's pockets, by making governments more efficient.

As you know, I said the confidence has come back in people's minds. They're out there spending money. Many people are shopping out there, you can't get parking spaces in the shopping malls, because the economy is booming. People are upgrading their houses, people are buying cars, they're repairing their cars. It's great. People have told us to continue on this great road of recovery. They're very happy in terms of the steps we are taking.

As you will recall, we have also eliminated the employer health tax, the EHT. To any corporation whose payroll is less than \$400,000, we have said, "You don't need to pay the employer health tax." That covers 88% of Ontario's private sector employers. They're very happy because now they can create more jobs and more and more people can benefit.

In fact, an average family, a typical two-income family earning \$60,000 a year, will be saving \$1,385. They'll be better off each year. That money they can go and spend as they like. They can spend this money much

better than governments can spend it. So that is what we are proposing. We want to ensure that there are tax cuts and we want to continue to 99 times. We've already cut 69 times; we'll be cutting 30 times more.

1600

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'm very happy to speak today to Bill 14, which is the budget bill. After some of the rhetoric that we've heard in the House this afternoon, we really have to set the record straight in terms of Ontario's economy and certainly the nation's economy. If you live in my riding, if you live anywhere in Essex county, in southwestern Ontario, you do not need to be a rocket scientist—I know the pages are going to agree with me on this—to know that where we come from, cars drive the economy.

There's one good reason why the Big Three are doing exceptionally well. That's because Americans are buying our cars. If you want to look at the Ontario economy and break down all those indicators, there is only one indicator that shows an increase for the Ontario economy. Do you know what that one indicator is? It's the trade figures for Ontario. The fine gentleman who just spoke last probably didn't look at the specifics of that; he just takes those bullet points the party hands over to him and reads them by rote. Let me tell you that the only reason the economy is booming is trade. To that end, if this were a government that is truly interested in improving the economy of Ontario, they would say that trade is where it's at, and it is, because they are buying Ontario cars, some of the finest of which are built in Windsor, Ontario. Issues like infrastructure and roads, trade corridors in Ontario—those are the kinds of priorities we want to hear from a Conservative Party so keenly interested in the economy, so they say. You have done nothing where infrastructure is concerned.

Where we have tried to advance the debate on trade corridors for Ontario, whether you are in Sarnia-Lambton or Windsor, Ontario—we have the greatest gateway to the nation in those two communities, and especially the largest single access to Canada and to the US goes right through my riding at the Ambassador Bridge and the Windsor-Detroit tunnel. This government has done absolutely nothing for the improvement of infrastructure. There we are as a city, as a community, with our own property tax base having to support the infrastructure.

For those who come from Windsor West, you'll know that when you go through the Tim Hortons and you're right on the corner of—pick any of the ones that cross Huron line. If you try to cross Huron line, which is the major access corridor to the 401 coming through Detroit at the Ambassador Bridge, your car actually moves up and down through the ruts of the road, because there's such traffic by trucks that are so heavy that they are causing damage to our roads, far before it ever should. What did the government do when they were first elected in 1995? They cut those transfer payments to support our road system. The one economic indicator that is improving for Ontario is trade, and this government chooses, in

its wisdom, to cut support for something as necessary as proper roads. That is totally unacceptable.

Hon Mr Klees: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it's important that the people of Ontario know that this government has spent more on the roads in this province than any other government—

The Acting Speaker: This is not a point of order.

Mrs Pupatello: This member ought to know better, as a member of cabinet, than to waste my time in this House.

The key today for Ontario's future, and why it is doing better as an economy, is trade. There is no question; every single economist worth his salt agrees with that stance. This government has done nothing to address that or improve that. It is happening despite this government. That's the point I want to make. Economic improvements in Ontario happened despite the Conservatives and Mike Harris. That's because Americans are buying our cars. Therefore, the manufacturing industry can support the auto industry.

We want to talk about what the priorities ought to be for a government that should want to improve the Ontario economy. Did you know—let me tell you—that the Big Three companies that manage the production of cars spend more money on health care for their employees than they spend on steel to produce those cars? That is how critical an element like health care is as a benefit package for the employees of the Big Three. Can the same be said for the Ontario government, which has responsibility for providing health care for the people of Ontario? What do we have instead? We have the community of Windsor, the canary in the coal mine it always was where restructuring was concerned. What has this government done but failed the people of Windsor, failed the people of Windsor West when we lost both emergency rooms before any investments were made in our community? Those people who have been to my riding know that full well, that that is bang on. That is exactly what your Tories told you, the few that you could find in my riding.

Nothing has changed so far. The only thing that's happened between last term and now is that the Provincial Auditor came out with a statement, and I don't hear any of the Conservative members talking about the Provincial Auditor's statement. What did he say? He said that your restructuring process was a disaster, that it was complete chaos, that you have not found savings you were supposed to find, that your government cannot even remit the monies you're supposed to remit at the appropriate time for it to have an impact. You choose at every turn to make it political.

This Minister of Health fails to deliver emergency care money, which causes a political benefit to the Premier's office—thank you, Elizabeth. He goes on a world tour to deliver cheques the size of three feet by two feet: "Here's your emergency money." He goes down to University Hospital, and while he's in the lobby of the emergency room with his cheque, they've decided to roll the patients from the gurneys, hide them in the closet while the

Premier's in town so that he can't see what kind of crisis is happening in the emergency rooms at University Hospital. Do you know why we know this? Because Windsorites go to that hospital because it's a regional centre. We have lots of information about what's really happening, even in what we in Windsor call the mecca of health care, and that is London, two hours up the 401.

We want to talk about a budget bill. We want to talk about what the priorities of this government are. They're wrong. They're dead wrong. Even an economic bill like a budget bill you can't get right. You have selected, in your wisdom, to make changes through Bill 14 to give the Ontario Realty Corp more power, because they're doing such a good job already, as the press is telling you on a daily basis. We have umpteen examples now where the Ontario Realty Corp finds itself in the courts trying to defend itself against all of these cases because they are doing things that are inappropriate in the releasing of assets that we own as taxpayers. We own property. Now we choose that we're going to sell the property for a one-time benefit to your books, and the Provincial Auditor called you on that. They said, "This shell game with your books—assets in, assets out, revenue one-time"—it is just bizarre to think that you would continue on this bent that you somehow are good for the economy. You have made a hundred mistakes, a thousand mistakes, in how you've dealt with the management of the economy.

All I can tell you is that when you live in Windsor, you get a view of what really drives the economy. You should be investing in things like infrastructure, roads, the appointment of trade corridors so that it actually makes a difference in where people will invest and why. You should have your priorities on health care and do it right, instead of just doing what's for show and what's for political purpose so that when your ministers of health fail—as they have, both of them so far—your Premier can take political advantage and traipse it around the world.

Frankly, the Provincial Auditor is on to you, and that's the only good vindication that we've had in the last few months. Everything that we have said for the last four years has been proven to be true through the Provincial Auditor.

Mr Galt: I'm a little surprised to be on my feet quite so quickly here.

It was interesting to hear the member for Windsor West. It's unfortunate that she can't stay with us for a few minutes, but her newspaper, the Toronto Star, the Liberal Star, made a comment on November 10, front page of the Liberal Star, and I quote: "Growth Powered by Ontario will Outstrip the United States."

1610

How could we be riding on the coattails of something else when we're leading? This is what the member for Windsor West was suggesting, that the only reason for the economy in Ontario is because of the US economy. The US economy was doing very well back in the early 1990s, and what was happening here? Well, not very much. It was going downhill with heavy taxes, red tape

galore. Meanwhile, it was doing very well out in BC. But then what happened in BC as we moved through the 1990s? More taxes, more red tape. Where are they today? They claim it's the Asian flu. I can tell the member for Windsor West that it certainly wasn't the Asian flu. It was right inside of the people. If the NDP in BC had looked in the mirror, they would have known why they got into trouble, why people were leaving in droves to go to Alberta, where things were happening. It was because of the policies of that government.

That's why this province was in trouble back in the early 1990s: because of the policies of the Liberal government from 1985 to 1990. They just took off with phenomenal quantities of spending into the early 1990s. Between the federal Liberals and the provincial NDP, it's no wonder we ended up in the position that we did.

There is no question that there are a lot of lessons to be learned, especially if you look at some of the fiscal chaos that was going on that ended up defeating the Rae government back in 1995. If nothing else, we should learn a lesson from what was going on at that time. Milton Friedman said it best: "There is indeed no free lunch."

Sooner or later, it catches up to you. In reality, you eventually pay for what you get. Deficits obviously turn into debts, and debts are really nothing more than deferred taxes that have to be financed sooner or later through ever-rising, ever-increasing interest payments, and here we are in Ontario paying interest up to almost \$10 billion, approximately half of our health care, almost equal to the cost of education. Just imagine, if that debt hadn't been allowed to get away, what we could be doing with that \$9 billion to \$10 billion that really should be going for services and not going into servicing the debt.

In years gone by, it has been politicians of this country and of this province who have really done a tremendous disservice to us. What were they doing to get re-elected? They were making all kinds of promises—"No down payment, no payment for a year"—and ending up with very irresponsible spending programs, and then the debt and the deficit occurred.

A tax is much like a disease. I often think of it as something like a parasite. At a reasonable level, the host can survive and live in a symbiotic relationship, but if you go on and overtax, it ends up that the host dies. In this case, the province would go into bankruptcy or the federal government would go into bankruptcy. It's certainly a sad fact that high taxes, needed to finance lavish government spending habits, became a near-fatal disease afflicting all parts of our country, and particularly our economy.

Somebody had to break the fever, somebody had to prescribe a cure for this country, and it's great to see that a few of the premiers in this great country have come through with a cure. A Premier like Klein in Alberta and a Premier like Harris here in Ontario have led the way to lowering taxes and reducing government spending.

It wasn't a problem of not having enough revenue coming into the province or into the federal government.

The problem has been excess spending. A lot of that spending is related to politicians wanting to get re-elected. I can understand why they want to get re-elected, but not on the backs of hard-working Ontarians here in this province.

As a result of these tax cuts Ontario now has the lowest general provincial income tax rate in the country and the second-lowest top marginal rate in Canada, just behind that of Alberta.

Not only that, we set a new course for lower taxes in this country. Even now, today, the federal government is talking about tax cuts. Unfortunately, that's all they're doing: talking. They've been talking now for a couple of years about tax cuts. They recognize the importance. Certainly the Minister of Finance desperately wants to get on with tax cuts, but the money-hungry federal Liberal government just won't let him go ahead. Unfortunately, other than for a few scraps and some well-chewed bones, the action behind Ottawa's words is sadly lacking.

We'd even be happy in the province of Ontario if the federal government would stop the tax increase. It's just terrible the kinds of increases that have gone on over the last few years. It has been kind of hidden, and it has been difficult to see. Particularly when the province has been cutting taxes so much, they just slip in their tax increase and the rank-and-file Joe and Jane Worker don't notice a difference on their paycheque because the province has been cutting taxes. If they were honest about it, before they start talking about tax cuts, let's see them at least put an end to those tax increases I've been commenting on.

Mostly, unbeknownst to most Canadians, federal taxes have been rising, and rising sharply, for years. For those who don't think further tax cuts outlined in this bill before the House are necessary, let's just look for a few minutes at some of the federal numbers. Take, for example, the transfers. They refer to them as transfers from the private sector to the government when in fact they're just another tax. From 1989 to 1996, there have been increases in all taxes. The federal taxes, provincial taxes, CPP premiums and employment insurance deductions went from 21.5% of the gross domestic product in Canada to 24.5%. Over seven years, that was a 14% increase. That means that in seven short years the government's take in relation to the economy grew by a choking 14%—just absolutely terrible.

After Revenue Canada's ravenous back-alley shake-down of taxpayers, no wonder the income of Canadian families has been dropping for years and no wonder we see so much anger on the streets, Canadians upset over having less take-home pay. It's pleasant to see so many in Ontario in the last year or two, when you see them on the street they're smiling and happy. Why are they smiling and happy? Because they can go out and buy the goods that the member for Windsor West was talking about, goods coming across the bridge on those trucks, goods that are produced in Ontario, which they're now able to buy.

My good friend Rami mentioned the difficulty finding a place to park in a shopping mall. I have to go around and apologize to my Liberal friends back home every Christmas over the last year or two because of the traffic jams around the shopping malls. The shopping mall parking lot is full. They have to park out on the street and walk to the mall. It's very unfortunate. I know we could raise taxes like the Liberals and put people out of work and then there would be all kinds of parking spaces at the shopping malls. Certainly back in the early 1990s we saw lots of space at the shopping malls for you to park your car and go in and shop. There were bargains as well, because an awful lot of the shopkeepers were going bankrupt at that time. In fact, after-tax disposable income dropped 8.4% during those seven years, just a shameful state of affairs.

Those historical high levels of taxation made tax cuts in Ontario absolutely imperative, and this party recognized it when they were campaigning some six years ago. Not only did we know it, but the taxpayers knew it and the economy knew it. But look how long it takes for the feds to get the message. I'm still not sure that they really have got that message yet.

Governments cannot impose impossibly high taxes without seeing some of the devastating effects that occur as a result. Canadians cannot go on spending money they don't have. You can't expect them to be saving money that has been taxed away from them. They just don't have it in their pocket or in their wallet. They certainly won't reinvest or invest in new businesses with money that is now the property of Revenue Canada.

None of this should be surprising, although just listening to the member from Windsor West talking, we should spend all kinds of money, raise the taxes and it will just keep flowing in. She does not understand what the repercussions are of high taxes. They're devastating to the economy, and there is all kinds of evidence of this over the years.

1620

We recognize these truths. We recognize that Ontario consumers simply cannot absorb any more provincial tax hikes. We were elected and we were re-elected to bring at least the provincial portion under control and we're well on the right track to doing exactly that. It's just unfortunate that the feds won't give support. If we could just get that kind of support from Jean Chrétien and his merry band of tax-and-spenders in Ottawa, we could go so far with this country. Ontario alone is leading the G7 countries throughout the world. If we could just get the rest of Canada with us, all of Canada could be leading the G7 countries.

We hear of promises of tax cuts on the one hand, and on the other hand new tax burdens are planned for the decade ahead. Why do they talk one way and act another way? On the one hand the feds will cut the employment insurance premiums by a minuscule amount, and then they'll impose a doubling of the CPP premiums, one of the biggest tax grabs in the history of this country. Just imagine the increase that's going to happen with the

CPP. It's just devastating to employers; devastating to employees. It's just not fair to the people of Ontario.

It's tremendous what the people of Ontario contribute, billions and billions of dollars every year to the employment fund, but we reap back such a small fraction in this province. In grand total, something like \$15 billion a year flows from this province to the other provinces here in Canada. Is that fair? Is that just? Yes it is, if you are a federal Liberal snorkelling around in the trough down there in Ottawa. What's even more ironic is that our tax cuts are stimulating the economic growth across this country. Ontario's sizzling economy, and I don't know how you could stress the booming economy any more, is largely responsible for the federal government's coming up with a surplus.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Even Martin said that.

Mr Galt: Martin has even admitted to it. The federal Minister of Finance is recognizing what's going on in Ontario.

There are two basic reasons why the federal government has managed to balance their books and come up with a surplus, and both really are on the backs of Ontarians, on the backs of Canadians. They reduced massively the transfer payments: over \$3 billion just in social services and health care to Ontario and to the other provinces. Meanwhile, we were increasing our spending for health care by a little over \$3 billion, actually, during that period of time.

The other area has been the fact that the economy in Ontario is booming. They haven't changed their tax structure, so the dollars are just pouring in and they gleefully waltz off to the bank, calling it their money. Let me tell you, taxes are not their money, it's not our money in Ontario; it's the taxpayers' money. We should never, ever forget whom that money really belongs to. We should give it back, give that money back to the people who earned it. It's the only honourable thing to do.

I just want to take a couple of minutes more to talk a little bit about the platform we ran on back in 1995. As I think back, I'm so impressed with what was designed and the predictions that were put in place.

In the fall of 1993, winter of 1993-94, that platform was designed and written predicting things like the creation in this province of 725,000 net new jobs in the first five years after the election. They had no idea when the Premier of the day might call the election, whether he'd drag it out or snap an election early, so they weren't basing it on any particular time frame. Here we are, a little over four years into the mandate, and look how many jobs have been created: 610,000 net new jobs since the election; 615,000 since the throne speech.

What happened between the election and the throne speech? I'll tell you. We were trying desperately to turn the Queen Mary around in the Toronto harbour without hitting something. That was the circumstance we were in. The economy was plummeting so fast that even with the election, the public didn't believe we were going to do what we said we were going to do and we lost 5,000 jobs

during that summer. That's why the difference between 610,000 from the time of the election and 615,000 from the time of the throne speech, and here we are—this is the impressive part—on track for the 725,000 net new jobs that we were committed to.

I was just a foot soldier, working away, doing my thing, selling the program. I don't begin to take the credit for that design. I'm impressed that the economists who worked with our Premier, worked with the leader of the PC party of the day, and came up with those figures and they were so accurate. I'm flabbergasted to see the accuracy and how it's working out.

The economy is on track. Actually, it's doing better than we had expected. The balancing of the budget is coming exactly when we predicted, in five years. I guess I am bragging a bit about the fact that it's ending up there, but what's exciting is that somebody could predict this. Six years ago, what was going to happen could be predicted, regardless of what the federal government was doing, what the US was doing or what BC was doing, and we're on track. My hat's off to those people who were designing it at the time.

This "riding on the US coattails" was mentioned, and I explained to the member in my beginning comments that you can't ride on the coattail of somebody else when you're actually leading. The Toronto Star sometimes is right and it was certainly right this time: "Growth Powered by Ontario Will Outstrip the United States," November 10, 1999, the front page of the Liberal Toronto Star. If any of the Liberals want to have a look at it—they believe in that paper—I think they would be very enthused.

It's just been because of that stimulation of the economy, the increase in revenue, some \$6 billion a year more coming in is the reason that we were able to raise the budget from \$17.4 billion to well over \$20.6 billion for health care, in spite of the fact that the federal government cut back \$2.8 billion in their transfer payments. It's the economic stimulation and the extra taxes coming in that has given us that opportunity to be able to do it.

I'm indeed very pleased to be able to support this bill, Bill 14. It's a tremendous bill, the More Tax Cuts for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity Act, 1999. I'm certainly looking forward to its being passed; I trust it will. Despite all that we've been doing, Ontarians are still suffering from tax fatigue. We must continue to do what we can to reduce the oppressive burdens so callously laid on by previous governments.

In winding up, I plead that it's time for the federal government to do the same as the province of Ontario is doing, to really stimulate the economy, and we can take off for all of Canada to lead the G7 countries.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Here in the Legislature we live in kind of an artificial world. We're in a nice, dry environment; we have lights; and, goodness knows, we have hot-air heating in here. But I think we need to remember, as politicians, how the rest of the world lives. I walk down Yonge Street, and I

haven't done that often over the years, but I can recall 10 and 15 years ago walking down Yonge Street and I didn't see people sleeping on the grates and I didn't see people begging for money.

It's easy to focus on the word "budget" and that's all we talk about. Maybe these people on the sidewalks of Yonge Street are lazy bums who won't work, but maybe they're not. If someone's blind, it's very easy to get compassion for them. If someone's deaf, we can understand that. But if someone has another, hidden sort of disability, we tend to very quickly label them as lazy. But these are people who in the past we felt, as a community, we had to provide for and had to offer services, and now we don't.

We can lose touch with them, and it's easy to lose touch, I guess, if you're a cabinet minister and you're riding to the Legislature and back in a limo. But I don't think it would be a really bad idea for every person in this Legislature if, two or three or four days a month, we knocked on doors like we did during the campaign; if we actually knocked and asked what the issues are—not once every four years, not for four weeks every four years, but on a regular basis. Because if we do that on a regular basis, we will be reminded of the proliferation of poverty that's happening in Ontario.

1630

And the income tax cuts, they're great if you have income, but not everyone has income. The income tax cuts have been a much greater advantage for some than for others. It's easy to hide the low-income people—let's not worry about them; let's not think about them—but they're there, and we need to listen and think about them.

It is all too easy for a government—and it's not just this government; most governments have governed with polls—to determine who will support their party and who won't and then just ignore the ones who traditionally don't vote for you. The unfortunate reality here in North America, and perhaps in the world, is a lot of poor people don't vote. A lot of people are completely disenchanting with the government, all governments, all politicians and don't vote. They lose the opportunity to help shape the province in the vision that they may have, because not all wisdom is consecrated within this room. But instead of actually finding out why they don't vote, we simply ignore them and say: "let's concentrate on the numbers, let's look at the demographics, let's take all the research and let's do what we have to do to get those people out to the polling booths. The others aren't going to show up, so we don't have to serve them."

We've seen money saved in the last election campaign by not doing a census, by not compiling a voters' list and ending up with a voters' list that was disgraceful, knowing that the people who are well educated and the people who have cars would be able to go through the process of getting their names on the voting list, but for people without cars, it was a very complicated process, and they actually didn't make it to the polling booth that day, because their names weren't there.

The simple fact is democracy costs money, and we've seen a reduction in the money going into making our elections open to everyone. Sure, maybe these aren't the people who were going to support the governing party. These are the people who traditionally maybe haven't supported the governing party. But, by gosh, they're entitled to a vote and we should have done everything in our power in Ontario to make sure they had access to that vote.

The numbers across the province who actually voted were a sad comment on the government. If some of the money that had gone into the ads for education, if some of the money that had gone into the ads for health—which the auditor, by the way, said were clearly partisan; we've seen no acknowledgement of that, but the auditor, a nice, neutral individual who brought the wrong message for the government, said that the ads were partisan—what would that money have done to make people aware of how they had to vote?

Interjection.

Mr Parsons: Pretty minuscule compared to the amount that went into the partisan ads.

Interjection.

Mr Parsons: I'm sorry. For a second I interrupted your heckling. That won't happen again. I'm new and I'm learning. I keep expecting rationale, and then I realize what's going on.

There is a reason for the democracy and for the processes that we have in Ontario. We've entered into dismantling everything, and everything comes down to a dollar. Goodness knows, dollars are the oil that makes the machinery work. I understand that. Education, health, everything is tied to the dollar. But the dollar has to be balanced with some compassion. The dollar has to be balanced with the future, looking at what the impact of that cut will be.

Some of the things that were done in the past, even though they were done by Bill Davis and even though they were done by John Robarts, maybe they were right, maybe there isn't a need to dismantle the work done by those previous premiers. Maybe they were correct at that time and we could continue with it, instead of, "We're going to change everything and then see how it works, and if you criticize us you're wrong, and if you stand in our way we're going to get rid of you."

We need to come back and refocus on the people of Ontario. The mantra of budget, budget, budget—I would say again and again, the budget really is the services expressed in dollars. When you reduce the budget, you reduce the dollars going into the services. Not everything is fat; not everything can be trimmed.

For many people in Ontario—and I think of the Family Responsibility Office. It should be ashamed, to everyone on the government side. We take the most vulnerable, we don't provide them with the money that's needed for food and rent, and now we're going to charge them for that service. Everything sounds wonderful when we get the user fee; everything sounds wonderful when we talk privatization.

I have a suspicion that if they could, this government would privatize the opposition and bring in rented people to sit on this side.

Mr Galt: Not a bad idea.

Mr Parsons: And props could be rented from the same firm that supplies the members for that side of the House.

We heard an analogy a few minutes ago about the Queen Mary, and I thought that was an interesting analogy, with the ships, for many of the people in Ontario who have been hurt over the past few years. An example of that is that 10 years ago the ratio between the low-income and the high-income person in Ontario was 30 to 1; it's now 300 to 1. Some went up, and some went down. When I see the statistics that tell me that single female parents with a family are raising their children on an average of \$14,000 a year, I'm ashamed and I'm embarrassed. For these people, the ship analogy they probably think of is that here in Ontario we've got the government in the lifeboat bailing water back into the Titanic. They're getting worse, not better in life. Their average incomes are going down in that group. Granted, from the government perspective—I understand that most of those people didn't vote—they're not real people, because they're not real voters. They are real people. Those are real children.

There will be a day when none of us will sit in this House, but those children will. Those children are going to be our future. The children we're not spending the money on for education and for health now will be living in our houses and will be taking our jobs and will be shaping our province. We need to leave them in a position so that they can carry on with the same vision of Ontario as we have. We're not doing that. Instead, we discount any sort of criticism. How can we ignore the report of the auditor? How can we ignore a neutral, outside individual who painstakingly went through and analyzed and found out we're not dealing with budget savings, we're dealing with a philosophy: We will do the cuts even if they cost more money. There is the old joke that it costs money to economize. That is becoming a horrible living truth in this province. It costs more to do the highways privately, but philosophically it's the right thing to do, and the auditor will ignore it because, well, it doesn't conform with our philosophy, simple as that.

Let's remind ourselves that the issue of budget is part of the picture. We should not be looking for what will win an election three and a half years from now but for what makes our Ontario continue to be our Ontario, four, eight, 12 and 50 years from now.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Again we find ourselves here in the Legislature with a budget bill which gives us the opportunity, as members of both the government and opposition, to speak on a wide range of topics having to do with where the government is at. I'd like to talk a little bit about where we find ourselves today in Ontario vis-à-vis municipal services and where we find ourselves when it comes to law and order in this

province as a result of many of the actions that have been taken by the government.

Oh, yes, I listened intently as the government members stood up and took credit for how well the American economy was doing. If you listen to their logic, everything that has happened is good in the economy. What has happened in the United States is because of the Ontario tax cut; that was basically the argument. But their basic premise is that everything that goes on in Ontario and everything that is so positive is as a result of the tax cut. I guess that is one spin you can put on it, but I would argue there's another side of the argument. If the government is going to go out and do what this government chose to—and clearly it was their decision, given that they won the election in 1995 by a majority government—they decided to go forward and give a tax cut. But we can't stand in this House and say, as the government is trying to make us believe, that all that came out of that was positive. Certainly a lot of negative has come out of that tax cut. I would argue that as time goes on we'll find out just how negative it is. God help us if the economy of Ontario goes down, as it will, because the economy runs in cycles. We will see the American economy start to slow at one point. As Ontario starts to go down, we will have lost our capacity to respond to what's happening in our communities by way of what this government has done in tax cuts.

1640

I would argue that the tax cut really has little to do with dollars and cents; it's a way for the government to basically entrench its agenda. Its agenda is very simple: less government, fewer services, more room for the private sector. Somehow, that will equate to being a better thing. Certainly, when it comes to competition within the economy, manufacturing goods, selling, retailing goods, the private sector must have an upper hand in what happens when it comes to those activities. What the government is trying to do is offload a lot of its responsibility on to the private sector in order to give their friends in the private sector more business opportunities. But in the long run I think that policy is going to come back to haunt us.

We sometimes forget what our history has taught us, that when the government didn't provide certain services in the early days of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, we went without those services and there were basically two classes in our society: one that had and one that did not have. There were more haves and fewer have-nots. Unfortunately, a lot of people went without, and that's why they went to government and asked for government services to be put in place.

Let's talk a little bit about municipal restructuring. You know that this government has embarked on a process of municipal restructuring that dates back to 1996. The government would have you believe that somehow this whole exercise that they've engaged in has been revenue-neutral and has not had any kind of negative effect when it comes to municipal services across Ontario. Nothing could be further from the truth.

If we take a look at what has happened in municipal services in this province, we have slipped a lot when it comes to the services that people rightfully and deservedly are supposed to get from the municipalities.

I would ask members of this assembly, rather than walking up to the local establishments you normally go to, to take a walk and look at what's happening in downtown Toronto. Just look at some of the recent effects that your government has had by way of policies in this one city, the city of Toronto. We have now, in the downtown core of the city, far more visible poverty than we have ever had in the history of this city as I remember it. I'm a young man, I'm 43 years old, so I only remember back to a certain point. I'm sure we can point back to times in history when it was worse. But in modern times this city has slipped a lot. When you take a look at the effects of poverty in our city, they're dramatic. The streets in the downtown core of Toronto, the basic place where tourists come to take a look, are dirtier than they ever have been before. We see more garbage on the street, we see a state of disrepair of our city, the infrastructure of the community is starting to fall apart to a certain degree and the city is a lot dirtier, physically, than it ever has been before. There's a very simple reason for that: Is it because all of a sudden more people are throwing their garbage in the downtown core? No. It's because we don't have the municipal employees we used to have in place before who went around picking up garbage and making sure that our communities were cleaner. That is only one effect of what we're seeing.

If you take a look at the issue of poverty, again, you have far more street people on the streets of Toronto—and, I would argue, in many other communities across Ontario. Not only in Toronto, we have some street people in my community, something we've never seen before in Timmins. During the summer months and this fall, we had people who were basically living out in the bush because they couldn't afford to have an apartment and a roof over their heads. Where those people went this fall is beyond me. I have to hope that things turned around for them. But the economy of northeastern Ontario is not as closely tied to exports in the United States. We're a resource-based economy and our economy has been lagging, I would argue, far behind what has been happening in southern Ontario. As a result, what we're seeing in our communities, because of what's happening in the economy, is that the municipality does not have the ability to respond to what's happening. In our community we even have people—not in the numbers you would have in Toronto—who are without a roof over their heads, without a job, who have had to resort to living in back alleys and in the bush to just get by this summer. We had many of those people come by our constituency office, as well as the Lord's Kitchen and the food bank, to try to find help so they could get by on a day-to-day basis.

The government tries to make us believe that somehow this tax cut has only been positive. I just took two very simple things that people see, and that is, our

communities, our cities, our downtown cores, are falling further and further behind when it comes to the effects of poverty. We're finding that in our province those who have money are doing far better today, and those without are doing far worse, and we're starting to see it.

We see the number of people who are on the streets trying to panhandle in the city of Toronto, as it is in Hamilton, as it is in Timmins—I saw it in Timmins this last summer—as we see it in Sudbury, as we see it in Ottawa. There are far more people panhandling on the streets of our cities and our towns than we ever had before because, I would argue, there has been an effect of the tax cut. The capacity for government to respond to what is happening in your local community, both by way of the municipal government and the provincial government, has very much been diminished by the actions of this government with regard to the tax cut.

Government members will say: "That's because they choose not to work. It's because they made a conscious choice that they didn't want to go out there and find a job." Easily said, but the reality is it's not as easily done. A lot of people are out on the street because our institutions have been depopulated. A certain part of the group of people who find themselves on the streets across Ontario are there because provincial institutions and provincial programs, which used to be able to respond to these people to make sure that they didn't end up on the street, are no longer in place. Even those that remain don't have the capacity to be able to respond to what is happening.

The other issue is housing. I listened earlier on as the Minister of Finance got up and called public housing a boondoggle. I see the member—I always forget your riding, Mr Hastings—from Etobicoke North. It used to be Etobicoke. The new ridings have changed. The member for Etobicoke North agreed that somehow this is a boondoggle, public housing. He fails to remember that public housing was far from a boondoggle. It is the public housing that was put in place in cities and towns across this province, dating back some 25 years, in order to make sure that we had affordable housing for those people within our communities who most needed it.

Seniors: I look at the communities in the city of Timmins. I look at Hearst, Moosonee, Kapuskasing, Val Rita. I look at a community like Moonbeam, which has public housing in place. It's providing affordable housing for the seniors of our communities so that they have a place to live, so that they feel secure, so that they are with other people their age and they're able to socialize. It's no fun when you get to be a senior and you're stuck alone in your home and there is nobody around to chat with and spend some time with. That's part of the reason that we put social housing in place, to make sure that seniors had that ability.

I look at what's happening in Opasatika right now, a small community in my riding of around 300 to 400 people. We have a number of seniors who would like to move into a seniors' housing complex so they can be together and feel a little bit more secure and find that

they have a bit more of a social life. The provincial and federal governments have basically gone out of the housing business. They're in a position where trying to get something like that up and running would be almost impossible.

The other thing that social housing did is provide housing for those people who were basically on disability pensions. People who suffered from mental illnesses, people who suffered from various types of physical ailments, had an ability to get social housing in order to make sure that they had an affordable apartment to live in. Nowadays there are increasingly more and more people in the province of Ontario, because of the demographics and because of immigration and because of, yes, what's happened in the economy, more people living in the economy of Ontario, and there is more and more of a need for social housing. But this government says: "It's not important. We're going to leave it up to the private sector."

The test is in the pudding. The reality is that the private sector is not responding. They're building co-op housing? No. They're building not-for-profit housing? No. They're building condominiums that are selling for \$180,000 to \$220,000 or \$240,000 a pop, and that is a response to what is happening in housing, because there is money to be made in building condominiums, in high-priced, high-end apartments. There is no money for the private sector in providing affordable housing. The reality is that that sector of the rental market is diminishing as far as the number of units available to people. What we're finding is that more and more people, unfortunately, are ending up on the streets.

The government can pretend all they want that somehow or other this tax cut has been a good thing. The reality is that they've had to pay for it, and one of the ways they've done that is they stopped all social housing. We no longer see affordable housing being built inside the province of Ontario by either the federal or provincial government, because they've gotten out of it in order to pay for their tax cuts. That's what they've done. The government will say that's a good thing. Tell it to the people who are lining up and to get affordable housing units—not a very pleasurable thing. They're now having to wait on waiting lists for two and three years to get a unit because there are so few units available. I don't think that's a good policy for the province.

1650

Take a look at the condition of the roads in our municipalities. The infrastructure of this province, when it comes to roads, is falling further and further behind. I'll just quote what came out of the auditor's report not more than a week ago. The province has lost the capacity to even maintain and supervise what's happening on its own highways, let alone what's happening on municipal roads. Basically the auditor was saying the other day that the Ministry of Transportation does not have the number of people it needs within the ministry to supervise what's happening when it comes to the private sector doing work on our highways that has been contracted by the

province. They don't have the capacity to keep up in capital costs the amount of work that needs to be done on the highways to keep them up to a standard of repair that is necessary to keep those highways up to snuff.

There's a short-term saving. The government can decide, as it did, not to spend the capital dollars necessary to maintain our highways and local roads. You're not going to see the effect immediately if the government does what it decided to do, which was to cut back on the capital dollars going to the Ministry of Transportation to keep up highways, and to cut transfers to municipalities, which in effect reduces the amount of money available for roads. People aren't going to see it immediately. The government looks like a genius. They save \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion in the first year and look as if they know what they're doing, and it looks like a good thing because the bottom line looks better.

But, Mr Speaker, you would know as well as I do, coming from northern Ontario, that over the longer term that policy is going to cost us money. Future governments—and, yes, the taxpayer—are going to end up having to pay far more money in the future to try to bring the roads up to snuff that have been taken out of the cycle of reconstruction that we used to have in place. The Ministry of Transportation, as you know, had a cycle that said that about every 10 years every road gets a certain amount of repair to keep it up to a standard. That is falling further and further behind, because the Ministry of Transportation is no longer doing the kind of work it used to do to keep our highways in repair, and with all the downloading, municipalities certainly don't have the amount of money they need to keep their roads in repair.

Yes, the government could argue that the tax cut has given taxpayers an immediate hit in their wallet—no argument. But in the long run the taxpayer is going to end up paying more because they're going to have to offset the cost of reconstructing those roads in future years, which will be more expensive. Because we know, by way of inflation, that as years go on it gets more and more expensive to repair these things. So you really don't save anything in the long run, you only save in the short run.

Just in passing, I would also like to say that I remember standing in this House when Mr Palladini was the Minister of Transportation and telling him, "Don't go the way of privatizing highway maintenance in this province, as you have done, because in the end you won't save any money." The Minister of Transportation, Mr Palladini, got up in the House, in about 1996 or 1997—I'd have to go back and look at Hansard—and said, "We're going to save a whole bunch of money if we privatize highway maintenance in this province." In fact, he stood in this House, along with the Minister of Finance, and said, "If we don't save at least 5% by this initiative, it's not worth doing."

The auditor's report came out last week. What did it say? In some cases it was more expensive to maintain our highways by way of the private sector as compared to the province, and in other sections of the province it was

maybe less expensive but they certainly didn't save the 5%. When you average it, we saved 0.2% of dollars maintaining our highways by way of private sector bids, where we've gone with this new system, and we don't even have the capacity to go out and check if the private sector is doing the kind of work that has to be done. So, yes, the tax cut got a couple of people a few bucks in their pocket, mostly those with more money, but we're paying for it in the long run.

That's not to speak to what's happened by way of user fees. If we take a look at the user fees that are now being charged for services that used to be delivered free by the province or the municipality, or in some cases agencies, we're now having to pay for that by way of user fees. In fact, I was in Val Rita last Friday meeting with the community council. They were telling me about a plan they had to try to move water and sewer expansion in their community to deal with the potential ability to attract new citizens into their community. They would like to be able to expand that so that they can service another 10 lots. In Val Rita, that's a big thing; in Toronto, it's not. Ten lots in Toronto wouldn't even be a speck, but in Val Rita 10 lots is a lot. First of all, there's no provincial dollars to help them do the kinds of expansion that they need to in order to get water and sewer in, so they're on their own. So it means the local taxpayer in Val Rita is going to have to pay through the nose to be able to update their water and sewer system to accept another 10 lots in that community because the province does not want to share the cost over the provincial system, as we used to do before.

But the interesting thing is that when the municipality went to the Ministry of the Environment—and listen to this, Chair of Management Board, because you probably know this, but I think this is really amazing. They went to the Ministry of the Environment, the provincial ministry, in order to try to deal with getting the permitting in place in order to do this expansion, getting ready to do all the permitting in the event that they can raise the dollars to do it, and they were charged a user fee, by the Ministry of the Environment, on each plan, about \$10,000 to \$15,000. There's a tax cut for somebody. If you added up the tax cuts for all the citizens who got a tax cut in the community of Val Rita, and you start to add up the costs the municipality is picking up when it comes to user fees on this and other initiatives, the tax cut is almost negated, I would argue. It probably is negated, if you really looked into it. So now the municipality of Val Rita, as are all other municipalities across the province, is having to go out and pay user fees to go to the Ministry of the Environment, a provincial ministry, to get permitting that is required by the province for the municipality to do its job.

This government says, "We're trying to make things easier for municipalities to do business." This is not making it easier for them to do planning. This is not making it easier for them to go out and do expansion in their community. It's making it unaffordable for them to do it. I would argue that the government tries to look good by

way of the tax cuts, but the reality, as Val Rita is figuring out, as other municipalities are, is that this tax cut is costing them money.

When we look at what this government is doing by way of amalgamation when it comes to what's going on in Ontario, we know that the provincial government forced the amalgamations in the city of Toronto. We said back then, "Never mind what we said; the citizens of Toronto said by referendum that they did not want to do this." You laugh at the taxpayers who had a referendum, who said no to amalgamation in the city of Toronto. If the Conservatives laugh in the face of referendums, I guess that puts to shame your entire position when it comes to referendums that you have taken in previous elections. But the reality is that taxpayers, by way of referendum, said: "No, Mike Harris; no, Al Leach; no, Steve Gilchrist,"—because he was one of the big pushers of this thing the last time—"we don't want to go with amalgamation. We want to have our own communities, and that is our choice as taxpayers." This government said, "No; we have a top-down solution. I, Mike Harris, and the rest of my government, am going to shove down your throats what I want to do in the municipality of Toronto."

Did you ever think for one second that maybe it wasn't your decision to make; rather, it was the decision of the taxpayers to decide if they wanted to have a local community or not? Now this government hasn't learned by way of what they had happen in Toronto, never mind they went against what the taxpayers wanted, never mind they had a top-down process that shoved the process down their throats and in the end we're not even saving money. Mel Lastman—let's not go there. He's the guy who's calling for separate provinces for the city of Toronto, and a few other things.

We haven't proven that we've saved any money—I would argue, in some cases we're paying more—and we've made government in the city of Toronto bigger in a lot of respects as far as the administration this thing has created, and we've made it less accountable, because now when a citizen, the taxpayer—yes, the member for Etobicoke North—goes to get services from his municipality or, more importantly, wants to hold the municipality accountable for decisions, they have far less by way of the democratic process to deal with because, yes, there are fewer politicians. There's a much larger council with fewer politicians, and they have less time to be able to deal with the concerns of the people, the taxpayers.

1700

Now the government says, "This was such a successful initiative, we're now going to go out and force amalgamation on North Haldimand, we're going to do it in Sudbury, we're going to do it in Hamilton, and then we're going to do it in Ottawa." Coming to a city near you. Well, give your heads a shake. Did you ever think that maybe you should first of all go to the taxpayers and ask them what they want to do, and say yes, if the people in Stoney Creek or the people in Kanata or in Valley East want to merge with the cities that are near them, let them

make a decision. If you really believe in democracy, hold a referendum. We'll just use one for an example.

If Stoney Creek were to decide, by way of referendum, that they don't want to amalgamate with Hamilton, did you ever think that maybe that's democracy in action? If they decide they want a municipal structure that is more or less expensive, that's their business. It's not for us to go in and say: "We know best. We're the big, provincial government. We're Mike Harris. We have all the answers. Let's shove another process down your throats. Let's just shove it down your throats so far that you don't have a say because democracy doesn't matter."

I find it very difficult to take, the way the government takes the approach when it comes to finding solutions for people in this province. They never think about what it means to the taxpayer. They say: "We know best. We're a bunch of Conservatives. We're arrogant. We can do anything we want and we'll shove it down your throats." Let the taxpayers decide. It's their municipalities, it's their province.

I again had an opportunity over Friday and Saturday to meet, as I'm sure other members in this assembly did in their own riding, many people across the riding of Timmins-James Bay. I was between Val Rita and Timmins this week. We did Val Rita, a bit of Kapuskasing, stopped in Smooth Rock to see a few people and did Timmins. You know what they're worried about now? They were looking at this amalgamation thing that's going on in the four big municipalities that are now engaged in it by way of getting it shoved down their throats by the province and they are worried about what's going to happen to them. They're saying: "We're living here in Val Rita. We don't want to be part of Kapuskasing. We chose to form our own community called Val Rita, because we have some different objectives than the community of Kapuskasing." Yes, Val Rita and Kapuskasing are not very far apart—some six or seven miles apart—but they decided to have their own municipality, and you know what? Their tax structure is less than what you're paying in Kapuskasing. Yes, they've got fewer services but that's a choice they made in Val Rita.

The municipalities in those areas, not all the municipal politicians but most of the municipal—

Hon Mr Stockwell: They have choices.

Mr Bisson: You're not giving them any choices. What are you talking about? You give them no choice. You go in with a forced amalgamation process and you tell them what they have to get. They have no say. I'm just saying, as a New Democrat, that if the citizens in a community—I'll just use Val Rita as an example—decide they want to live in a community that offers fewer or more services, that has fewer or more taxes, that's their decision. Let them decide by way of referendum what type of municipal governance they're going to have—not to have it shoved down their throats by the province. That, to me, is not a good system democracy. That's a system where Big Brother knows best, and Mike Harris is the Biggest Brother I have ever known when it

comes to big government. He just shoves it down the throats of the people in the local municipalities.

On the question of Val Rita and other communities, people this weekend were talking on the streets, not just the politicians at the local level, and they were worried. They were saying, "We're seeing what's happening." A report was released on Friday about Sudbury, Hamilton and others and they were worried about what's going to happen in their communities.

At the same time that was happening, the government did something which I'll give them some credit for. They went to the community of Kapuskasing and they offset some of the transfers back to the municipality because the municipality has lost money with regard to assessment by the way of Spruce Falls. The provincial government went in and gave J.-C. Caron, the mayor of Kapuskasing, about \$2.4 million to offset the loss in assessment, so a good thing. But part of the condition of getting that money was that they have to engage and start discussions about how to amalgamate, possibilities of amalgamation with local municipalities around them. People in my communities, Val Rita and others, were saying: "Hang on. Hold it a second. We're happy that Kapuskasing got \$2.4 million but we don't want to amalgamate. We don't want to become part of Kapuskasing. We're happy being in Val Rita."

The people in Opatatika told me the same thing. They don't want to be part of Kap. They want to remain who they are. They want to remain the community of Opatatika, and the people of Moonbeam and the people of Fauquier, and the people of Smooth Rock Falls. They don't want to be part of a larger entity. They want to remain as citizens of their own community because, in the end, they make their own choices in those communities about what they're going to be doing. They decide what the focus is going to be for the times those councils are in place and then they move ahead.

I'll tell you something: There's more community spirit in those communities than in big cities like Toronto or Ottawa. Those communities are good. Toronto is a great city, Ottawa is a great city, but those small communities have a spirit of their own. If you try to bring them into larger entities, you're going to take away the spirit they have in those communities.

You know what makes those communities go? Let me tell you what happens in places like Opatatika and Val Rita, to the member for Etobicoke North. Do you know how big the administration is for the town of Val Rita? One and a half staff people, and a whole bunch of volunteers.

I was talking to the fire chief in Val Rita just the other day and he said to me: "You know, I do this gladly. I volunteer for my community because I know it's my community. But if you're coming to me and you're now saying I'm going to be part of a larger municipality the size of whatever, around Kapuskasing, I probably don't want to volunteer because I know in the end we will not be making our own decisions for Val Rita. Decisions will be made in the larger centres, and we're going to get the

crumbs on the outside." The further you are from the centre, the smaller the crumbs will be.

You are going to stifle the volunteerism that's going on in those communities that are volunteering services back to their communities. That's how those communities operate, and I think we're doing them a disservice when we try to force amalgamation on them. They are efficient administrations, they work well, they do the right thing, they set the priorities with their communities, and there's a community spirit in those communities that you don't see in many other places. I think we need to find ways to strengthen that, not ways to make it less.

I want to also touch on another issue that deals with what's happening by way of this tax cut. I talked about communities, and one of the very important services in communities is policing. It's a shame. We look at the number of cops we have on the streets today in Ontario as compared to 1995 and there are far fewer cops today than there were under the NDP government, because this government said they were going to go the way of the tax cut and one of the ways to go the way of the tax cut was to not give the kind of support that police services need across this province. So we have fewer cops on the street making our communities safe now than we did in 1995.

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: I hear the members across the way talk about the 1,000-police initiative that this government has started up. Let's talk about the 1,000-police initiative. Under David Christopherson, the then Solicitor General of the NDP government, we announced and we started the 1,000-police initiative across the province. We started the process, but do you know what's interesting? When we put in place the 1,000-police initiative, we put it in place in such a way that said police departments across Ontario will not be able to use these 1,000 police to replace retiring policemen, that these were for newly created police positions within the communities of Ontario. For example, in the city of Timmins, you had at that time a police department I think of around 65 police officers. We've had about five or seven of them retire and this 1,000—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Order. Members know that only one member can speak at a time and that the member for Timmins-James Bay has the floor.

Continue.

Mr Bisson: The point I make is this: In the city of Timmins, we had about 65 police officers in 1995. I might be off on my numbers, but it's around the same ratio. I think it was 65 police officers or 60 in 1995. But the point I'm making is this: We had about 65 police officers in 1995. About five of them retired over a period of time. The Mike Harris government, on being elected in 1995, cancelled the police initiative established by the former NDP government that would have put 1,000 new cops into cities across Ontario. This government cancelled it and when they brought it back, they tried to

announce it as a new initiative that they invented. Hogwash, as Premier Mike Harris said the other day, but on a different subject.

The reality is that David Christopherson, Bob Rae and the NDP government started the 1,000-police initiative and the difference—

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: Listen to this. The former Speaker should at least get to his chair to heckle, I would hope. He used to tell me that when he was in the chair.

The difference between the NDP and the Conservative program was that our program was established—look at the rules—and it only was able to put new cops on the road, not to replace retiring police officers. This program now is being used to replace retiring police officers only. If you look in the city of Timmins, we had 65 cops. They've been able to hire four police through this particular program, barely enough to even keep up with the retirements in our community. So we have fewer police officers in the cities across Ontario because of what this government is doing. Yes, it's given people a tax cut, but it's equated to fewer cops on our city streets. That's what they have done.

1710

We know by way of statistics that there are literally thousands of police officers who are coming up to retirement over the next couple of years, and this government has no response in how to deal with those retiring police officers other than trying to deal with 1,000 police officers that they are replacing by way of a program that was supposedly set up in order to augment police, not keep up with what is happening by way of retirement.

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: The government is howling on the other side because they somehow see this as being their turf. Well, I'm telling you, you might think it's your turf, but you have a poor record.

Take a look at what happens with crime across the province. This government tries to make us believe they've got some kind of response to crime. They are going to go out there and do some neat things. So they go out and they do what? They attack squeegee kids. That's the response of this government when it comes to crime. They go after panhandlers. They are going after the victims of poverty, the victims of the economy as set up by the Mike Harris government and their tax cuts. Their law is, make laws to go after the poor, make laws in order to fix the problems that were created by your mess, and that's supposed to be you being tough on crime.

You want to do something innovative for crime in Ontario? Why not hire more crowns?

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: The member for Etobicoke North, you should try listening.

I make a suggestion, and a former Solicitor General is here: If you are going to put money into the system, why not hire more provincial crown attorneys so that we're at least able to prosecute the convictions that are brought forward by the police officers across this province? The

deterrent to crime often is not just the law, or often not the punishment; the deterrent is knowing that you're not going to get—hang on. Let me do that again.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: Thank you. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity.

The point I make is this: The deterrent to crime often is not the penalty but the fact that you might get caught. If somebody is out there thinking, "I might just get caught because there are more cops on the streets, and if I do get caught, the prosecuting attorneys across the province are going to try my case in a speedy manner and I will get the full extent of the law," that person is less likely to go out and commit a crime than they would be under the system that you have now. Why? You have fewer cops on the streets. We have a system that is overloaded. We are going to end up in another Askov decision where we are going to have to throw out court cases because you don't have the capacity in the system to respond to the charges that are being brought into it.

I would say to you that you would probably be better off spending some time trying to set up a couple of programs across the province in some places where it's worse than others—I would argue the Niagara region, Toronto and a few other places that I can think of—to hire extra crown attorneys to make sure we have the resources necessary to try those charges that are brought forward by police.

When I talk to cops across this province, they are telling me what they are sick of. They are sick and tired of going out and doing their jobs, charging somebody, doing an investigation, working hard to get a charge, bringing them to court, and because the court doesn't have the capacity to deal with them, because we don't have enough crowns, the darn thing is thrown out. They don't have the capacity to respond because this government does not give the crown attorneys and does not give the court system enough money to prosecute the charges that are brought in by the cops.

If you want to support cops in this province, there are two simple things you can do: first, hire more of them, something that you're not—

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: No, you're not. You're not even replacing them. We've got 600 fewer cops in Ontario now than we had in 1995, so don't try to spin that. Talk about the truth of what's going on with your record.

The second thing that you can do is to actually go out there and give those cops some support. Let them know that when they go out onto the street and they apprehend somebody and they charge somebody, they at least have a chance of getting that person before the courts in a swift period of time, convicting them and making sure that the charge sticks because we have crowns who are capable of responding.

Mr Speaker, I know the member for Sault Ste Marie has much more to say on this, and I thank you for this time in debate.

Mr Wettlaufer: I'm pleased to stand and speak to the time allocation motion on Bill 14, the More Tax Cuts for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity Act, 1999.

I guess I can assume from the speech of the member for Timmins-James Bay that the NDP is not going to support this. However, I do have to say that either he is blessed with a convenient memory or he needs a new speechwriter. If their government was so supportive of the police in Ontario, why did they put in a moratorium on police hiring? He either conveniently forgot that or his speechwriter didn't give him the facts. I'll give him the benefit of the doubt; I think his speechwriter didn't give him the facts.

I think we know how the NDP will vote on this, but I will be very interested to see how the Liberals vote on this. As we know, the Liberals—

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: It's interesting. The member for Timmins-James Bay says he knows how they're going to vote. I'm not so sure, because they talk out of both sides of their mouth.

Mr Speaker, as you are quite aware, the Liberals have opposed all 69 tax cuts that this government put into effect in the last Legislature, and they opposed the 30 tax cuts by our government in this Legislature—a total of 99 tax cuts, and they opposed each and every one of them. However, what did they do when we introduced Bill 7, the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act? They supported it. They spent days talking against it, but then they turned around and supported it. So I'll be very interested in how the Liberals are going to vote on this, because we're never too sure.

In his article in the Toronto Star today, Ian Urquhart said, "The Liberals have shown an aversion to ... policies. They seem to prefer being all things to all people." I think that's indicative—

The Acting Speaker: Stop the clock. Perhaps the conversations could be kept down. Particularly the Minister of Labour knows that he needs to be in his own seat.

Member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr Wettlaufer: We also know that the NDP would continue their policies of tax and spend and they would regulate. When I was in business, prior to 1995, there was a little joke in business about the NDP. They would tax a business until the business whined. Then they would tax some more. The business would whine some more. Then they would tax some more. The business would whine some more. Then they would regulate. The business would whine. Then they would impose more taxes. The business would stop whining. Then the NDP would come along and subsidize to try to get the business back into business. That's the NDP policy, but we're never too sure what position the Liberals are going to take. One day they're over here, the next day they're over there. That is typical of being a Liberal.

We have taken a very strong position on tax cuts. Our government campaigned on it in 1995. Our government campaigned on it again in 1999. The public is sick of taxes. They want balanced budgets, which we have

committed to doing—that legislation was passed last week. The debate is over. Tax cuts create jobs. Why can these people not get it through their heads? There have been 617,000 net new jobs since 1995. That was the latest figure in October. The net new jobs are increasing at such a rate that we're not too sure how many it could be. It could be 640,000 or 650,000 as I speak. We know they create jobs.

I know what the Liberals say about jobs. I have it right here in Hansard. On Monday, November 22, the member for Essex said, "You know, member from Kitchener, a job doesn't mean a damn thing." In 1995 there were a lot of people in Ontario—a lot of people in Kitchener, in my riding of Kitchener Centre—who cared about jobs. They didn't have jobs. So I am pleased to say that our government's tax policies are creating jobs, and the jobs are increasing revenue.

What has happened to revenue in this province? Let's just take a look here. I just have to find it here. In 1995-96, government revenue was \$49.5 billion. That was before the tax cuts. Now we have fully implemented 30% tax cuts, plus the people of Ontario have had a further 5% in July of this year; that's what we're debating here, to give passage to that. Revenues have increased from \$49.5 billion to \$52.5 billion in 1997-98. Revenues have gone up. Taxes have gone down.

1720

Liberals don't understand this, and we know the NDP don't understand this, but it's a fact of life, people. Our revenues are up because the economy has improved. As a result of the economy improving, and with increased revenues, we can pour that money into health care. You claim you like that. I know you would have restricted health care spending to \$17 billion. You campaigned on that in 1995, remember? It was in your platform, the red book. Well, health care spending in Ontario now is \$20.6 billion. It's going to go up another 20% because of revenues increasing, because the economy has improved, because jobs have increased. I know you have trouble with that, but that's a fact of life. Business understands that. The general public understands that. That's why they re-elected us this year. The public understands that, but you have trouble with that. I don't understand why the Liberals can't get it through their heads.

Mr Hastings: They're slow learners.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, I guess they are.

They would like to have us believe that they have a monopoly on caring. They raise the issue about homelessness all the time. They talk about how homelessness has increased. Homelessness increases if you can't get a job. There would be a lot more homeless people on the streets if there weren't 617,000 new jobs since 1995.

You have trouble with that too; I can see that. The Liberal House leader is sitting there and he's saying, "Oh, gee, well"—

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: I know. Well, let me explain something to you. When you don't have a job, you don't have any money, and when you don't have any money, you

can't pay your mortgage or you can't pay your rent. Therefore you wind up on the streets.

When you do have a job, you have enough money to pay your rent or your mortgage. And do you know what? You also then have enough money to pay taxes, which increases government revenues.

I know, you're having trouble again. The member from Sarnia-Lambton is over there shaking her head; she has trouble understanding. Well, it's a simple case of economics. We learned it in Economics 101 in university many years ago. Now they teach it, but they teach other things as well. But I know you're having trouble with that. That's OK.

In the Canadian Federation of Independent Business members' survey in July this year, survey 44, they asked businesses, "Which of the following issues should be the high priorities for CFIB action?" Do you know what the top issue was? The top issue was total tax burden. Some 81.8% of the members said that total tax burden was their number one priority. They realized that what our government is doing is enabling business, through our tax policies, to hire more people. Business understands that and most employees understand that. The Liberals don't. The Liberals are having trouble with that. They also ask in their survey: "Which of the following taxes and charges are the most harmful to the operation of your business? Circle as many as apply." Mr Speaker, 49.3% said that personal income tax was the most harmful to the operation of their business, because it reduces their competitiveness.

The member from St Catharines was up here speaking earlier about competitiveness. The member from Windsor West was talking about trade being so effective for Ontario. Of course it is. We know it is. But in order for our businesses to trade with the United States, they must be competitive. Our tax policies have helped that competitiveness.

That's what it's all about. It's creating an environment in which there will be jobs, creating an environment in which government revenues will increase. Yes, we would like to be able to pay more on education and health care. We would love to be able to do that, and if we didn't have to pay \$9 billion interest on debt that was built up in this province over the last 10 years, we could do so. From 1985 to 1995 we built up such a massive debt that we were paying \$9 billion a year in interest payments.

I know that members of the Liberal Party are going to say, "How much have you increased the debt?" It's very important to point out here that we are not increasing the interest payments. Do you know why? We are not increasing the interest payments, simply because we have got a better interest rate than your government was able to get or better than the NDP was able to get. The differential between government prime and what we're paying is better than it was under your government.

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: You have trouble with that, don't you? I can see. You're laughing. You're going, "Oh, oh." It's so hard to believe for you people. I know. That's

because you don't understand business. You don't understand economics.

I want to point out the debate is over. We have created jobs. Tax cuts do create jobs.

Do you remember how Ontarians were suffering in 1990, 1991 and 1992? Do you remember that? No jobs. I know you remember. A large part of that was created by the Liberals' tax policies in 1988, 1989, and then the NDP came into power and introduced a budget that was totally out of whack—\$11.3-billion deficit, if I remember correctly. But the NDP will say that that was in large part due to the Liberals' spending.

The Liberals talk about the fact that they introduced the last balanced budget in 1989. Do you remember that? The Liberals have been saying that here lately. The Liberals like talking about the Ontario auditor too. The Ontario auditor says there was no balanced budget. It's one thing to introduce it; it's another to totally spend beyond what the budget allowed for. You have trouble with that too, don't you?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have trouble with anybody who says that—

Mr Wettlaufer: You have trouble with that too. Interesting.

Ontario leads the Great Lakes region in job creation. That's who we are competing with. They're our business competitors, our trade competitors, the States and the other provinces in the Great Lakes region, and we are doing better than they are. We are increasing our job creation. Get this: Between February 1998 and February 1999, we increased job creation by 3.7%. It has increased even more since then, far ahead of Minnesota, which was at 2%; New York at 1.7%, one of our major competitors. New York only increased—

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just a few minutes ago, this member quoted Hansard on November 22 and he said, "The member from Essex said, 'A job doesn't mean a damn thing.'" Your memory is very selective. You didn't continue to say, when I was speaking on—

The Acting Speaker: This is not a point of order. You can correct your own record; you can't correct anyone else's.

1730

Mr Wettlaufer: The member raises a point. He said I didn't continue that he said it didn't mean a thing to a child in a classroom. I admit that I didn't say that. However, I want to point out to the member that a job means a whole lot to that child in the classroom, because if his father or mother does not have the income to provide him with the necessities of life at home, then that means a terrific amount to that child in the classroom. I'm glad he raised that.

A job for his parents is very important to that child in the classroom, because he will have something to eat. Do you know what something to eat means to that child? It means an awful lot to the people in my riding.

Mr Crozier: It means a lot to the kids in my riding because—

The Acting Speaker: Member for Essex, come to order.

Mr Wettlaufer: Mr Speaker, it's obvious that I've touched a nerve here.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I don't presume to be quite as eloquent as the member for Kitchener Centre, but I certainly want to make a comment on Bill 14, and also on the comments of a number of members.

The government is taking credit for a booming economy, and I find this incredible. I equate this government taking credit for a booming economy to a rooster taking credit for the sunrise. The members across the way talk over and over about budgets and about tax cuts. But in reality we know they are not good managers of the services they are supposed to provide to the people of this province. The auditor's report qualified that they're not good managers, and the people of the province see the effect of that every single day.

The government gives out contracts that cost more and not less. They tell hospitals to restructure, but by the time they get around to it, it costs four or five times more than when it was initially going to take place.

They're not good managers because they don't look at need; they only look at budget. They don't look at the fact that we now have a province that cannot provide cancer treatment to seven out of 10 patients, which is incredible. That is poor management. Good managers look at the need for services, and then they provide it with fiscal responsibility.

This government has a tendency to talk about budgets and tax cuts, but you never hear them talk about their debt. They keep talking about debts that other governments have increased. But here we are in a booming economy, and this government has increased the debt by \$21 billion over the last four years. Not only that, I think this year it's going up another \$4 billion. We never hear them talk about that. No one on the other side of the House talks about the credit rating, which they have been unable to increase. It's still AA-, but you don't hear anyone talk about that.

There is development that we need to talk about that this government doesn't even discuss, and it's called people development. One part of the equation is a simplistic approach to good government. It is my experience that this government does not have an understanding of people development and how it relates to sustained economic development. The Auditor General's report discusses many examples when it comes to poor management. We can talk about tax cuts all you want, but you can be poor managers of less money as much as you can be poor managers of more money.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): In the time I have, I just want to put a couple of points on the record here this afternoon.

One is about the nature of the bill we're discussing here. It's another in a long list of closure motions that this government keeps bringing before us so that we don't get the fulsome debate that is required, because

these pieces of legislation have some long-lasting and important impacts on the people of Ontario and in particular the people of my community. This is the third closure motion we've had and debated in this House in the last three days that we've sat—three closure motions.

The Minister of Labour thinks this is OK. He puts his hand out as if, "So what?" It's the diminishing of our ability to participate in the democratic process here in this House: three days; three closure motions. I don't understand it, and I think that in the long haul the loser in all of this will be the taxpayer, the constituent of the province of Ontario.

Let me just share with the people out there—because the folks in here I think know what's on the table right now and what we're debating. It says here that:

"Pursuant to standing order 46, and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 14, An Act to implement the 1999 Budget and to make other amendments to various Acts"—a lot of acts—"in order to foster an environment for jobs, growth and prosperity in Ontario, when Bill 14 is next called as a government order"—which was done this afternoon—"the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and, at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

"That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

"That the order for third reading of the bill may then immediately be called."

So we've gone from some slight debate on second reading to an ordering of the bill at second reading without any amendment, move directly to third reading and then vote on third reading, and the bill is through the House. Since when is that democracy? Since when is that an allowance for the participation by members of this House in the ordering of business and the development of policy and legislation as it affects the constituents of this province?

Then it goes on to say, "When the order for third reading is called, the remainder of the sessional day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill," which is what we're into now. "At 5:55 pm ... as the case may be on such day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment." We're disposing of third reading of this bill here this afternoon. So we've gone from second reading to third reading to some limited debate on that third reading, and then we're forcing it through the House.

"That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding 'Deferred Votes'; and

"That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes."

Once again, and we've said this over and over in this place over the last four and half years, this Conservative Party, which got government in 1995, declared very early

on in its mandate that it didn't want to be government; it got re-elected again in 1999; in its speech from the throne reiterated its statement that it didn't want to be government; and now we have an example before us here today of just exactly what that means. It means that they don't believe in the process here. They don't believe in the give and take and the checks and balances of this place that have been built up over a long number of years by parties of different persuasions and different stripes—Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats—so that we don't put something in place in great haste that at the end of the day we will regret, that at the end of the day we have to bring more legislation back to fix, but that in fact will be, when we're finished with it, in the best interests of the people of Ontario and building up a province that the world continues to envy and wants to emulate in very significant ways.

That's one of the points I wanted to raise here this afternoon in the time that I had to speak on this closure motion and on this bill.

The other thing I wanted to talk to is to respond somewhat to some of the commentary from across the way. It is, frankly, in my view, simply put, incorrect. There's a lot of incorrect information being put on the record and I just thought I would by way of example share with you one of those things.

1740

This afternoon the member for Northumberland got up in his place and suggested that this government said it would balance the budget in five years. That's what you said. Then we read from the Common Sense Revolution, which some of us still happen to have a copy of—I suppose you guys have probably all burned yours, just in case somebody should challenge you on the authenticity of some of the policies that you've put in place—“This plan will fully balance the Ontario budget within our first mandate.” It seems to me this is the second mandate. Are we into the second mandate? Maybe I've got it wrong here; maybe you're still in your first mandate. But it seems to me we went before the province on, I think it was June 3, 1999; there was an election and you guys are into your second mandate. And guess what? You haven't balanced the budget yet.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You've got the wrong one.

Mr Martin: No, this is the one. This is the Common Sense Revolution. The member for Northumberland very clearly put on the record here this afternoon that the promise was that your government was going to balance the budget in your first mandate. That's on page 5, the third sheet in the book. You're very early into your Common Sense Revolution and already you've broken a promise. This is the government that said, “We do what we say we're going to do.” You puff your chest up and say, “We did what we said we were going to do.” Here we are on one of the more fundamental pieces of your—

Mr Galt: Point of order, Mr Speaker: The current presentation is pointing out a mistake that I made, and I just want to correct his correction. I think that's only fair.

The Acting Speaker: You can't do that. That's not a point of order.

Mr Martin: Obviously, Speaker, I've twigged some interest over here. I've touched a nerve. He did admit to having made a mistake. That's probably the first time in—I've been here for almost five years now. It's the first time I've heard any one of them over there suggest even for a second that they might have made a mistake. We should mark on the clock here, do something special this afternoon—

Mr Galt: Point of order, Mr Speaker: He misunderstood again. I was correcting his mistake, that he was trying—

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

Mr Martin: We have the member over the way doing a little tap dance now about who actually made a mistake. I suggest he did—and we'll have a look at Hansard tomorrow—say just a few minutes ago that I was correcting his mistake. He admitted that he made a mistake. That's refreshing. Maybe it's a window open now to some new approach to government around here, where we actually have some honesty coming from across the floor and an admission to the fact that you're not fulfilling your promises, you're not doing everything you said you were going to do. On an issue of some fundamental importance, you broke the promise. You said you were going to balance the budget. You said you were going to balance it in your first term, and you didn't do it. Imagine that. You didn't balance the budget. Let me tell you what you did do.

The Acting Speaker: Perhaps the member could address his comments through the Chair.

Mr Martin: Certainly, Speaker, through the Chair. Do you know what they did instead of balancing the budget? They gave the bank away. As soon as they got elected, all their friends and benefactors lined up at the door with their hands out and said: “Give us money. We got you elected; you have to deliver.” So they did. They brought in the tax break. And we know from the analysis that was done, from the figures we put out during the election and all the way through the last mandate, that your friends and benefactors, the people at the top end, the folks making all the money, made off like bandits with your tax break. You gave them all the money, so you had no money left to balance the budget. You had a choice to make. The choice was very clear.

Mr Hastings: Shame on you.

Mr Martin: The member for Etobicoke North is saying, “Shame on you.” I'm saying shame on you. You had a choice to make. Do you know what the choice was? It was give the money to your friends and benefactors on one hand, or balance the budget on the other. Do you know what you chose to do? You chose to give the money to your friends and benefactors by way of the tax break, and you didn't balance the budget. As a matter of fact, what you did was run up the debt. Here's the party that prides itself on knowing how to manage fiscal issues. Here's the party that said, “We don't believe in

debt; we would never run up a debt,” pointing a finger at the federal government, talking about them running up a debt. Let me tell the people of Ontario what you did. We left the province with \$80 billion of debt because we spent money in some really difficult economic times in this province to be sure that programs stayed in place, that people didn’t lose their jobs. These guys got in in some of the better economic times that this province had seen in a long time, and what did they do? They said they were going to balance the budget—

Mr Hastings: And we are.

Mr Martin: —but they ran up the debt. The debt is now, today, as we speak, member for Etobicoke North, at some \$120 billion; \$40 billion more in debt since you come in. That’s \$10 billion a year that you put this province in debt since you’ve been government. They borrowed \$10 billion a year to pay for the tax break that they gave their rich friends and benefactors.

They stand up over there as if they had just gone to church or something, preaching fiscal responsibility, “We’re going to balance the deficit and we’re going to straighten out the economy and we’re going to make sure that this province is never in debt anymore,” when in fact the details of the budgets that they keep putting out speak a completely different story: \$40 billion more in debt than we were in 1995.

Having said that, I have to tell you that I worry. We’re in a time of some really exciting and interesting and positive economic times in this province, it seems. If you read the financial pages of the newspapers these days, corporations and big business and industry are making historically record-high profits in this province, although I have to tell you that some of that profit is being generated on the backs of some of the people who used to work in those industries.

I share with you and the members across the way a piece out of the National Post, Friday, November 19, where the TD Bank was posting a record profit. Right underneath it, though, it plans to cut jobs. So I worry that as this economy that’s not based on anything really concrete or substantial continues to run its course, eventually it will run out of steam.

It’s based on a couple of things that I don’t think are sustainable or long-term in nature. One is that it’s hugely speculative, speculation of a kind that is quite worrisome and should be quite worrisome to anybody who’s watching the economy of this province. The other is that the good economy that we’re seeing is built on some of the bigger corporations and financial institutions laying off people. It’s not on new innovations, it’s not on new intelligence, it’s not on new research and development; it’s on cutting jobs.

Every year we see big corporations coming in and announcing increased profits and usually, if not with the announcement then shortly thereafter, there’s a piece that comes out that says, “We’re going to cut more jobs so that next year we can announce another historically record-high increase in our profitability so that our share-

holders will be happy.” Well, eventually that house of cards comes falling down and, alas, this government has no economic development programs to speak of to kick in when that economy begins to come crashing down.

I just want to put very briefly on the record another point this afternoon that nobody has talked about much in the last four and a half years in this place. That is that some of the growth in the economy, some of the good news that we’ve seen over the last four years, yes, is very much dependent on the growth in the US economy, but it’s also very much a result of initiatives taken by the NDP government from 1990 to 1995 that only began to show fruit, only began to produce some positive results, soon after these folks took office.

We governed, people will remember, in some very difficult times. There was some great upheaval. We were dealing in a major way with the Mulroney free trade deal and the high interest rates that he was promoting and the GST and the start of a terrible recession.

We put in place as a government a number of very exciting initiatives which I will get into in more detail at another time in this House so the folks across the way will remember and realize that some of the jobs that we’re seeing out there, not all of them, are actually a result of some of the things that we had done when we were in government, particularly in places like Sault Ste Marie, where at Algoma Steel, by way of the restructuring and the leadership that we gave and some of the guarantees that we put in place, bringing together the management of that corporation with the workers, with the financial institutions, we saved some 4,000 to 5,000 jobs in that community, not to speak of St Mary’s Paper, where we saved another 300 jobs. That company now has reinvested in further—

Interjection.

Mr Martin: Yes, they took pay cuts. Unlike the hockey players, they took pay cuts and that company is doing well too.

The list goes on and on, Mr Speaker; places like your riding now, like Elliott Lake, where we put a fund of \$250 million on the table to deal with the closure of the mines that they’ve taken and put into some very good small and medium-sized businesses that are creating jobs in that area—not enough, mind you, but a few.

I go on record here this afternoon to suggest that it’s wrong for us to be ramming legislation through at the breakneck speed that we are in this place, three time allocation motions in three days in this place, cutting off debate, cutting off democracy. Above and beyond that, the program of this government is wrong as well.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Klees has moved government notice of motion number 11. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Acting Speaker: Those in favour will rise one by one until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnett, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Skarica, Toni
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Molinari, Tina R.	Tilson, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John	Young, David

The Acting Speaker: Those opposed?

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Ruprecht, Tony
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Smitherman, George
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 48; the nays are 28.

The Acting Speaker: I declare this motion carried.

This House will stand adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1805.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

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

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

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

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