



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 1 December 1999

Mercredi 1^{er} décembre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Copies of Hansard

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

Exemplaires du Journal

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 1 December 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 1^{er} décembre 1999

The House met at 1848.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HOUSE SITTINGS

HEURES DE SÉANCE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 1999, on the motion by Mr Klees that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a), the House shall continue to meet until Thursday, December 23, 1999, at which time the Speaker shall adjourn the House without motion until Monday, April 3, 2000.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Mr Speaker, I am asking for unanimous consent, and I believe my House leader talked to the other two House leaders before we adjourned at 6, to continue in our rotation as our member who was speaking will not be back. I believe we have about 18 minutes left.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is it agreed? Agreed. So be it.

Ms Martel: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and the other members.

In the time I have this evening, knowing that we are dealing with the House calendar and knowing that this Legislature at any time could deal with virtually any issue, I think it's going to be pretty freewheeling tonight in terms of what we debate. I decided that in the time I have that I would like to address a document that I think of all of us as MPPs received in November about an issue that involves violence against women and children, particularly abuse against women and children.

It is not a topic that would get wide coverage in the media. It's not very sexy, it certainly isn't very appealing and it probably wouldn't get a lot of air time otherwise. But I'd like to make some reference to this report that we all received. It speaks volumes about what still must be done in Ontario to deal with abused women and children, and it speaks volumes to the needs that are still out there today, yet again today, when it comes to dealing with abused women and children in this province.

The document we all received was called Ten Years from Montreal: Still Working for Change. It was put out at the beginning of November for the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses. Members who have been here before would know that OAITH, for short, every November at the start of Wife Assault

Prevention Month holds a press conference in which they release to the media, members of the public and MPPs information that they have gathered over the last year with respect to the level of violence against women and children, with respect to the cuts the government might have made, with respect to the changes the government might be making to the criminal justice system or to the community-based system designed to meet women's needs. They also call on the government to do certain things, and that has been a tradition.

When I was first elected here, there used to be quite a large lobby that occurred with members of OAITH. They would come to Toronto from all parts of the province, because they represent over 65 shelters in the province, and they would speak directly to all three political parties. Regrettably, for reasons I will not get into, that kind of lobby effort has not gone on for a number of years, but OAITH still takes the time to hold a press conference and to make MPPs aware of what they have documented. I certainly appreciated that they did it again this year, and I want to use a lot of the documentation that they have provided in the remarks that I'd like to make right now.

The situation continues to be desperate in Ontario with respect to abused women and abused children. Since the release of the recommendations from the May-Iles inquest, and that occurred in July 1998, there have been yet another 33 women murdered in Ontario, almost all by partners, by former partners, by people with whom they had had an intimate relationship. In 1997-98, almost 28,000 women and children were admitted to 116 women's shelters in Ontario, and that represents almost one third of all women who took refuge in shelters in Canada in the last year. Many more women and children were receiving outreach, were receiving follow-up services, crisis intervention through telephone counselling, supportive group counselling, legal support, ex-resident support and advocacy.

A survey that they did of their member shelters, the 63 in 1998, showed that a number of shelters, between 32 and 36, provided crisis telephone support to over 61,000 calls and brought outreach services to over 12,000 women and children. In November 1998, OAITH told us that the requests for services and shelters had increased from 11% in 1994-95 to 33% in 1997-98, fully one third of the female population.

It is also true that many of those women who sought support at women's services in the community were not likely to go to the police to report on their abuser or to try and get this matter into court. The survey shows that only

24% of women in Ontario shelters had ever contacted the police about their abuser; in only 58% of those cases were charges ever laid. Over 75% of women using shelters are addressing the abuse by using counselling support and women's advocacy services. Only a quarter of them want to be involved or get involved with the police.

I raise that point because, if only a quarter of women will involve themselves with the police to deal with abusive situations, surely that determines how we will structure our response to woman and child abuse. Surely that gives an indication to government of where resources should be placed in order to deal most effectively with women who are abused. Surely that says very clearly and sends a clear signal that 75% of women won't contact the police, won't enter the criminal justice system, so the support that we have to provide has to come from community-based women's services. That's where the focus has to be, and that's what I'll address further in my remarks. But those are clearly the statistics: women seeking help in shelters has grown 30% to 33% in the last year, from 11% in 1994-95.

The government response needs to be talked about. The government response to community-based programs has been to cut many of them. We know that those are the services women use to deal with abusive situations. It's clear that, immediately after the June election, women's shelters, community counselling programs for women and children experiencing violence, second-stage housing programs and the referral services all had cuts. In fact, counselling at second-stage housing was cut completely—\$2.6 million. We now know that in many of those second-stage housing programs the majority could not continue to provide counselling even free, and that five second-stage housing projects have closed.

We also know that in 1997 the government announced some funding for front-line services for abused women and children, and OAITH makes it clear that most of those have been short-term, one-time projects for research, workshops or educational materials. In total, they make it clear that, after eliminating approximately \$9 million from front-line services for abused women and children, the 1997 allocation of \$7 million over four years did not match what had been cut, and in fact there has been a net loss of ongoing funding for community-based programs for women and children who are trying to escape violence.

We also know that the government has, to its credit, made changes on the criminal justice side. The problem is that when only a quarter of women who suffer abuse and violence will use the justice system, we have to ask whether we are putting our resources in the right place to deal effectively with these women and children.

For example, the government did develop two pilot specialized court programs in Toronto called the domestic violence courts. We know as well that the government expanded hospital-based sexual assault programs and included domestic violence in these to also get evidence to use in criminal cases. The government as well introduced the Victims' Bill of Rights, but we all know that

has been challenged in court by victims, and the court then demonstrated that no rights have actually been conferred on victims as a result of the passage of this piece of legislation.

The establishment of the Office for Victims of Crime was announced in the throne speech. We are waiting to hear from that office with respect to their response to deal with the May-Iles inquest.

It is very clear that the government is taking a very limited approach to how it addresses violence against women. Most of the initiatives have to do with the criminal justice system, and that's not a bad thing. But if only a quarter of the women who are being abused will ever use the justice system, what do we do about the remaining 75% who are trying to flee from their abusers and who need the support in the community in order to do so?

It is clear that if you are going to deal holistically as a government with the issue of abuse against women and children, then changes to the criminal justice system have to be in addition to, not an alternative to, community women's services. The government has to understand that it can't be one or the other. The changes to the criminal justice system have to be seen as changes in addition to profound, increased support for community-based services, because those are the support services women are using when they flee from their abusers.

As a result of the very tragic and very horrible death of Arlene May, the coroner's inquest released a number of recommendations—about 230 in total, if I recall—early in July 1998. Some of the recommendations included, and this came from the jury itself, that the preferred form of victim services for women and children should be the independent model based on community women's services; for example, shelters.

The jury also recommended expanding counselling for child witnesses within women's shelters—not outside the shelter system but within shelters. And they recommended a review of all funding for shelters in the province.

The jury recommended that a government-community committee be struck to implement the recommendations and that all the ministries of government, when they were bringing forward recommendations to deal with domestic violence, should deal with women's advocacy groups before those initiatives were implemented.

And the jury recommended that the coroner would report on the progress of the implementation of all the recommendations a year after the release of those same recommendations.

1900

What has happened since the recommendations have been released—as I said, there were at least 213. OAITH had standing. The Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children had standing. They were able to make clear to the jury how systems worked, how community-based services worked, why they were important and why women felt more comfortable going there than entering the criminal justice system etc.

As a result of all that work, what has happened is the following. Immediately upon release of the recommendations, the Attorney General's staff said that 95% of the recommendations were in fact being worked on. What was interesting about that announcement was that it was some four months later that the joint domestic violence committee, which was supposed to deal with all the implementation, was finally formed. So the Attorney General's staff waited four months after they made a grand announcement that 95% of the recommendations were underway to finally establish the committee that the coroner had recommended be established to look at implementation.

What's interesting to note is that OAITH, the transition houses, were not included in the government's committee. One of the groups that had standing, one of the groups that made a profound impact upon the jury during the May-Iles inquest, one of the groups that deals directly with women and children who are fleeing their abusers because they operate shelters in the province, counselling for women and children, children's witness programs, was not included in the government committee that was established to implement the recommendations that affect women and children who are affected by violence.

Second, the coroner did report in September 1999. And because most of the changes that came in the recommendations had to do with changes in government policy, what the coroner did in essence was give an accounting from the various ministries of government that were affected on what they had done in the last year.

It's interesting to note what the government provided as responses to the May-Iles recommendations, and I just want to cite some of these.

It's clear that initiatives that were implemented by previous governments, such as the introduction of emergency legal aid for abused women in shelters, were included as a government response to the May-Iles inquest recommendations. The expansion of the domestic violence courts, announced by Charles Harnick a full year before the release of the May-Iles recommendations, was also included as part of the recommendations to the May-Iles inquest, even though it had been a full year previously before the recommendations came out.

Interjection.

Ms Martel: A whole year before the recommendations even came out. I'm not sure how the government could possibly have included that in the recommendations when it was announced a full year earlier. Of course it wasn't a response.

The current funding of 98 women's shelters and 100 community counselling programs, which had been in place long before the inquest took place—in fact, some of these shelters have been in place 25 years—was also included as part of the government's response to the May-Iles inquest. It had nothing to do with the May-Iles inquest. Those shelters were already in place. They had been funded by three different governments. That had nothing to do with the recommendations that were made

by the coroner's jury—nothing—but the government chose to include it as part of what they had done.

The shelter funding review was deemed to be implemented because it had been uploaded through the Who Does What committee. So the 20% funding of basic shelter costs came to the government, and the government included that as its response to the shelter funding review that the coroner's jury had recommended. That had nothing to do with what the coroner recommended. The jury clearly recommended a review of shelter funding to ensure it was adequate. The fact that the government picked up the 20% the municipalities had formerly paid for had nothing to do with a full-fledged review, which is what the jury had demanded.

Fifth, the jury's recommendation for increased independent supports for women in the community, such as shelters, was implemented by virtue of a pilot project which was already located in a Toronto agency. Again I have to say that the government deemed to be implemented one of the recommendations the jury clearly made, by the mere fact that a pilot project was located in a Toronto agency.

A number of other recommendations that had to do with community-based support, which is important to OAITH, which are the services women use when they flee from their abusers, were bypassed completely by the coroner. He suggested that those critical issues about funding for shelters, funding for counselling in shelters, funding for children's witness programs were not going to be addressed by him or the government but would be addressed in the Office for Victims of Crime report. That hasn't been released yet, so we don't know what the government response is going to be.

It's clear that unless you were an expert in Ontario government initiatives and when they were implemented, the government used many things that had already been in place, that had already been implemented, as part of their response to the very direct recommendations that came from the May-Iles coroner's inquest.

What's also interesting is that the domestic violence joint committee that the government was told to implement also made recommendations earlier this year. What happened there was that they released yet another 173 recommendations on how to implement the 213 recommendations that came from the May-Iles inquest. The good thing is they recommended a time frame for each one. The really dismal part of all this is that we would have yet another 173 recommendations on how to implement the very important 213 recommendations that already came out in July 1998. Clearly what we're going to have happening as this continues is that the very important matters of how we fund shelters, shelter reviews, how we fund counselling services, how we fund child witness programs in shelters are not going to be dealt with. They will be put off again and again.

It's as a result of what has happened in terms of, at times, a very inadequate response to the important recommendations that came from the May-Iles inquest and the fact that domestic violence is increasing that OAITH

sent this document to all of us. They have called on the government to do a number of things:

(1) Immediately fund the equivalent of at least one additional women's direct service community support worker and one additional child and youth support counsellor for each women's shelter and each second-stage housing program in Ontario. The total cost would be less than the \$18 million that the government has talked about giving as a bit of a tax break to the NHL if the NHL decides to stay in Ontario. I'm sure we could probably find that money somewhere if we could find it for the NHL.

(2) Immediately implement a review of the funding for women's shelters, as was requested in the May-Iles coroner's jury, and second-stage housing programs with a view to increasing these funding resources.

The coroner's jury made it clear that women's community services were extremely important, and we know from what OAITH has given us that 75% of women who flee abusers use those services. That's why they're making the kinds of recommendations for change that they are. I hope the government would follow up seriously on those most important recommendations for community-based services, because those are the ones that women and children who flee violence really need.

1910

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I'm pleased to speak to the House calendar motion. There has been some talk on the part of the Liberal opposition, and even some of the third party, that there was actually no need to have an extension of the hours, and I'd like to speak to that.

The motion said that "the House shall continue to meet until Thursday, December 23, 1999, at which time the Speaker shall adjourn the House without motion until Monday, April 3, 2000."

Some members of the Liberal Party, specifically the member from St Catharines, indicated that if we had come back sooner, it wouldn't be necessary to sit longer. The member from St Catharines said that our government was being arrogant and deceitful in not coming back sooner and that we were treating this as a dictatorship. The member from St Catharines and all members of this Legislature know that we couldn't come back sooner. Shortly after the election, I came into this chamber, I saw the renovations that were going on and I wrote hundreds of letters to my constituents pointing out that we would not be back on the date the House calendar had set because it appeared to me at that point that there was no way those renovations would be complete. In fact, as we know, the renovations weren't completed until a month after we would normally have come back. The member from St Catharines and many members of this Legislature attended the opening ceremonies for the new chamber. We all agreed that it looked very nice. It was a job that was long overdue.

Having a one-month delay necessitates that we sit longer. It means night sittings. But that's OK. Most of us don't mind. There are a few who think we are being

arrogant. I don't think that's arrogance. I think it's democratic, and I think it's what the people of Ontario expect of us. We've heard a lot of debate in this House. Our government believes in the democratic system. We believe in allowing debate to carry on.

Sometimes the debate seems a little superfluous when we hear, over and over again, the members on the other side speaking about tax cuts and how we wouldn't have to do this or we wouldn't have to do that if we didn't have the tax cuts. I'm going to ask a few of them right now. The member from Ottawa-Vanier: Did you give your tax cut back? No reaction. The member from Don Valley East, Mr Caplan: Did you give your tax cut back?

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: You didn't give it back? OK.

I'll ask the House leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Duncan, the member from Windsor-St Clair: Did you give your tax cut back?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Yes, I did.

Mr Wettlaufer: He said he did. Well, that's not bad. One out of three.

Mr Duncan: If you count the user fees I paid.

Mr Wettlaufer: Oh, now he's being conditional. In other words, he didn't give his tax cut back. There was provision in the budget, in 1996, to give your tax cut back, and you haven't given the tax cut back. The members of my constituency who are watching this on TV tonight, I know what's going through their heads right now. I can't say it in this House, but I know what they're thinking. They're thinking, "How dare you speak out of both sides of your mouth," which I can say, but I can't say the other thing, the three-letter word starting with "I" or the multi-letter word starting with "h". I can't say those. Boy, would I like to. I wonder how you go back to your ridings—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. This is the winter season, and although it's awfully nice outside—the sun is shining and it's warm—it is the winter season. That's the season for playing hockey, and we think of ice. I think we're all getting onto very thin ice. I think we would be better to get back on thick ice.

Mr Wettlaufer: I will say that this is also the season of goodwill, so in the spirit of goodwill I won't be too critical of them any more—well, for a couple of minutes anyway.

We have spent a lot of time in this House in the first few months of this government term. We have debated and passed Bill 5, and the Liberal Party voted unanimously for it. We also introduced and debated and passed Bill 7. We debated and passed Bill 8. We debated and haven't yet passed Bill 11. We're getting there. We plan on passing Bill 14 as well.

There has been much debate on these bills. We have spent time being considerate of the opposition parties, considerate of the democratic process and considerate of the fact that there must be debate in this House on many of these bills. That takes time, and that is why we must sit a little longer.

Of course, there is always the possibility that the opposition parties may choose not to spend a lot of time debating some of the bills that are coming forward or have come forward, in which case we will not need to sit until December 23. That possibility exists, and I'm the first one to admit it. However, we on the government side must recognize that you may want to give full debate. For that purpose, it is necessary to sit until December 23. If you want to go home and do your Christmas shopping early, you know what the alternative is.

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: December 30? I can't introduce that, but of course I can discuss it with the House leader, I say to the member from Don Valley East. If you would like to sit over Christmas, I certainly can sit over Christmas. It's no skin off my nose.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Will you buy me a gift?

Mr Wettlaufer: Buy you a gift? That would be a frosty Friday in, wherever.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): You got a tax cut.

Mr Wettlaufer: My colleague the member for London West says we already gave you a Christmas present. It's called a tax cut. By your own admission you didn't turn it back.

I also want to ask the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, who has now come into the House: Did you give your tax cut back? No, he didn't either. To the member from Algoma-Manitoulin: Did you give your tax cut back?

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: Oh, you didn't either. Isn't this interesting? Nobody I've asked so far on that side of the House has given his tax cut back. They argue against it, they waste a lot of time arguing against the tax cut, but they didn't give it back. Where are your principles?

I confess I didn't give it back either. I'm using mine to help a family in need. Are any of you doing that? Oh, you're not doing that either.

Interjection: There's the food banks and the United Way.

1920

Mr Wettlaufer: I give money to the food bank. I give money to the United Way. But I am also directly helping a family in need. Which one of you is doing that? I submit to you that I care very deeply for my constituents. Many constituents want the tax cuts, and I'm helping constituents in need as well.

I have to say that the NDP have very great principles, and we know from which side they are always going to debate. They feel very strongly that we are not doing the right thing. That is their feeling, and they stand by that at all times. We know that. But the Liberals: Do you know that in 1995, in their red book, they campaigned that they were going to limit health care to \$17 billion and, get this, they would add \$17 billion to the debt before they could balance the budget. Understand that. They said they would add \$17 billion to the debt before they would balance the budget. But what have they done for the last

four and a half years? They have criticized us for not balancing the budget sooner. I have stood in this House more times than once and said, "Yes, we could have balanced the budget sooner, if we had done like the Liberals and restricted health care spending to \$17 billion." We are spending \$20.6 billion, and that is going to increase again. It will increase each year for the next five years. It will increase by 20% over the next five years. But you people don't talk about that. You tell us we're not spending enough, but you were going to spend \$17 billion.

We know that our tax cuts have increased government revenue. We know that. It has been evident. It was \$49.5 billion in 1996-97, and it's \$54 billion this year. That's government revenue. They like to sit over there and say: "Do you thank the federal government? Do you thank the US government? Do you thank all the other provincial governments?" I'd like to point out to them that the growth in our province is the highest of any region in any of the countries in the G8, right here in Ontario. You say: "What about trade? Isn't it great that we're trading to the United States?" If we weren't creating a competitive environment in this province, we wouldn't be trading anything to the United States. But I realize you are Liberals and you do have trouble understanding that from time to time. I can appreciate that.

There was a book written a number of years ago called *Double Vision: The Inside Story of the Liberals in Power*, by Eddie Greenspon. You're possessed with a multiplicity of double vision. I don't know how you can have so much of it. It's wonderful. I wish I could be so blessed. But unfortunately, I got my education at a time when black was black and white was white, and you know, I still think that one plus one makes two.

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: I'm being criticized over here because I'm also German. Knock it off.

I'd like to point out too that we spent much time debating the throne speech. The Liberals and the NDP opposed the throne speech. They didn't like what we had to say, what the Lieutenant Governor said. Businesses liked the message in the throne speech. I'll give you an example.

Rod Seiling, president of the greater Toronto hotel association—remember Rod Seiling? He was an all-star hockey player; now he has a very responsible position with the greater Toronto hotel association. Also, Judith Andrew—do you know who Judith Andrew is? She is only the vice-president for Ontario of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—you know, that small association representing about 80% of small businesses in all Canada. They're the ones who create 80% of the jobs in this province. They don't mean much, though, right? Judith Andrew said, "On behalf of small business, we were looking for all the commitments that Premier Harris had made, pre-election, to our members, and we were able to tick a lot of them off in the throne speech." Isn't that nice? Business people are creating jobs and they like our message. Do you know something else? I

went back to my riding after the throne speech, I went back to my riding after Bill 7, after Bill 14, and I keep hearing from my constituents, "You people are doing the right things."

Last Friday, a couple of senior citizens came into my office. These two senior citizens are retired former municipal employees, and they both told me they were former members of the NDP. They had voted NDP all their lives until this last election. Do you know what they said to me? They said: "Wayne, we like what you're doing. Keep it up."

In 1995 I was outside the Budd plant in Kitchener distributing my brochures during the election campaign. And I believe it was the secretary of the CAW—he turned around from going into the plant, came out to me and said: "Wayne, we're going to endorse you. But if you do not keep your promises, we'll be on your doorstep every day." Do you know, those people have never been on my doorstep. They like what we are doing. They represent the rank-and-file, blue-collar worker in my riding. They represent the rank-and-file, blue-collar worker in all of Ontario.

These are the people who work hard for their money. These are the people who want the tax cuts because they turn around and invest that money or spend the money, and when they spend it, it creates other jobs. When it creates other jobs, those people in turn pay taxes. The cumulative tax money from 617,000 net new jobs is rolling into government coffers, an increase of \$5 billion in revenue for this province. What are we doing with some of that money? We are turning it back into health care. What are we doing with some more of that money? We're putting it into education.

I am very happy to be part of a government that keeps its promises and, yes, part of a government that is willing to sit longer in this House, if necessary, in order to give the opposition time to debate. Whether or not the debate makes sense, I think it's only reasonable that we allow them to debate the issue, to debate the bill, to debate budget Bill 14, to debate Bill 11, the act to reduce red tape, the one that governments want. They want less red tape. They want so little red tape that they can create more and more jobs.

There is now a prediction that there could be 825,000 new jobs from 1995 when we started to 2005—825,000 net new jobs, 825,000 people working who weren't working before. The people in my riding want those jobs.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I'd like to seek consent from the House to share my time with the member for Ottawa-Vanier.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed? Agreed.

Mr Gravelle: I'm very glad to have an opportunity to speak on the calendar motion before us. It gives me an opportunity to talk about a number of issues that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to talk about were we not discussing this and extending our time in the House, and thank God we are, considering that we did come back so late. Notwithstanding the comments by the member for Kitchener Centre, the fact is that we had

every opportunity to come back earlier and it was disgraceful that we didn't.

May I also say that I find the member's remarks and the actions of this government quite hypocritical in terms of their attacks on our concerns about the impact government decisions are having on our constituents and people across the province. A government that talks about tax cuts, talks about the fact that they are trying to protect people and give them more money in their pockets, is adding extraordinary user fees all over the place that are nothing more than tax increases. When you've got a government that has allowed tuition fees to rise to the extraordinary degree they have in the past four years—imagine what that means if you want to talk about your tax cuts. I speak to many constituents who tell me they don't notice any significant difference as tax cuts are concerned because of the extraordinary differences in user fees.

1930

The government promised there would be no new user fees. What did the Mike Harris government do? It imposed user fees on seniors and disabled people in terms of prescription drugs. It was a shameful thing to do—\$250 million, and they said they wouldn't do it. Just a week or so ago, we found out that the Family Responsibility Office is going to be charging user fees to people who are receiving family support. They're charging user fees for them to access their accounts. That's disgraceful; it's extraordinary.

We talk about small business owners. Let me tell you that Bill 79 was such a mess that during the campaign, and certainly before that and since, small business owners were furious at this government for the mess they made of the property tax. They are absolutely furious that they were having their taxes clawed back and were having to find huge amounts of money. Don't fool yourself. People aren't fooled by it. They recognize that the government has just tacked on user fee upon user fee, which is simply tax upon tax.

We know that hunting and fishing licence fees have gone up. The justification was, "We want more money to spend in our special purposes account." Then we find out there was \$4 million left over from last year. Meanwhile they're not doing any of the improvements related to that fund that they should be doing. I tabled a petition the other day from people in the Hurkett-Dorian-Red Rock-Nipigon area, who are very concerned about the fact that they can't get the Black Sturgeon road improved and it should be improved.

Remote camp owners in this province are being charged increases of 500% on the land-use permits for their remote camps. These camps are used three months of the year and have no power. There's very little access other than through snow machines. The fact is the government is ratcheting up the user fee by 500%. In fact about a year and a half ago, the government tried to ram through quietly, may I say, because it wasn't legislation, 300% increases on field sign advertising for small businesses on the highways—a huge issue. The former

Minister of Transportation backed down on it, because again he was attacking the business owners for signs they were putting up promoting their businesses.

It's extraordinary to me how the government can continue to sell this tax cut when it's very clear that it's all being ripped back, and people know it's being ripped back. I certainly am glad that I have an opportunity to express those feelings, because I feel very strongly about it. We all care about our constituents. Again you were directing some questions at us, "How do you feel about the doctor shortage in your particular area?" The fact is that you've become underserved areas as well and your government is taking no action to deal with that problem. We're waiting for the McKendry report. Then we find out that when the McKendry report comes forward, it's going to be sent to a panel of experts. Last week we had private member's legislation related to foreign-trained professionals. We need to get them working in our province, and the government will not do anything about that. There are answers to these problems, and it's astonishing to me that you stand there piously and attack us when we are fighting for the people of this province. We are fighting as hard as we can for the people of this province, and don't have to listen to you.

Excuse me for getting so upset. I want to use the rest of my time, if I can, to talk about some of the issues I won't get the opportunity to talk about.

I come from a very big riding, Thunder Bay-Superior North, made up of essentially the former riding of Port Arthur, the north side of Thunder Bay, and the former Lake Nipigon riding. I know the member for Brampton Centre, Mr Spina, who was in the north fairly often as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, knows the area well and was a big supporter of everything we want up there, and need in our communities.

It's a big riding and I am enjoying representing the constituents as much as I can and trying to fight for their issues. I want to talk about some of the issues in some of the communities in the time I have. Again, I'm glad we are going to be extending the sittings of the House till December 23, and I, like many others on our side, wish we could stay here year-round. The fact that we're not coming back in the wintertime is distressing. We should be here, and I'm sure the member for Kitchener Centre would agree with that.

Mr Wettlaufer: It's a lot warmer here than where I'm going to be.

Mr Gravelle: That's true.

When I look at some of the issues we're battling for in my riding, let me start in the beautiful town of Marathon. There is an extraordinary marina development there called Carden Cove. It's got extraordinary economic potential. The community, municipality and chamber of commerce have worked very hard to get it in shape as a future marina development not just for the community but for the region as well. We are very keen to have support for that project through the northern Ontario heritage fund. I've spoken to the minister about it and

I've written him a letter, and he's certainly listened to me on it, I hope. It's very important that we get that support. This is going to have an extraordinary benefit for the entire area around Marathon and I hope we can see that come to fruition by next spring. It's very important we move forward on that. It will make a huge difference.

Another issue that's of concern in Marathon is the fact that there is no part-time justice of the peace. Marathon is a community of about 5,000 people and it's very distressing to all of us that there is not a justice of the peace living in Marathon. We are working very hard to have that happen as well because we think that's a service they should be rightfully expecting to have. Again, I hope the Attorney General will be helpful in that regard as well. We think that's very important, so we're going to continue to fight for that.

Terrace Bay is a beautiful community right on the shore of Lake Superior that I'm sure many of you in the House have been through. If you haven't stopped, you should stop there. It's a gorgeous community.

One of the major issues there is a seniors' health complex, a former home for the aged, called Birchwood Terrace. Last spring I got up in the Legislature because I really felt that once it was closed down as a district home for the aged—and it's a beautiful building—it made enormous sense for the government of Ontario to return this property back to the people of Terrace Bay and Schreiber, the reason being that in I believe 1974 Kimberly-Clark donated that property to the province to be used as a home for the aged for the price of \$1. We were successful in having it returned for \$1.

There's been quite a discussion, quite a battle over it. The fact is that McCausland Hospital and the community are certainly willing to pay the appraised value for the building because they're very keen to turn it into a seniors' complex, which could be a wonderful opportunity for people who are needing that kind of help and service as they age to stay in their communities. But we need help from the government in that regard as well.

The fact is that the building itself has many repairs and maintenance that need to be done, and I'm hoping the government will be listening to us on this. They wouldn't listen to us in terms of what I thought was a pretty fair deal as in returning the property for the \$1 which the government received it for, but I would hope, in light of the fact that they weren't able to do that, that they will very seriously look at helping us get that building up to standards so that the community and the hospital can then purchase it and we can turn it into the complex that we know it really can be.

The town of Schreiber is a great railway town and certainly home of our former Speaker, Mr Jack Stokes, and the former member for Lake Nipigon, a wonderful man and quite a legend in northern Ontario. Schreiber is an extraordinary community. It's going through difficult times. Inmet Mines closed about a year ago and the industrial base is not great there. But boy, what a town with spirit. They've got all kinds of projects on the go—we're talking about a beautiful railway interpretative

centre—and they've got a great entrepreneurial spirit there, which I know the members on the government side will appreciate, and certainly all my colleagues do.

But I can tell you that there still are some concerns. One of the things that worries us is that once the Lands for Life process was completed and it turned into the Living Legacy process, there were decisions being made in terms of the use of some of the land around our communities in terms of parkland. The fact is that although I think everybody likes more parkland, we still have to recognize that everybody loves to go to a picnic but somebody has to bring the food.

One of the concerns we have is that an area very near some development that Schreiber might be looking at in terms of mining may be designated potentially as one of the protected areas. The concern we have about that obviously is that there needs to be the flexibility for the community to continue to develop, and to develop a tax base, but perhaps more significantly what we really need to be careful of or concerned about is the fact that the Ontario forestry accord advisory board is making a number of decisions related to the Living Legacy process with no municipal representation. It's crucial that we have municipal representation on that advisory board so that when there are decisions that are about to be made in that regard, the municipal representatives can be there who obviously know what's going on in their communities. It's a major issue and a major concern, and we've got to watch it very, very closely.

1940

Certainly in Nipigon and Red Rock, again remarkable communities and very beautiful, about 100 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay, what we think would really make sense there is a 24-hour truck inspection station. It makes a great deal of sense. We know that the former minister, about a year and a half ago, announced there were going to be 10 new 24-hour truck inspection stations across the province. Somehow northwestern Ontario got left out of the mix. We think that's wrong. We know the volume of traffic has increased dramatically. We have an absolutely perfect spot for it to take place. It's something that I will continue to pursue, obviously, on their behalf. I know that Mr Hastings—I can't remember his riding, but the former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I believe—was up and spoke to them, and I really hope this will be looked at as a possibility. There certainly needs to be a truck inspection station; it's at the junction of Highways 11 and 17, and we are very, very keen on having that happen.

Beardmore: a remarkable community as well, the great, big snowman, for those of you who have driven through. It's a beautiful community.

Mr Wettlaufer: Great fishing.

Mr Gravelle: Great fishing; you're right. As you may also know, earlier this year there was a massive fire that very nearly burned down the town of Beardmore. There was an extraordinary effort by all concerned to save the town, but it was a very big and frightening fire. But

typical of the spirit of Beardmore, reeve Eric Rutherford has come out with an extraordinary proposal called the Phoenix proposal whereby he will take a lot of the dead wood that has been gathered as a result of that and actually turn it into a business. He's got a proposal that he has brought forward, and I know the ministries are interested in that, and they should be, because they never stop thinking.

Another aspect of that area we're looking at is the development of cottage lots. So we're very excited about that as well.

There are so many communities, and I apologize to those who are listening or watching for those that I missed.

The community of Jellicoe is a wonderful community: great hunting and fishing area, lots of lodges. It was absolutely devastated by the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, absolutely devastated. The general store was affected in a very negative way. It had a terrible impact and it was something we were very concerned about. I hope the government will continue to make sure it gives a fair compensation package, let alone looking at the whole process of how that cancellation took place. It was a pretty rotten deal, as you may recall. It was simply announced, end of story, and then some false consultation. That's not acceptable.

Geraldton, the home of the president of AMO, Michael Power, the mayor of Geraldton: again a community with an extraordinarily strong entrepreneurial spirit and economic base. One of the major concerns I have there, and I do hate to always be concerned simply with problems, because there are many positive things, but the fact is that the Ministry of Transportation has downloaded a section of 584 to the municipality. It's part of the provincial highway going to Nakina. It should not be downloaded. It's not fair, and it's something I think we need to pursue. Certainly the Minister of Transportation told me he would at least review it, and I hope that takes place.

Nakina: an extraordinary boom going on up there with the opening of the Buchanan Lumber sawmill. But you know something? They need OPP service up there now. The community has come back; it's back to life. Now they need full-time OPP service, and I hope we can get it.

The town of Longlac, another remarkable community in my riding and I'm very proud to represent it: many, many issues, of course, but one I will tell you is that the president of Beaulieu Bus Lines, Renald Beaulieu, a good friend of mine, is very concerned about the fact that it's difficult to get proper training places for his bus drivers. That's an issue for him.

These may seem insignificant or small, but they are very important, certainly to everybody in my riding. I'm glad to have had the opportunity to speak about them tonight. I appreciate the attention of the House. I will now pass to my colleague from Ottawa-Vanier.

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier) : Si j'ai bien compris, nous parlons sur une résolution sur le calendrier de la Chambre, et si j'ai bien compris, l'agenda de la

Chambre était de siéger jusqu'au 9 décembre prochain. Arriverons-nous à terminer tout le travail à accomplir ?

I expect that this government wants to introduce, as early as tomorrow, the bill concerning municipal restructuring and the downloading that comes with it. This government is obviously trying to limit debate and pass it before the end of the session.

How can you justify the ramming through of a bill that is causing such turmoil and dissension within the Conservative caucus? The members of this House and the people involved in this restructuring deserve that we take our time to look at every aspect of the bill. By the way, we don't even have the bill in our hands yet, so we don't know what it contains. We deserve a say before you choose to run this legislation through on a whim. People need to have a say in their reactions before we pass this bill. If time was such a concern, why was the sitting of the House delayed until this fall?

Êtes-vous vraiment un gouvernement responsable, un gouvernement qui n'a siégé que neuf jours avant cette session, a government that wants to adjourn the House until the spring? Is this what you call accountability?

This government has shown its arrogance countless times this year, and continues to show disdain by pushing forward bills without debate. It's as if this assembly has little or no importance for this government.

We, the Liberal caucus, use this Legislative Assembly as a forum to bring forth people's concerns. We come to the House only to have these bills rammed down our throats, with little or no analysis about their impact. If this government was concerned about ensuring the appropriate time being taken to examine the details of legislation, we would have sat much earlier this year.

J'ose espérer que la question de l'hôpital Montfort, qui dessert non seulement le comté d'Ottawa-Vanier mais la province dans son entier comme le seul hôpital francophone de la province qui donne des services en français, que son sort soit décidé dans les plus brefs délais. Vous savez que la décision de la cour divisionnaire, des trois juges, a été unanime. Vous devez aller de l'avant. C'est essentiel de reconnaître les droits fondamentaux des francophones. J'espère qu'on les prendra en considération et qu'on deviendra plus sérieux.

Let's be serious in this assembly. Let's pass bills and have a chance to talk on them and to debate them in all the essential little things that we have to do with these bills.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's certainly a pleasure for me to be able to rise and speak on this calen-

dar motion. I've heard a lot of moaning and bellyaching about sitting a few extra days, and complaining that we didn't come back early enough. I'm more than pleased to stay here until midnight on the 23rd, if that's what is necessary to get the necessary legislation through this House.

All through our previous term and into this term, this government and this party have not hung back. We've been prepared to take the bull by the horns and do what was necessary, and it has made a very significant difference here in Ontario.

For example, taxes are way down, significantly lower than they were back in 1995, even back in 1990. Just listening yesterday to the Minister of Finance talking about retail stores being up some 7%, after the jump last year, it's really going places. New jobs and all kinds of things are happening in Ontario.

The opposition talks a lot about how to govern. It's far easier to be throwing grenades than it is to catch them, and they certainly have that experience.

We have ended up returning hope and prosperity to this province, and I'm sure when the history books are written, there will be a lasting legacy for this government about the stimulation of the economy.

On the House calendar, as we look at how long this House will be sitting, to December 23, I'm very proud to sit until then and recognize the necessary things that the government has to do.

As such, I move that this question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker: I find that after the amount of debate, I cannot accept a closure motion on this motion.

Further debate?

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I do believe the standing orders of this House allow for unanimous consent on any matter before the House, and I believe we have unanimous consent that this motion be called.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there consent that the question now be put? It is agreed.

Mr Klees has moved government motion number 12. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Hon Mr Klees: Mr Speaker, I will move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1952.

CONTENTS

Wednesday 1 December 1999

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

House sittings , government notice of motion number 12, <i>Mr Sterling</i>	
Ms Martel.....	1017
Mr Wettlaufer.....	1020
Mr Gravelle.....	1022
Mrs Boyer.....	1024
Mr Galt.....	1025
Agreed to.....	1025

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 1^{er} décembre 1999

MOTIONS ÉMANANT DU GOUVERNEMENT

Heures de séance , avis de motion du gouvernement numéro 12, <i>M. Sterling</i>	
<i>M^{me}</i> Boyer.....	1024
Adoptée.....	1025