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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 31 May 2000

Mercredi 31 mai 2000

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

Wednesday 31 May 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 mai 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WATER QUALITY

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Events in Walkerton over the last couple of weeks have made all of us not just sad but have left us with many questions and, in particular, have given a whole new meaning to the area and to the cause of red tape and cutting of red tape.

Many of us have always followed this Red Tape Commission and looked at the kinds of things that were being advanced as simple bureaucracy, needless bureaucracy, that in fact are turning into what really is life and death on many fronts, in particular the area of the environment. Where I come from, the Great Lakes cleanup is a perfect example, where both the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment have made cuts, significant staff cuts, budgetary cuts, that have resulted in less being available for cleanup and, frankly, less availability of people who are in the business of cleanup and ensuring that legal levels of toxins are even acceptable.

What we are seeing in Windsor now is a rise in the level of mercury in the Detroit River. What we see now is that local councillors who are participating in committees are begging the province to come to the table. In fact, they are not even meeting the obligation they signed on to in agreements with the Canadian government.

I would like to call on the Ministers of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources to do a complete review of all of the cuts they have made as they relate to the cleanup of the Detroit River, to its obligations to international agreements which they signed on to and now are not coming to the table and fulfilling.

EVENTS IN DURHAM

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to rise today to inform the House of an upcoming event in my riding of Durham. The Lake Scugog Historical Society has once again organized an annual Steamboats on the Scugog Festival, which will be held on June 9, 10 and 11.

The festival takes place at Port Perry, which is located on Lake Scugog, part of the Trent-Severn system. Over 50 steamships are known to have plied these waters, and

the festival celebrates the age of steamship, antique boats and nautical history in general.

The organizing committee of Ken Gadsden, Mike McGill, Jim Musselman, Bruce Aikens and the chairman, Paul Arculus, has been hard at work putting together this outstanding community event. The Port Perry Chamber of Commerce and Port Perry Business Improvement Association have supported the efforts of this committee.

This year's event will feature the legendary steamboat from the 1951 movie *African Queen*. The steamboat's owners Jim and Barb Hendricks will be towing the 30-foot steamer all the way from Florida to attend the event.

Also on hand will be Woodwind Yachts, with a display of their boat restorations, classic and antique steamboats from across the province, the Antique Outboard Motor Club and model engineer clubs from across the Kawarthas and the province. The Port Perry High School band will provide entertainment.

The nautical events in Port Perry don't stop there. Our annual Canoe the Nonquon event will take place this Saturday morning. This fundraiser for the Scugog Shores Historical Museum is the province's oldest continually running canoe race.

I encourage all boat lovers across the province to attend the festival of boats in Port Perry in my riding of Durham.

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Before I begin my statement, I'd like to acknowledge a group of distinguished visitors from my great riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale who are in the west members' gallery.

My member's statement is on the subject of the situation in the town of Walkerton, and I would like to convey my sympathies to the people in that town.

Yesterday in this House Ontarians were treated to an incredible display of Tory arrogance. Not only did the Premier suggest to the people of Walkerton this soothing sound bite, "The procedures in place were sound," but he also defended the view that it is appropriate for an accused party to investigate itself. This from a government that purports to be tough on crime.

We witnessed the cabal of dumped Tory cabinet ministers laughing up a storm while this Legislature was engaged in the debate about the tragic events in Walkerton. Then, to top it all off, we had the member for Brampton Centre, the same member who sponsored a bill to audit

food banks, offering the following comeback to passionate demands for an independent inquiry: He said that's the way it's going to be because "we're the government and you're the opposition." I got in his face outside the Legislature, and I'll be in Brampton tonight, where I'll put it on the record again. He is under the mistaken impression that a majority government absents him and his party from being held accountable for the impact of their decisions—decisions which have contributed to death.

YORK CENTRAL HOSPITAL

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): I am very pleased to report that the York Central Hospital, which serves my riding of Thornhill, is preparing to open its new \$25-million Continuing Care and Rehabilitation Centre. This is a much-needed complex which will greatly benefit the residents of Thornhill. At capacity, the building will contain 116 long-term-care beds, 90 complex continuing care beds, 32 rehabilitation beds, a dialysis unit, an adult day program and a child daycare centre.

The facility is among the most modern of its kind in central Ontario, going beyond what is traditionally offered at a nursing home. Providing opportunities for intergenerational activities, the presence of a child care centre on the ground floor provides 60 care spaces for children of hospital staff and the community. The centre also features an outdoor play area, rest and dining areas. Also on the first floor will be an intergenerational chapel, rehabilitation assessment and treatment areas, patient dining and lounge rooms, an outdoor patio and recreation area and solarium.

Every patient room features a large window, and 60% of rooms are single occupancy, while the rest accommodate two patients. Wheelchair-accessible balconies also permit residents to get outside for fresh air.

The first residents will move in on June 6, and the centre will officially open on June 26. They will be gradually placed over a four-to-six-week period so that staff and residents may become accustomed to the facility. This centre will be a tremendous asset to Thornhill.

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I rise today to express my sympathy to the families of Walkerton who have lost family members due to the negligent manner in which this government has proceeded with cuts to the Ministry of the Environment.

On March 13, after confirmation from the MOE local rep that the village of Cumberland had sewage and water problems that could affect the health of the community, the mayor wrote to the minister requesting assistance. The minister wrote back two months later stating that the provincial water protection fund was created to help municipalities, but there was no more money available for the village of Cumberland. Today we have 20 families in the village of Cumberland and 60 families in the village of Osgoode that have been told by the Ottawa-

Carleton medical officer to boil their water due to coliforms found when their water was tested.

Are we going to wait until we have another Walkerton in eastern Ontario or is this government prepared to admit their mistakes and reinstate the responsibility for testing back to the provincial level? Mr Sterling said that his government should have done more when handing over the responsibility for water testing to the private sector. I beg the minister to act immediately for the villages of Cumberland and Osgoode to ensure that we don't have any more deaths due to the negligence of this government. Enough is enough.

MEMBER'S WEB SITE

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I rise today to share with the Legislature and with the larger community of Ontario out there something that I launched in my own community from my constituency office last Wednesday, and that is the existence now of a Web site that people can plug into and get information from and communicate with me on a variety of issues. The address of the Web site is www.tonymartinmpp.com and one of the first offerings on that site is a newsletter I put out this past week that focuses on a couple of things I think we need to enter into dialogue about. One certainly is the economy, and the other is the Canadian narrative: where it is that we're going, and are we keeping in the spirit of the story that our forefathers developed and that we have worked so hard to develop over a number of years.

Under the area of the economy, I believe that together we can build a strong, vibrant community where our businesses, labour, institutions and families can flourish. Leo Gerard calls it the "real economy." Much more than a dot.com virtual company, the real economy is based on real work by real people making real products. We need to talk about that. You can talk to me about that by plugging into my Web site.

I also talk about the story we've all spent so much time and effort developing, the Canadian story, which is about community and co-operation as opposed to individual pursuit and competition. I think we need to get back to that. I want to hear from people about that.

1340

KYLE PETTEY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to once again pay tribute to Kyle Pettey. Kyle Pettey is an outstanding young man and a successful athlete who resides in my riding of Northumberland. When I brought your attention to Kyle back in October, he was in Australia competing at the Southern Cross World Games. When he returned home from that event, he was proudly wearing a gold medal around his neck.

Today I'm pleased to announce that Kyle has set a new world record in the discus throw at 35.96 metres. This record was set at his first track-and-field event this year in Sarnia on May 13. This new record places Kyle in

a good position to qualify for the Canadian Paralympic team and compete at the Year 2000 Olympics in Australia.

Despite being diagnosed with cerebral palsy and breaking his back in a farming accident, Kyle has managed to beat the odds and become one of Canada's top amateur athletes. I applaud him for all his successes and I hope that Kyle will be selected to join the national team.

I know, Mr Speaker, that you join in extending our best wishes to Kyle, his coach, John Potts, and his family. His family and Mr Potts have been tremendously supportive in this young man's athletic endeavours.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): In the wake of the Walkerton tragedy, we have learned of another frightening situation in Hillsburgh, Ontario, a farming community near Fergus, where a portable toilet operation is proposing to dump untreated human waste on a field it owns in the town.

This property is situated on one of the higher elevations in the area and is located between two branches of the West Credit River, and north of the property is a source of the Grand River. Within a one-kilometre radius of the site, and inevitably the recipients of a waste runoff, are a public school, a subdivision of approximately 35 homes, which all rely on wells for their drinking water, and a site where a water bottling company is extracting water. This field's runoff ends up in three separate creeks and a small lake.

Believe it or not, it gets worse. Apparently the owner of this company is planning not just to spread the waste from his own toilet but is also contracting to haul additional sewage to the site for untreated dumping.

I don't think it is necessary for me to paint a detailed picture of the toxic cocktail that would be produced as a result of this dumping and the potential consequences that would result if this project is allowed to proceed. While this proposal is currently being reviewed by Ministry of the Environment officials, local residents fear that the criteria for review do not adequately address such important considerations as site elevation and the possibility of water contamination.

On behalf of the residents in the area and in the interest of protecting public health, I call on the Ministry of the Environment to ensure that this extremely dangerous dumping plan is not allowed to proceed.

MAURICE RICHARD

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Today in the city of Montreal a great Canadian and an exemplary citizen is laid to rest. He was also a pretty fair hockey player. For those of us old enough to remember black-and-white television, we remember his prowess as a player and we appreciate the accolades bestowed upon him today. We also understand the admiration demon-

strated by the thousands who expressed their public condolences in the past three days.

Maurice Richard continually reminded each and every one of us that he was just a hockey player, and yet today we witness a show of respect usually only afforded to the passing of a head of state. In a shy and reserved but very dignified manner, Mr Richard became an ambassador for the game he loved, an ambassador for the province and the country he loved, a true icon who embodied the spirit of his people in the 1950s and carried it through to the new millennium. The game has seen people with more God-given talent, but mine eyes have never seen his equal as an athlete.

A former linemate of the Rocket's once told me: "He could make us win when we thought we wanted to quit. He could carry an entire team on his back without a word, just an icy stare."

We in Ontario join with all Canadians in expressing our sincere condolences to the entire Richard family. We also express our thanks for allowing Canadians the opportunity to express the public outpouring of respect recorded in the last three days.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize members of a delegation who are here from the chamber of commerce in Sarnia-Lambton.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It's not a point of order, but we're very pleased to have our visitors here with us today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

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

Bill Pr4, An Act respecting the Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME AMENDMENT ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INDEMNISATION DES VICTIMES D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Mr Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act to amend the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act to remove maximums for compensation awards to victims / *Projet de loi 80, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels pour supprimer le plafonnement des indemnités accordées aux victimes.*

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

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Robert Montfortin of my riding was severely injured in 1971 as the result of a crime. He was stabbed viciously on a number of occasions. Under the existing act that compensates victims of crime, his compensation will be cut off by this government as of June 1. I have written to the Attorney General on numerous occasions, sought meetings for Mr Montfortin, sought to have the government intervene and they stubbornly refuse to do this.

We on this side of the House want to stand up for the victims of crime, unlike the all talk, no action crowd opposite.

SAFE SCHOOLS ACT, 2000
LOI DE 2000 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ
DANS LES ÉCOLES

Mrs Ecker moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to increase respect and responsibility, to set standards for safe learning and safe teaching in schools and to amend the Teaching Profession Act / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à accroître le respect et le sens des responsabilités, à fixer des normes pour garantir la sécurité des conditions d'apprentissage et d'enseignement dans les écoles et à modifier la Loi sur la profession enseignante.*

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.

1350

HUMAN TISSUE GIFT
AMENDMENT ACT, 2000
LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE DON DE TISSUS HUMAINS

Ms Lankin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to amend the Human Tissue Gift Act to establish a routine referral system to coordinate activities relating to tissue donation on death / *Projet de loi 82, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le don de tissus humains afin d'établir un système de notification systématique destiné à coordonner les activités relatives au don de tissus au moment d'un décès.*

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

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): This bill amends the Human Tissue Gift Act by adding a new part IV to establish routine referral systems to coordinate activities related to tissue donation on death.

A new Ontario tissue donation agency will operate a province-wide register of consent and work with health facilities to ensure that opportunities for donation are not missed. The steps to be taken by such health facilities, when potential donors in their care die or are near death, are set out in detail. If consent is refused, no further action may be taken.

The bill also amends the Health Insurance Act to require that a person 16 years of age or older to whom a health card is issued must first have an opportunity to give or refuse consent to tissue donation on death.

Currently in Ontario there are over 1,700 people awaiting organ transplants. Also currently in Ontario we do less than 300 transplants a year. In other jurisdictions, like Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Arizona, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Tennessee, Illinois, and European countries, this kind of legislation has increased tissue and organ donation by over 50%. It's the gift of life. I'm hopeful that the Legislature will see fit to pass this bill.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated May 29, 2000, the House not sit today from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm.

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.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Do we unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot item 29.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): Next on your list will be ministerial statements, and today we're having two statements from the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health. I would seek unanimous consent that the Attorney General also be allowed to give a statement without supplying a written copy to the opposition parties as required by the standing orders.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My understanding is that the Attorney General will be announcing the appointment of a public inquiry that we've been demanding for four days. I would ask the government House leader, would it not be appropriate for the Premier of Ontario to stand in this House and announce the appointment of that public inquiry?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The request is for the Attorney General. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FEDERAL HEALTH CARE SPENDING

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I rise today to report to the members of this House on yesterday's meeting of provincial and territorial health ministers in Quebec City.

Yesterday, the provincial and territorial health ministers demonstrated once again their firm commitment to a publicly funded health system in Canada, and also to continue with health care reform and innovation. They are also committed to continuing to work together collaboratively to meet the health care needs of Canadians.

It is no small accomplishment that all the provinces and territories of Canada remain united in seeking the unconditional restoration of federal funding for health care. In our joint statement released yesterday, the provinces and the territories unanimously agreed to four points:

First was the immediate, unconditional reinstatement of the Canada health and social transfer to the 1994-95 level of funding.

Second was that there be an appropriate escalator attached to CHST funding.

Third, the provinces expressed their continued commitment to exploring the innovation and adaptation necessary to ensure the sustainability of a quality, publicly funded health care system in Canada.

Finally, we reviewed a draft report on factors driving costs in the health care system and we agreed to forward the report to our Premiers after final revisions.

Once again, at the conclusion of this meeting, all of the provinces and territories unanimously agreed to ask the federal government to do its share for health care in this country. Full restoration of the \$4.2-billion cut from

the CHST, and an appropriate escalator, is a very modest request in light of the challenges we are all facing.

The provinces and territories are all working very hard to improve and update our health care systems. We are doing what is needed to respond to an aging and a growing population, and all of the provinces and the territories are responding to the increasing demands for new services, new technologies, new drugs, and for new and costly procedures as well as increasing public expectations.

As health ministers, we want to move forward to restore the confidence of the people of Canada in their health care system. Our position is clear: All want immediate action for health funding from the federal government.

The provinces have committed to the reform and the innovation that has been asked for, and now we await a commitment from our partner, the federal government.

In Montreal, in Markham, and now in Quebec City, the provincial and territorial health ministers of this country have remained united in their request, and we will remain united in the days and months to come. We will continue to seek restored federal health care funding from Ottawa to ensure that all Canadians can rely on an effective, publicly funded health care system now and in the future.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): Parents, students and teachers have told us they want their schools to be safe, respectful environments for learning and teaching. I am sure every member would agree that students, teachers, staff and parents have the right to be safe and to feel safe in their schools.

We have clearly heard those concerns. We are taking action, as promised, to ensure that respect, responsibility and safety are a fundamental part of our education system.

The Safe Schools Act that I have introduced today addresses behaviour, discipline and safety in our schools. If passed, this proposed legislation would give legal authority to the provincial code of conduct and related safe school initiatives that I announced last month.

The proposed amendments will fulfill our government's commitment to make Ontario schools safer by promoting respect, responsibility and civility; by setting clear, consistent province-wide standards of behaviour; and by setting clear consequences for not meeting those standards.

1400

Just as we have rights as citizens, we also have responsibilities. The provincial code of conduct sets clear, consistent province-wide standards of behaviour for everyone involved in the education system. Many school boards have varying codes and rules for safety, but this legislation will ensure that there are clear province-wide standards, especially for the most serious infractions, like bringing weapons to school.

In addition to the province-wide code of conduct, school boards will continue to establish their own procedures and set consequences for less serious infractions.

This government believes that parents and community members are important partners in the education system. Their involvement makes a difference in their schools and in their child's achievements. This legislation clearly recognizes that role by ensuring that school councils be involved when a school board is developing its code of conduct and safe school policy.

People have told us they want classrooms that are conducive to a respectful learning environment and schools that promote responsibility on the part of our students. In order to accomplish this, teachers need to have the authority to take action in their own classroom, and principals need to do the same for their school. That is why the proposed act would give teachers the authority to suspend students for one day. Suspensions that warrant more than a day will be referred to the school principal. Principals, as is the current practice, would continue to be able to suspend students for up to 20 school days, but the legislation would also extend to principals the right to expel students for up to one year.

As I said when I first introduced the code, every use of authority must be balanced with the appropriate process, so the legislation will give parents or guardians the right to appeal suspensions and expulsions by school boards or principals.

The proposed legislation also sets mandatory requirements for students who have been expelled to attend strict-discipline or equivalent programs in order to re-enter the regular school system. Parents and guardians want to see appropriate programs for students who have been suspended or expelled from school. This government agrees. Sending them out on the street only puts the problem somewhere else.

We recognize that teachers can't teach and students can't learn if they fear for their safety, and in too many classrooms across the province this is still the case. These amendments would allow for such things as criminal background checks of anyone working in a school to better ensure the safety of students, staff and volunteers.

Incidents of school violence are often started by outside troublemakers. Many parents, students and teachers have told me they believe a school dress code or uniform is not only a good way to encourage respect and responsibility but that it also contributes to a safe school environment. These amendments would give the government the ability to issue guidelines to school boards which would allow a majority of parents at any school in Ontario to have a dress code or require a uniform for their children. Principals would also be given authority to ensure that anyone who poses a threat is denied access to school property.

Finally, in order to instill pride and respect, the proposed amendments would also require schools to include the singing of O Canada as part of their daily opening or closing exercises. As well, schools may include the daily recitation of a pledge of citizenship.

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Ecker: These amendments are about making the rules of behaviour and the consequences clear to everyone, something the opposition over there could use today. They clarify the roles and responsibilities we all have to ensure safety and respect in our schools.

The amendments I have introduced build on previous reforms we have made to ensure that Ontario schools deliver the best education possible for all of our students. It is another step in making sure that Ontario's publicly funded education system is not only the safest but the best that it can be.

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The Premier has today announced that in order to get to the bottom of the Walkerton tragedy the Ontario government will appoint a judge or a retired judge to a commission of inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock, please. We have a very important statement that the people of this province want to hear and, as we did yesterday, we are not going to put up with people yelling and screaming during that period of time. This is a statement that the people of this province want to hear, and they deserve to hear it.

Hon Mr Flaherty: As I was mentioning, in order to get to the bottom of the Walkerton tragedy, the Ontario government will appoint a judge or a retired judge as a commission of inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act. The Premier stated today that the families of Walkerton victims demand answers; the Ontario public demands answers; and he indicated that of course he demands answers. That's why he has called for a full, open and public review of what went wrong and why.

As a result, the government has decided that the open and public review for which the Premier has called should take the form of a broad commission of inquiry. The Premier has asked me as Attorney General to draft the broad terms of reference for the commission. The commission should examine what went wrong in Walkerton in order to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring. I expect to announce details of the commission within 10 days. Under the Public Inquiries Act, a commission is appointed by cabinet and has full power to determine the procedure to be followed at the inquiry. Hearings on an inquiry are generally open, and the commission has the power to summon witnesses, compel the production of documents and receive sworn testimony.

In the hope that it's of some assistance to the House, I'll comment a bit further on the nature of public inquiries in Ontario. In Ontario, an inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act may be called when the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers it expedient with respect to a matter connected with or affecting good government in Ontario, the conduct of public business or the administration of

justice. The practice and procedure of an inquiry is controlled by the commissioner. Hearings are open to the public, with narrow exceptions. Interested persons must be given an opportunity to give evidence, to call, examine and cross-examine witnesses. Before a finding of misconduct can be made against an individual, that individual must be given reasonable notice and must be allowed full opportunity to be heard during the inquiry in person or by council. The commission has the power to compel by summons and to state a case to the court for contempt in the event of a failure to obey a summons. No evidence given by a witness at an inquiry shall be used against that individual or be receivable into evidence in any trial or proceeding against him or her thereafter, except for a prosecution for perjury. Testimony and evidence given subject to privilege is not admissible into evidence. A commissioner may appoint investigators and apply to the court for search warrants.

A recent example of a public inquiry in Ontario with respect to which members will be familiar was the inquiry by Mr Justice Kaufman into the Morin prosecution. For details with respect to the procedures on public inquiries, I would invite members to have reference to the Public Inquiries Act itself, which of course is in the revised statutes of Ontario at chapter P.41, which sets out the powers of the commissioner, the procedures to be followed and so on in more detail than I have indicated today.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I say this in the sincerest way possible, with no disrespect to the Attorney General. This is really a statement that should have been delivered today by the Premier. This is a crisis of overwhelming proportions. Two more people have died as a result of this tragedy since we last met in this chamber yesterday. It may very well be that the toll is up to nine once all of the facts come out. A community has been nothing less than devastated, and people throughout Ontario at this point have had their confidence in their own water deeply shaken. It seems to me that something of this magnitude, something of this impact, something that connects all of us, our water, should require the response of the Premier of Ontario.

1410

This is good news for the people of Walkerton, it is good news for those families who have lost loved ones and it is good news for people right across Ontario. But it is sad that what motivated this announcement today was not a genuine desire to get to the bottom of this issue. It was because they felt the heat and not because they saw the light. They decided that they had no choice, as a result of tremendous pressure that was brought to bear not only by members sitting on this side of the House but by people right across the province of Ontario, but particularly by people inside the community of Walkerton.

There is sadness connected with their motivation, and I must say in all honesty that it would be nothing less than offensive if this inquiry were to be a trick. For this inquiry to be of real and genuine value in these tragic,

sad circumstances, it must leave no stone unturned and it must shed light in each and every corner. It must be a full and comprehensive inquiry, and I want to put the government members on notice that we want a seat at the table when it comes to establishing the terms of reference for this inquiry.

I want the Premier's assurances that everybody connected with this matter, from the Premier on down, all of the cabinet ministers, all government staff, all officials, all documentation, all evidence, will be forthcoming upon the request of those people heading up this inquiry. Anything less than that will severely limit the work of the inquiry and its credibility. Let's assume there is some good faith here and that the government really does want to move forward on this matter in a positive way. Then we insist on having a seat at the table. We insist that everybody, from the Premier on down, make him- and herself available to respond to questions that are going to be forthcoming from the inquiry.

I am somewhat concerned because in the news release put out just a short while ago, it says here, and this comes from the office of the Premier, "[T]he commission should examine what went wrong in Walkerton, in order to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring." I hope I'm not reading too much into this by thinking it's going to restrict itself specifically to the events that occurred at Walkerton, because that would not be enough. That would not do justice to the extent of the tragedy that has touched all Ontarians. It is nothing less than essential that this inquiry be conducted in a comprehensive way, arm's length from the government, arm's length, in fairness, from all politicians. That's the only way that we can do justice to the people of Walkerton, to the seven people who have died, to their families and to all Ontarians who have developed a real, pressing concern about the safety of their own water.

Again, I want to thank the government for this announcement, but we look for much more by way of reassurance that this is a genuine effort to get to the bottom of this.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): First of all, a response to the Attorney General. I read the news release from the Premier's office carefully and I want to say to the Attorney General that this is a step forward, but this is a step not nearly forward enough, because your press release specifically says the commission should examine what went wrong in Walkerton. But we already know today that the issue of water quality, the issue of water safety, now extends to Freelon, to Shelburne. A young woman is sick in Sudbury. There have been concerns in Thunder Bay, in Dryden, throughout Huron and Bruce county and, finally, there are problems in North York. If I may, I want to suggest to the Attorney General that this should not be an inquest into what went wrong in Walkerton, although that must be covered in this inquest; this should be a commission into the safety of Ontario's water supply. That should be the subject of this commission.

I want to note for the Attorney General that this is not the first time that your government has had to call a commission of inquiry. Earlier in the history of your government the then Attorney General, Charles Harnick, appointed Judge Estey to head up an inquiry. But in doing that he said that he would not be preparing the terms of reference himself, that the House leaders would sit down with the government House leader to ensure that the inquiry covered all of the issues that needed to be covered. I want to quote from Hansard, because the Deputy Premier, Mr Eves, at that time said: "The government has no problem with a public inquiry into this matter and I would be happy to discuss the matter with the other two House leaders tomorrow morning." That is when he was Deputy Premier and House leader.

To ensure that this inquiry at least gets off on the right foot, I'm asking that when the Attorney General leaves this Legislature later on today and you deal with the members of the press, you will indicate that this will be a commission of inquiry into the quality of Ontario's water and the safety of Ontario's water, that the tragic events that happened in Walkerton will be covered in that, but so will the other issues that have arisen since the events in Walkerton. And I would ask that you indicate as well that you are prepared, or the government House leader is prepared, to meet with the House leaders of the opposition parties to work out the terms of reference, because if this is strictly an inquiry into what went wrong in Walkerton, then it will be nothing more than a duplication of what the coroner's office is supposed to do. The coroner's office announced earlier today that they will look into the issues surrounding the deaths of nine people in the Walkerton area.

If you intend to narrow this inquiry into simply what went wrong in Walkerton, then it will not be in any greater detail than the coroner's inquiry, and that would simply be wrong. So I'm asking that when you leave this Legislature this day, you will satisfy us on those two points: that the House leaders will meet to determine the terms of reference, and that it will be an inquiry into the water safety and the water quality for all Ontario residents.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want to say just a few words to the Minister of Education, because the Minister of Education today has made a statement.

I find it interesting that a government which breached the privacy laws which protect the privacy of the citizens of Ontario, a government which then got involved in a process to obstruct the privacy commissioner and a government which has tried to deny its responsibilities for the tragedy in Walkerton, now assumes that it is in the position where it is going to set codes of conduct for other people in the province. I would say that if there needs to be a code of conduct, it is a code of conduct for this government. Nowhere are teachers asking for the

right to suspend students. Teachers aren't asking for that. They know that's not their role. They don't want to be put in that role. But that's exactly the kind of inane thing you're going to do in this code of conduct, and it is wrong and you shouldn't be doing it.

1420

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the business of the general government committee with respect to the tragic events at Walkerton.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: The official opposition will grant unanimous consent on this, but I would like to point out to you, sir, that had the government agreed with Mr McGuinty's amendment to its own motion, they'd be doing in effect the same thing, only three days earlier.

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

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I move that the referral of the House of May 29, 2000, to the standing committee on general government to consider and report on the circumstances leading to the tragedy in Walkerton and voted against by members of the opposition be discharged.

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

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The official opposition was informed that the Premier would be in the House today. Indeed, his schedule showed that he would be in the House. We have not been told otherwise, that he will not be in the House. Clearly, we want to have the opportunity to question the Premier on these events.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, I'm informed the Premier will not be here today.

The Speaker: The member for Windsor-St Clair on a different point of order.

PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Mr Speaker, if I may, we were told that the Premier would be here. Please, this is a serious circumstance. We were informed that the Premier would be here. Indeed, the Premier's schedule showed that he would be here. This is an extremely important debate, and the tradition of this House has been that we would be informed in the event of a minister's not being here.

I call on you, sir, given the fact that we were told the Premier would be here, given the significance of events today, that you summon the Premier to the House to answer questions, or, alternatively, recess for five minutes to allow the government to consider getting the Premier into this House to answer questions.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member will know that I do not have the power to send for anybody in this position. The members will know that the Speaker does not control who is coming and who is not here. I know there is a tradition of letting the opposition know out of courtesy.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Sometimes circumstances do change. There is nothing in the standing orders that the Speaker can do regarding that.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for London-Fanshawe, come to order.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent, consistent with the request of the official opposition, that we recess this House until such time as the Premier can be here to answer the questions. It's not acceptable that he would avoid the House on this day.

The Speaker: I'm going to listen very carefully. Is there unanimous consent? No, I'm afraid there is not.

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It occurs to me that we have been discussing this tragedy since the beginning of the week and we have not collectively shared in a moment's silence on behalf of the community, families, and those who have died. I seek unanimous consent that we do that presently.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Interjections.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think we heard clearly on this side of the House what the unanimous consent was for.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I didn't hear it. I say to the members opposite, I appreciate the fact you're upset—

The Speaker: If the Minister of Labour would take his seat.

Once we settle down, you can do the point of order.

Point of order, Minister of Labour.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't think we heard clearly on this side of the House what the unanimous consent was for.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): You did too. You're making it worse, Chris.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I didn't hear it. I say to the members opposite, I appreciate the fact that you're upset—

The Speaker: Minister of Labour, take his seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that what the leader of the official opposition was asking for was a moment of silence for the people of Walkerton. I hope I got it correctly.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Just a second. We're dealing with one. That's what he asked for. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. If all members and our friends in the gallery could rise for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker: I thank everyone. It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, you have announced that we're going to have a commission of inquiry. I want to better understand from you whether or not this commission's work will have as its objective a comprehensive review of the safety of water throughout Ontario, including those facts leading up to the tragedy that occurred at Walkerton. Is that the kind of inquiry we're talking about?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The terms of reference for the inquiry will be broad. I will have an opportunity to discuss the terms of reference with whoever the commissioner may be over time.

One of the advantages of the Public Inquiries Act and that system of public inquiry in Ontario is that it is open to the commissioner to address systemic and broad issues. As the Leader of the Opposition no doubt knows, a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act is the highest form, if I may put it that way, of inquiry within the statutory structure of the province of Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, can you assure us that my House leader and representatives from the third party, as well as representatives from your government, will be at the table when it comes to drafting the terms of reference, at the table when it comes to the makeup of the commission and at the table when it comes to choosing a time frame in which a report must be made available? Can you provide us with that assurance?

Hon Mr Flaherty: As the Leader of the Opposition knows, he had the opportunity to have a legislative committee with members from his party participating. It was the Leader of the Opposition who demanded that the Public Inquiries Act be used. It is now going to be used. I will have to discuss the terms of reference with whom-ever the commissioner is going to be. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that if he has input which he would like to convey with respect to what the terms of

reference, in his view or in his party's view, ought to be, I'd be happy to receive and consider those.

1430

Mr McGuinty: I'm getting the sense here that, as nothing more than perhaps a passing courtesy, you're going to allow us to participate in establishing the terms of reference for this very important public inquiry. I want to put it on the table now that that is completely unacceptable. That is a non-starter. We think representatives from all three parties should be involved in establishing the terms of reference, deciding the makeup of the commission and deciding when they're going to report. You can't now appropriate all authority over this inquiry. I want to make it perfectly clear that is unacceptable to us. You cannot move from a cover-up committee to some kind of a cover-up inquiry.

I'll ask you again: Provide us with an assurance now that we will be able to participate in establishing the terms of reference and establishing the makeup of the commission and the time frame within which the commission must report.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I thank the member opposite for his question. I'm trying to say yes; I thought I had said yes already. If the Leader of the Opposition has input which he would like to convey to me in terms of the terms of reference, I would be pleased to receive that input, and I'm sure it will make an effort to deal with the issues that ought to be dealt with by the commissioner, whoever that may turn out to be.

I would commend to all members—perhaps it will take some time to do this—to have a look at the Public Inquiries Act to refresh their memories with respect to same, because it does offer substantive guidance and procedural guidance with respect to the powers that the commissioner has and the subject matter that the commissioner can deal with.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: A question to the same minister: I'm sure you're familiar with the terms of reference that were established for the Estey inquiry, which was conducted under the terms of your government not that long ago. You will know that the terms of reference there were established by order in council. You give the commission their marching orders. That's how it works. You don't sit down with them and ask them what they would like you to do; you tell them what you want them to do.

We want to participate in establishing the terms of reference. You can't simply extend an invitation for me to contact you. I want a process whereby representatives from each of the parties can meet, ideally later this afternoon, and begin to work together to draft comprehensive and responsible terms of reference. That's what I want. That's the only way we will have a commission of inquiry that's going to have a tremendous amount of credibility attached to it. Will you give us that?

Hon Mr Flaherty: As I say, the procedure and the substantive provisions are in the Public Inquiries Act. That act has been used by previous governments several times with respect to public inquiries. It was used by the

previous Liberal government in 1988: the Honourable Judge Colter and the Niagara commission. The same procedure was used by the Liberal government in 1989 in the Houlden Commission of Inquiry into the Relationship Between Certain Individuals and Corporations and Elected and Unelected Public Officials, also known as the Patti Starr inquiry, I believe. It was used again in 1990, I believe by the Liberal government, with respect to their reports on disposition of material generated and collected by the Houlden inquiry.

As I say, governments in the past 15 years have used this method of inquiry, which is statutory and not discretionary. I again commend to members the usefulness of referring to the Public Inquiries Act.

Mr McGuinty: The minister can cite all of these wonderful historical examples, but the matter we're talking about here is without precedent, to my knowledge, in the history of this province. Seven people have died. There's an entire community which has been devastated. The people of Ontario have had confidence in their own drinking water shattered. This is an issue now of trust. We must now together attach as much credibility as possible to this commission of inquiry. That means, as a matter of necessity, all three parties must be involved in lending shape to the terms of reference. That's how important this is. You can't compare this to things that have happened in the past. This is without precedent.

I ask you again, will you guarantee us that all three parties will be at the table working together to establish terms of reference?

Hon Mr Flaherty: As I have indicated twice now, and I'll state it for a third time to the Leader of the Opposition: I welcome his suggestions, the suggestions of his party members. In fact, I welcome the suggestions of all members of this Legislative Assembly who have views with respect to what the terms of reference ought to contain.

This is a very serious matter, as the Leader of the Opposition has indicated. I hope that we can repose our trust—I feel as Attorney General I certainly can—in a judge or a retired judge in this province to use the Public Inquiries Act as statutory framework to get to the bottom of this situation, which is what the Premier has indicated repeatedly he would like to accomplish through the use of a public inquiry in Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, this is all about trust. The people of Ontario are watching today. They want to know that what you are putting in place is something that is worthy of their trust. They can't trust their water. They can't trust the procedures that are in place. What they want to be able to do is to have some real confidence in a process now that's going to leave no stone unturned and will shed light in each and every corner. That's what they want to hear today, and they're not getting that from you, Minister. You're dancing around my question. You're not providing us with a guarantee that all three parties will be involved in a process to establish terms of reference. It's a simple question. I want a direct answer. Yes or no, can all three of us be involved in setting up

terms of reference for a commission that will be worthy of the public trust?

Hon Mr Flaherty: For the fourth time, I will repeat to the Leader of the Opposition that his participation, his input, the input of every member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is welcomed with respect to the terms of reference. If he'd like to put them in writing, if he'd like to meet with me as Attorney General, whatever he wants, I'm prepared to accommodate the Leader of the Opposition with respect to his having full input in the terms of reference. I extend that also, of course, to the leader of the third party and the members of the third party. I don't think I can be more clear than that.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): In view of the fact that the Premier was supposed to be here and is not here, my question is for the Deputy Premier. As the Premier's representative here today, I want to hear directly from the Deputy Premier. When the Estey inquiry was appointed by your government on March 20, 1996, you told this Legislature that as the Deputy Premier and the House leader of the government, you were prepared to meet with other House leaders to determine the terms of reference of that inquiry. Are you prepared to do the same thing with this inquiry, given the fact that seven people have already died, the coroner suspects that another two may have died as a result of polluted water, that this has been a tragedy and it is a tragedy that may stretch beyond Walkerton? Are you prepared to give the same commitment here today that you gave in 1996 with respect to the Estey inquiry?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): First of all, obviously everybody is well aware of the seriousness of this particular tragedy. I think the Attorney General has outlined quite clearly that he's prepared to accept the advice of the leader of the official opposition, the leader of the third party, that you will have very direct input into what the terms of reference will be. I guess you could do that by a House leaders' meeting if you want to, but you have an open invitation from the Attorney General of Ontario saying he'd be happy to receive your input into his broadest possible terms of a public inquiry. That's what the press release says.

Mr Hampton: The Premier's press release is this: On the one hand, I hear the Attorney General talking about broad terms of reference, but then I read the Premier's press release and he says we should determine what went wrong at Walkerton. But as you know, and certainly as other members of your government know, E coli has now been detected in the water supply in Freulton and in Shelburne. There is a young woman who is seriously ill in Sudbury. There are concerns about the water supply in North York.

This means that the inquiry in terms of its scope ought not to look just at the issues in Walkerton but ought to look at the broader issues of the safety and the security of our water supply. Are you prepared, as Deputy Premier, the person who is responsible for this government here

today, to give a commitment that the terms of reference will, yes, include Walkerton, but will be broader than Walkerton to look at other areas where E coli has been found and other areas where there are concerns about the quality and the safety of the water supply?

1440

Hon Mr Eves: To the leader of the third party, if he will permit me to read two sentences from the press release: "Harris has asked Attorney General Jim Flaherty to draft broad terms of reference for the commission. He said the commission should examine what went wrong in Walkerton, in order to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring." You have the Attorney General's open invitation to provide your very direct input and that of your colleagues, in fact of every member of the Legislature, as to what those terms of reference should be. I would think the Attorney General might want to hear from the commissioner when he or she is chosen as to what those terms of reference may be as well. I think all of that is very appropriate and all of that input should be received and will be received by the Attorney General.

Mr Hampton: I think what you've just confirmed, Deputy Premier, is that you can interpret the Premier's press release in two ways: In one sentence he says he wants broad terms of reference; in the next sentence, he says he wants it confined to what went wrong in Walkerton. I am the first to say that Walkerton is a very tragic issue, but you must also know that E coli has been detected in the water supply in Freulton, in the water supply in Shelburne. There is a young woman who is sick in Sudbury today. There is a problem in North York, and for all we know, there may be problems elsewhere in Ontario, given the fact that your government is not doing the same level and the same quality of water testing.

I'm simply asking for a commitment from you. Will you say clearly and unequivocally here today that the terms of reference of this commission will not just be with respect to Walkerton, as tragic as that event is, but will look at the broader issues of the safety, the quality of the water supply of people's drinking water in Ontario, especially in these other communities that have been identified? If we're seriously going to get to the bottom of this issue, I would think that you'd stand on your feet and give that commitment here and now. Will you do that, Deputy Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, I don't think the leader of the third party would begin to suggest that all the other possible situations that he has referred to are on a parallel with Walkerton, number one—at least I would hope he's not suggesting that. Number two, with respect to the terms of reference of the public inquiry, I think it would behoove him to have his input, to have the input of the leader of the official opposition and other members of the Legislature, to see what the draft terms of reference of the public inquiry are before he starts to criticize it.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Hampton: Again to the Deputy Premier: We're simply seeking assurances over here that the terms of reference will be broad enough to deal with the identified

water safety, water quality problems in the province. I want to relate to you again the Premier's response yesterday. I asked him about the issue of large factory farms, the issue of many tonnes of manure, the issue of not having adequate environmental plans or other plans to deal with that and the possible water contamination. The Premier said, "Well, these things have nothing to do with water quality."

I'm asking you here and now, will the terms of reference of this commission of inquiry be broad enough to look into the very issues that were identified by the medical officer of health in the Walkerton area, Dr McQuigge, when he wrote both to your government and to municipal officials and said there appears to be a relationship between the large factory farms, the tonnes of manure and the pollution of the water supply? Is the commission of inquiry going to be broad enough to look at that issue, Deputy Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: The terms of reference for the public inquiry have not been established yet. I don't know how I can comment on what they are when they haven't been established and when the Attorney General, I think in a very sincere and open way, has asked you for your input and he's quite prepared to receive that input. If the leader of the third party is not happy with what they end up being at the end of the day, then I would say to him that would be fair comment, but when they haven't even been drafted yet, to start criticizing what they are is a little premature, to say the least. Why don't you have your input first, why doesn't the leader of the official opposition have his input, and the input of other members of the Legislature? Then it would be fair comment at the end of the day, if you're not satisfied with what they are, to talk about it.

Mr Hampton: The problem, Deputy Premier, is this: You are the government that cut \$100 million out of the Ministry of the Environment budget. You are the government that laid off 900 scientists, inspectors and technicians. You are the government that came forward and said that most of the environmental regulation in the province is nothing but red tape. You are the government that tried to come in here two days ago and restrict the inquiry into nothing more than some of your backbenchers rubber-stamping what you've done already. That's the problem.

You had no problem in 1996 coming into this Legislature and saying, "We are prepared to meet and we are prepared to work out the broad terms of reference." I'm asking you specific questions: Are you prepared to include these important issues within the terms of reference? I think you, as Deputy Premier, if you're truly concerned about this issue and want to get very much to the bottom of it and the breadth of it, would be saying, "Yes, we're prepared to do that."

Deputy Premier, just another item, another important issue: Your government has a number of water tests that you've refused to make public, a number of tests of municipal facilities and other facilities. Are you prepared to include that all of this information must be made

public and must be the subject of this commission of inquiry?

Hon Mr Eves: Of course we want to get to the bottom of the matter. The Premier said that consistently from the very beginning of this. Today the Attorney General of the province has announced the public inquiry. We are welcoming your input and that of other members of the Legislature into what the terms of reference will be. I'm quite prepared, and I think every member of this Legislature should be quite prepared, to leave this to a judge or a retired judge as the commissioner under the Public Inquiries Act, and he or she will definitely get to the bottom, to the heart of the issue. If you have any qualms about a particular individual who you don't think is competent to serve as a commissioner, I guess you should let those be known to the Attorney General of Ontario, but I think he has been most sincere and frank and open about asking for your input here today.

DRINKING WATER SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Ministry of the Environment. You will be familiar with the program that operates through your ministry called the drinking water surveillance program. Before I get into that program and what it has done recently, I want to remind our viewers that you and the Premier have been telling us for a week now that no procedures have been changed since 1996 when it comes to testing water and making sure it's safe for all Ontarians. But we now learn that in 1996 your water surveillance program, which is a monitoring program developed to provide reliable and current information on municipal drinking water, stopped testing for E coli. It was a form of E coli that killed seven people in Walkerton.

You told us that nothing had changed. Tell us now, Minister, why it is that you told us that nothing had changed when in fact something did change. Why have we stopped testing for E coli, a killer bug here in Ontario, under the terms of your government?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): On the issue of the drinking water surveillance program and the testing of E coli, it's important to note that not all municipalities and all water treatment facilities were involved in that program. Testing for E coli and all other water testing has been done with the municipalities, with the public utilities commissions in this province. So the testing continues for E coli. There are procedures in place. Information must be shared between all parties involved: the labs, the Ministry of the Environment, the local medical officer of health as well as the municipality.

Mr McGuinty: There is a program here in Ontario that operates under the auspices of your ministry. It's the water surveillance program. The purpose of that program is to monitor contaminants and to measure trends when it comes to water in Ontario. That's your ministry; that's

your job. Tell us again in a way that all Ontario can understand this, why is it that this water surveillance program no longer tests for E coli, a disease that just killed seven people in Walkerton.

Hon Mr Newman: The program tests over 200 parameters of concern in this province with water testing, and the testing of E coli continues. We have the toughest testing system of its kind in North America. The water quality in Ontario: 98.98% of all the water tested meets the objectives of the Ontario Drinking Water Objectives that were put in place in 1994.

1450

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Chair of Management Board, and I would like to change the questioning to the kinds of questions we were hearing a couple of weeks ago.

I noticed in today's Star that the sales process for our property at McCowan Road and Highway 407 has been called into question. I'd been listening to the Liberal Party's questions on this issue some time ago, but they're always so muddled with misinformation and of course slanted Liberal facts.

The residents in my riding of Northumberland are very concerned that we get the best value for money in these sales. You know they are the shareholders of this government and the province of Ontario, and they're not happy with anything that's undervalued in the sale. Minister, what can you tell the House about the property mentioned today, and how are you ensuring that taxpayers get the best value for these sales?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'm happy to have a chance to answer on this important matter. As I've told this House before, all past transactions are being reviewed by independent auditors, and the transactions mentioned in today's paper are no exception; they are following the same process. Some time ago I asked the Ontario Realty Corp to implement a sales process that is open—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member, take your seat. We can't continue. I'm going to be watching closely. People are going to be warned from now on.

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I was saying, some time ago I asked the Ontario Realty Corp to implement a sales process that is open, accountable and transparent. That is why this audit process was initiated, to ensure that all past sales were conducted in the best interests of the taxpayers. Independent auditors have been retained and are conducting this review in a thorough and comprehensive manner. Any evidence of concern found by the auditors to date has been forwarded directly to the OPP for further review and investigation.

As you are aware and members of this House are aware, serious questions are being asked about the way sales were conducted in the past, and that's why this audit process—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Galt: You mentioned that the independent auditors and the police are reviewing these past sales, yet I was watching the Michael Coren show a few weeks ago and I was shocked, absolutely shocked, to hear the member for Eglinton-Lawrence admit—admit—that the Liberal Party was not forwarding any material they find to the auditors or to the OPP. Of course, this is consistent with the flip-flop positions of the Liberals.

This member was quoted when asked for assurances that his party would forward any material to the authorities, and this is what he said: "We make them"—referring to the information—"public in the House. The public are the real investigators. The OPP investigations are done behind the scenes." What an insult to the OPP.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Windsor West, this is the last warning. You can't continue shouting across there; last warning.

Mr Galt: I'm sure what he was referring to, about the public being the real investigators—he was talking about the court of public opinion, and that of course is just a political interest and not really of concern for the taxpayers of this province. With this revelation, do you know if all the relevant material is indeed being forwarded to the proper authorities?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I too have heard these comments from the Liberal member, and I too was very concerned.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Hodgson: If I can continue and not be interrupted—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member take his seat.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Hodgson: If I could get a word in edgewise, if the member for Windsor West would allow me to speak here for one second to answer to this important question, I can tell the House that I have been asking Liberal members across the floor to forward any information they find either to myself or to the proper authorities. To date, I have not received any evidence from the Liberals. I would expect that they would have forwarded any evidence they have to the proper authorities. I can guarantee the member from Northumberland that this side of the House is certainly following the proper process.

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'd like to get back to Watergate, and I would like to ask a question of the Minister of the Environment. For public relations purposes, Minister, and so you can appear as though you're doing something after the horse is out of the barn and after the tragedy of Walkerton, you'll be sending out staff from the Ministry of the Environment to scrutinize, I suppose, water plants across the province of Ontario. But you will know from your issue reports in the Ministry of the Environment that your government disbanded those teams which were specifically expert and dedicated to the

inspection of water treatment plants. It appears that you're going to have to bring anybody and everybody out of ministry offices to be able to conduct this work, because you've had over 700 staff fired out the door in the Ministry of the Environment and over 40% of your budget cut.

Minister, could you tell us where on earth you're going to get the staff to be able to do this, the staff with the specific expertise and capability of inspecting all these plants? Could you tell us what you're going to do with those people's regular jobs? Are you going to abandon their other jobs so they can go out and inspect plants? Never mind Chris Stockwell's answer; I'm interested in your answer.

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I'm glad you're interested in my answer, because that's what the people of Ontario want to hear.

My ministry staff take this issue very seriously. That's why, in the new regulation that I've talked about and announced on Monday, my commitment to ensure that each and every certificate of approval for water facilities in this province is indeed reviewed.

We're going to go beyond that. We're going to ensure that each and every certificate of approval is reviewed at least once every three years. This is a real step forward. The regulation also will require private labs and municipalities to exchange that information with the Ministry of the Environment and the local medical officer of health.

Mr Bradley: They're not going to have the staff to do it because you've disbanded those expert teams. They were great teams. They were teams of four that went out, dedicated staff specifically for inspecting water treatment plants in Ontario. You got rid of them. You were so busy wanting to cut the Ministry of the Environment so you had money to give away to the richest people in this province that you've lost those people. Forty-two per cent of the staff dedicated to drinking water are out the door at this time.

Minister, why don't you ask the Premier of this province to give up his \$1.7 million that he just got for an increase for his personal staff? Why don't you ask the Premier to give up his \$6 million in new political advertising in this province? Why don't you ask the Treasurer of this province to forgo that public relations trick of sending a \$200 cheque to everybody in the province, and why don't you ask the Treasurer and the Premier to invest that money in safe drinking in Ontario?

Hon Mr Newman: The member opposite is wrong. I can tell him that there are no changes in the number of environmental inspectors in this province.

I want to also let the member know that this government and this party have made a commitment, through our Blueprint document, to the environment. I can tell you that there are many measures with respect to environmental legislation, with respect to increasing the maximum fines for not only first-time polluters but second-time polluters. Repeat polluters are going to see fines doubled in this province; that was a campaign commitment. There was also a campaign commitment to

set up a 1-800 hotline with respect to pollution. But importantly, there was also a commitment to create an environmental SWAT team.

I want to tell you that I'm going to ensure, as the Minister of the Environment, that this party and this government keep all of our commitments from the Blueprint document with respect to the environment.

1500

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. I've heard from many parents and students in my riding of Scarborough Centre that they're very concerned for their safety at school. In fact, recent media reports from Ontario and around North America have highlighted certain incidents of violence at school. I know this is very disturbing not only for constituents in Scarborough Centre but for many constituents in Ontario. Minister, I wonder if you could tell this House how the new Safe Schools Act will respond to the concerns of my constituents.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): One of the things I think all members in this House have heard from constituents is that concern about violence in schools is growing. The incidence of things like bullying and harassment of some students by other students, for example, has been growing and parents, students and teachers are quite concerned about it. We told the people of Ontario before last year's election that we would implement a code of conduct if we were returned as the government. We have moved forward with that commitment. I released the code of conduct a month ago.

Today I introduced the legislation which gives it legal authority. It clearly sets out rules, standards of behaviour, consequences for breaking those standards—suspension and expulsion. There are mandatory penalties for bringing drugs to school, for example, or weapons. We will also ensure that school boards have the appropriate programs in place, like strict discipline programming, for example, to help students who have been expelled or suspended to get the help they need to keep our classrooms safer.

Ms Mushinski: I thank the minister for her answer. I'm particularly proud that our government is taking steps to ensure a safer school environment for our students and teachers. We know they have a right to feel safe and be safe in their school community. Along with standards for physical safety, my constituents feel it is very important that students are also encouraged to be civil and to have respect for their school environment. I'm wondering if you can tell this House if the Safe Schools Act addresses these aspects of the schools as well.

Hon Mrs Ecker: There are several other initiatives that are included in our Safe Schools Act. First of all, parents will have the authority to decide if they want to have a dress code or a uniform. It's something parents are very supportive of. There will be the mandatory singing

of O Canada. Parents can have a pledge of citizenship or the bill of rights, for example, as part of the opening ceremonies, if they wish. We're also requiring students in high school to do a minimum of 40 hours of community work as another way to promote respect and good citizenship and responsibility in our schools. It not only benefits the community; it will certainly benefit those students.

The other thing I'm very encouraged to say is that many members here may have seen the recent media reports about a public opinion research company that showed 91% of Ontario residents do indeed support a code of conduct for their schools, because they know our teachers cannot teach and we know our students cannot learn as well as we want them to if we have these issues in the school.

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): To the Minister of the Environment: I have a three-page chart showing some of the hundreds of staff cuts at the Ministry of the Environment between 1995 and 1998. These numbers are based entirely on information provided by your ministry. Here are just four examples: lab services, 83 staff let go; science and technology branch, 95 gone; environmental monitoring and reporting, 37 gone; investigations and enforcement branch, 27 gone. You may recall that your Premier told this House that zero compliance staff were laid off.

Do you think it's any wonder that we don't trust your government to set broad terms of reference that can get to the bottom of what has happened here when you and your own Premier stand up in this House and—how can I put it delicately?—misinform this House about the number of staff who have been cut from your—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member can't use that word. I'd ask her to withdraw that word.

Ms Churley: I withdraw that. Minister, I'll give you a chance now to retract what you said earlier. Stand up and come clean with the people of this province and tell them that those staff have been cut, you do not have the same procedures in place and there aren't as many staff there doing the job.

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): If you look at the numbers from the years the member is talking about, she may want to also enlighten all members of the House to the fact that back in 1995-96 the Ministry of the Environment was part of the Ministry of Environment and Energy. There were some 140 staff members who were part of the Ministry of Environment and Energy who are now in the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology. There are 140 staff right there who have been transferred from the Ministry of Environment and Energy to the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology.

She may also want to let everyone know that there have been staff members who are now part of Manage-

ment Board Secretariat in the shared services bureau doing an administrative function.

I agree there are fewer staff members in total in the Ministry of the Environment, but I can tell you that there has been no change in the number of environmental inspectors in this province.

Ms Churley: That is not correct. It's here in black and white. We know that you fired up to 900 staff and cut your budget by \$100 million. Why don't you just admit it?

Yesterday we had the Taking Stock report from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation giving Ontario an international reputation as a jurisdiction that does not care about the environment. Were you shocked to learn that for 1997 Ontario was the third worst, after Texas, polluter in North America? No. You did what you're doing now. In that case, you were blaming the methodology instead of the facts there. I have a document from your own ministry that says, "There is no obvious error in the analysis and ranking of state and province total release pollutants to all media and transfers to waste."

When are you going to stop the spin? People have died in Walkerton, and you and your Premier are still standing up and giving a spin. We need you to admit today that your cuts in staff and resources are hurting environmental protection in this province and you're going to put the money and the staff back. Will you tell us you're going to do that today?

Hon Mr Newman: I have a document which is the historical approved budget for the Ministry of the Environment. There's a little asterisk beside the years 1995-96 and 1996-97. It says that the 1995-96 to 1997-98 values include the Ontario Energy Corp business that was transferred to the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, about \$14 million.

The member opposite also doesn't recognize the fact that when her party was the government they actually cut \$200 million in water and sewer grants to municipalities in this province.

She also raised the issue of the Taking Stock report. Yes, indeed the methodology is flawed, because no matter who is the government in this province, Ontario will always be near the top based on the methodology that's used.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask you about the blame and distract act, Bill 74, that you're now trying to hide from the public by shotgunning it out of debate today and putting it into almost no hearings. In your own riding of Durham, in that board, you've allowed \$60 million to be cut once inflation and enrolment is taken into account.

At St Mary school in Pickering, the hallways are dirty. There are only two custodians for 2,000 students. In the phys ed and health education class, 55 kids share 12 text-

books. They had to get eight desks from the elementary school to accommodate their class this year.

Minister, will you tell the truth on this bill? Tell the students in Durham, and indeed around the province, that it's about taking money out of education, it's about reducing your commitment. Will you say to Bob Richmond, who is the teacher of this class—and he tells you that you're wrong, that you can't legislate spirit and passion and commitment for kids. Minister, will you admit that you're wrong with your bill, that you're hiding and distracting from the money you're cutting from education, and will you tell us today that you'll withdraw it?

1510

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): I really wish the honourable member would check his facts. First of all, Bill 74 has nothing to do with the budget of school boards. As a matter of fact, because Bill 74 decreases class size, there will be more teachers and there is going to be more money for school boards: \$253 million more to enforce and put in place smaller class sizes. Why? Because teachers and parents told us that smaller classes are important to quality education.

Second, I don't know how he turns a \$9-million increase in the Durham public board funding into some sort of cut. Only a Liberal could do that kind of Liberal math.

The other thing is, contrary to what the honourable member states, the funding formula is built on enrolment so that it reflects enrolment in boards. It was designed to do that because that's what we were told needed to be done.

Mr Kennedy: The minister unfortunately did not meet my simple request to tell the truth; \$60 million was lost because of enrolment and inflation since 1995 in her own area. So what do you say, Minister, to Bob Richmond? You're saying you're going to give more workload to teachers who are already working heavily. You're going to take their attention away from kids.

Minister, Bob Richmond is a former member of the Edmonton Eskimos who does extracurricular at St Mary school in Pickering. He starts his day at 6:30 in the morning to teach the weight-lifting class. He then teaches two classes from 8:15 to 11:45. He has 35 minutes for lunch; only gets it twice a week because he also has lunch and supervision duty. From 12:20 to 2:20 he teaches one or two more classes, and then he teaches the football team and leaves at 6:30.

Minister, you're misleading the public when you say this is about—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Thank you very much. I got it. I appreciate it, Minister of Labour. I heard it too. I don't need the yelling from the government benches. You have to withdraw that.

Mr Kennedy: It was unintentional. Minister, will you please agree to this simple request: Will you either withdraw the bill that will take learning time away from kids or will you come with me and spend the day at St Mary school in Pickering, in Durham, in your riding where this—

The Speaker: Order. The member's time is up. Minister of Education.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I would like to hazard a guess that I have been in more schools in Pickering—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Members will come to order. Sorry for the interruption. Minister of Education.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I would hazard a guess that I've probably been in more schools in Pickering than the honourable member has. Second, he may think it is OK for a region like Durham, or any other region, to have extra-curricular, co-instructional activities withdrawn from students for two years. He may think that is OK, but this government and parents do not think it is OK.

He says we should withdraw Bill 74. Does this mean that the Liberals believe that if a school board is taking special education money and spending it on something else, if a school board is taking textbook money and spending it on something else, we shouldn't do anything? Bill 74 allows us the authority to take steps on that.

The honourable member may not think remediation should be considered part of instructional time for teachers—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. In the past I know you've taken time to meet with members of Bethesda House, a women's shelter in my riding of Durham. The hostel provides accommodation for up to 15 women and children in a safe, secure location in Bowmanville. Bethesda House offers a 24-hour crisis telephone line, counselling, support for children, community education and a volunteer training program. Bethesda House faces many financial challenges.

I have here with me a list of hundreds of individuals from communities and corporate donors that have helped support this hostel over the years. Clearly Bethesda House has acquired funding in a number of creative ways. I know that Karen Mason, the executive director of Bethesda House and the volunteer board have written in the hope that you and your ministry will be able to assist this hostel. Minister, what can you tell the members of Bethesda House today?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I want to say at the outset that this government will not tolerate violence against women and their children. Helping to support abused women and their children is a top concern of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Because of the hard work of my colleague the member for Durham, who I know cares passionately about this issue—he's had the representatives from Bethesda House in to see me in my office and I've had the opportunity to recognize the good service that the folks at Bethesda House provide women and children in need in his community.

Our ministry is providing one-time funding of \$26,000 to help ease the immediate cash flow needs of Bethesda House. By providing this one-time funding the agency has the ability to ensure that the essential health and safety issues, as well as the payroll concerns, can be addressed. I'm also pleased to learn, through the member for Durham, that the region has agreed to provide stable block funding to Bethesda House to help the hostel better manage its day-to-day operations.

I look forward to continuing to work with the hard-working member for Durham on this important priority for his community.

Mr O'Toole: Minister, I want to personally thank you for the time you've given this initiative. Also the whole community really has come together, and as you've said, Durham and yourselves have come together to provide a more predictable funding model for them and I thank you for that. I thank the Durham council.

I am sure that my constituents appreciate that there's more to be done. Furthermore, I'm certain they will appreciate that the minister will be willing to help address the financial needs of this hostel. We all recognize that Bethesda House plays an important role in Durham. The good news is that the Durham Bethesda House is not alone in its efforts to protect women and children. The region is also well served by another women's shelter. Together, they both provide a critical service to help ensure the safety of women and children in Durham.

Minister, would you please explain what we are continuing to do to help and support women and children in shelters?

Hon Mr Baird: I want to again stress that this government is committed to addressing and responding to the challenges of domestic violence against women and children in our province.

Funding for women's shelters is now more stable. We've replaced per diem funding with stable block funding so that shelters can know their revenue at the beginning of the year and be able to be more responsive to the needs of these vulnerable victims.

I would like to point out two initiatives contained in the budget as further evidence of our commitment to combating domestic violence. We'll be expanding the domestic violence courts through the Ministry of the Attorney General. We also announced \$10 million to establish two new programs to support women and children who have experienced domestic violence. These two programs are now under development and we will be providing further details in the near future.

These new funds, in addition to the \$110 million this government already spends each year to address and prevent violence against women services, demonstrates the important priority we accord this. Just in Durham region, with respect to hostels, the region's now on board and the province, of course, provides 80% to support emergency hostels, which is another evidence of our strong commitment to this important area.

1520

LOW WATER LEVELS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. For over two months now, through questions, statements and correspondence, I've advised you of the economic crisis that's been created by low water levels in Essex country to private property owners, being individuals and marina operators. You know too, I think, that these low water levels are throughout the Great Lakes basin.

Early this month the federal government, along with the Ontario Marina Operators Association, each offered \$15 million to go towards dredging of private marinas and those areas that are affected by low water levels.

I wrote you a letter on May 8, encouraging you to partner with the Ontario Marina Operators Association and the federal government, and for the provincial government's to put its \$15 million on the table to help these economically strapped businesses and property owners. I said in that letter, "I simply ask that the province join the partnership effort to help those in need of assistance."

I haven't heard from you yet, Minister. Will you tell me today that you will partner with the federal government and private marina operators and put a third of that \$45 million on the table?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member opposite for the question and the opportunity to address this again. As I've told the member opposite and in fact every member of this chamber in the past, we take low water levels very seriously in this government. That's why we announced Ontario Water Response 2000, so that we could address these issues where they're important throughout the province.

We also instructed our ministry, and I know the member opposite is aware of this, to expedite applications for dredging, particularly in those areas that are experiencing very low lake water levels. As the member opposite will know, we've had some relief over the course of the last few weeks in terms of water levels in some of our lakes and some of the Great Lakes. However, we do have low water levels in some areas of the province.

I am pleased to inform the member opposite that I had a very brief conversation with Minister Dhaliwal a few weeks ago, who is the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. He, I expect, has admitted that there is a federal responsibility for navigation in waterways in Ontario. I was pleased he has finally recognized that. I asked him to send me, please, his intentions, his plan, for dredging.

Mr Crozier: I assume by your answer that you asked him to send you something and he hasn't sent it. But you know, Minister, on that phone you have, whether it's a cellphone in your car or one on your desk or one you carry in your pocket, there's a dial on it. If you hadn't heard from him and if you were really concerned about these property owners, you would have called him again, or you might have brought it up in the House and said, "I

haven't heard from him." But you haven't answered my letter. You haven't gotten back to him to say, "Where is your answer?" You haven't done anything. So will you call him today and say, "Minister Dhaliwal, I'll put the \$15 million on the table if you'll send me that information tomorrow?"

Hon Mr Snobelen: Unfortunately the time constraints didn't allow for a fulsome answer on the first question. Perhaps in the supplemental we'll get to the matter.

The minister was kind enough to give me a phone call and ask what Ontario thought about this proposal. He wasn't able to share details of it with me then, or in fact now. I suspect that perhaps the plan is not very full.

I can tell the member opposite that within an hour or so of calling me and our asking for his plan and for some input, he made the announcement that there'd be a federal plan—this, without any planning, this without any consultation, and in my view in an irresponsible fashion.

I can tell the member opposite that we continue to take low water levels very seriously in the province of Ontario, that we have got a plan to address those issues and the environmental issues that come from dredging, which is a concern for people right across this province. We are taking it very seriously.

ST CLAIR PARKWAY COMMISSION

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Tourism. First of all, I would like to thank the minister for spending some time in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex with the good people of that riding last week. As you are aware, Minister, the St Clair Parkway Commission, which is an agency of your ministry, provides outdoor leisure and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock, please. It has gone to a new member, and I say to the government member that his own member is trying to ask a question. I would appreciate the indulgence.

Sorry, to the member, for the interruption.

Mr Beaubien: I didn't think my question was going to be that controversial.

As you're aware, Minister, the St Clair Parkway Commission, which is an agency of your ministry, provides outdoor leisure and recreational opportunities for visitors to the Bluewater region. As I have expressed to you in the past, there have been some challenges in operating the commission as an important gateway to the region of the Bluewater land. Minister, what are you doing to ensure that the St Clair Parkway Commission continues to draw tourists to the Bluewater land region?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): I'd like to thank the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for the question.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence in the House today of a former member for Middlesex, Bob Eaton.

As many members of the House are aware, there is a large delegation from Sarnia-Lambton here to talk to the government and to all members of the House. I'm

pleased to report, as my colleague has asked the question, that recently we've acknowledged that tourism in Sarnia-Lambton is their third-largest industry and growing at a faster rate than any of the other economic activities. That's why our government has invested recently in an additional \$50,000 to expand and enhance and develop the historical site known as Uncle Tom's Cabin—it is a rich part of Ontario's proud history—and a further \$35,000 for developing a campground and RV park facilities at the St Clair Parkway Commission properties.

Interjection: It's never enough.

Mr Beaubien: I hear on the other side that it's not enough, and you're right, it's never enough, but we'll do our best to get our fair share.

Minister, as you're aware this afternoon, some members from the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce will be meeting with you to discuss some of the issues in the area. I hope you will maintain an open mind with regard to suggestions that the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce might submit or place in front of you. Could you give me your comments on this particular issue?

Hon Mr Jackson: I'd like to say that thanks to the encouragement from the local member, my colleague, I have had occasion to meet with several delegations from the Sarnia-Lambton area. I hasten to add that the historical impasse that has been created with the parkway commission property and adjacent Chatham-Kent—we're very close to having that matter resolved, I'm pleased to report to the House, and will be reporting to that very soon.

Also, our ministry is working with the Ministry of Transportation, the Bluewater Bridge Authority and the Sarnia/Lambton Visitor and Convention Bureau on a gateway proposal for expansion of the new bridge site at Point Edward. My ministry and our staff are working cooperatively with all the partners. I'd just like to state publicly, though, for the record, that I encourage all these organizations, whether it's the chamber of commerce, the visitor and convention bureau or the economic development offices, both at the region and at the city, that they work together to promote tourism. This is one of the fastest-growing tourism regions in Ontario today, and I know that citizens of Sarnia-Lambton are looking forward to the new jobs and the wealth that will be created as a result of that.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions is over. The Minister of the Environment on a point of order.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): Earlier today, in answer to a question, I referred to the number of inspectors. I should have said that there was no change in the number of investigators. I just wanted to correct my record.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming the fifth group of legislative pages to serve in the first session of the 37th Parliament. With us today we have Leta Attard, from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey; Nicholas Bewick, from Perth-Middlesex; Michael Cabral, from Northumberland; Gina Cowing, from Oxford; Stephanie Craig, from Waterloo-Wellington; Maria Dombrowsky, from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington; David Fascinato, from Guelph-Wellington; Bryan Holt, from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Riley Jakob, from Essex; Christopher Kent, from Nickel Belt; Danielle Koehn, from Markham; Avery Low, from Etobicoke Centre; Sebastian MacIntosh, from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford; April Martin, from Algoma-Manitoulin; Melissa Martin, from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale; Mark McKie, from Beaches-East York; Alex Paton, from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant; Bryce Schubert, from Davenport; Alexandra Stephenson, from Peterborough; and Marc Thorup, from London West.

Would all the members please join me in welcoming our new set of pages.

PETITIONS

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Bill 74 diminishes quality education for students in this province by ensuring teachers will be responsible for more students each day and will therefore have less time for each student;

“Whereas Bill 74 attacks the very heart of local democracy and accountability by creating a system of informers and absolute powers for the Minister of Education;

“Whereas Bill 74 cuts not only the heart out of education but also the spirit by making teachers perform voluntary activities on threat of termination;

“Whereas Bill 74 is an unprecedented attack on the collective bargaining rights of Ontario’s teachers; and

“Whereas Bill 74 turns over all control over education in this province to one person, the Minister of Education;

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

“We call on the government to hold public hearings on Bill 74 immediately.”

I affix my name to this petition as well.

1530

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I have great privilege in submitting a petition on behalf of

750 students at DeVry Institute in Scarborough and Mississauga that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intention to allow private universities to offer degrees in the province;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement this policy over the next few months in order to increase the opportunities for students to obtain a degree in this province.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Bill 74 diminishes quality education for all students in this province by ensuring teachers will be responsible for more students each day and will therefore have less time for each student;

“Whereas Bill 74 attacks the very heart of local democracy and accountability by creating a system of informers and absolute power for the Minister of Education;

“Whereas Bill 74 cuts not only the heart out of education but also the spirit by making teachers perform voluntary activities on threat of termination;

“Whereas Bill 74 is an unprecedented attack on the collective bargaining rights of Ontario’s teachers; and

“Whereas Bill 74 turns over all control over education in this province to one person, the Minister of Education;

“Whereas we, the teachers of Ontario, believe only one and a half days of public hearings is both a sham and a shame;

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

“We call on the government to hold full public hearings on Bill 74 immediately.”

I affix my signature to it because I’m in complete support of this petition.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, it’s good to see you in the chair again.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer, also called Our Father, has been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada in the 18th century;

“Whereas such use of the Lord’s Prayer is part of Ontario’s long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary Ontario life;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is a most meaningful expression of the religious convictions of many Ontario citizens;

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

"That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord's Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom, and do all in its power to maintain use of this prayer in municipal chambers across Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 74 diminishes quality education for students in this province by ensuring teachers will be responsible for more students each day and will therefore have less time for each student; and

"Whereas Bill 74 attacks the very heart of local democracy and accountability by creating a system of informers and absolute powers for the Minister of Education;

"Whereas Bill 74 cuts not only the heart out of education but also the spirit by making teachers perform voluntary activities on threat of termination;

"Whereas Bill 74 is an unprecedented attack on the collective bargaining rights of Ontario's teachers; and

"Whereas Bill 74 turns over all control over education in this province to one person, the Minister of Education;

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

"We call on the government to hold public hearings on Bill 74 immediately."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition, which is signed by a number of teachers, students and parents from west Elgin, and I have affixed my signature hereto.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to present a petition to the Legislature of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I support the petition and I affix my signature to it.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a petition signed by in excess of 200 people.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Canada's health care system is one of our greatest achievements as a country;

"Whereas health care in Ontario has deteriorated, with medical services being reduced and hospital budgets cut to the bone, resulting in lengthy delays in treatment, with sometimes fatal results;

"Whereas major changes to health care legislation by the Harris government have been made with no prior public consultation;

"Whereas residents of Prince Edward-Hastings are demanding that their voices be heard and their concerns addressed to ensure that future health care legislation meets their needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Harris government to protect our valued health care system and to hold public hearings on Bills 23 and 173."

Being in agreement, I'm pleased to add my signature to this.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

“Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

“Fight the federal government’s plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

“Ensure that the Ontario government’s sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible.”

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, with over 600 names on it:

“Whereas Bill 74 diminishes quality education for students in this province by ensuring teachers will be responsible for more students each day and will therefore have less time for each student;

“Whereas Bill 74 attacks the very heart of local democracy and accountability by creating a system of informers and absolute powers for the Minister of Education;

“Whereas Bill 74 cuts not only the heart out of education but also the spirit by making teachers perform voluntary activities on threat of termination;

“Whereas Bill 74 is an unprecedented attack on the collective bargaining rights of Ontario’s teachers; and

“Whereas Bill 74 turns over all control over education in this province to one person, the Minister of Education;

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

“We call on the government to hold public hearings on Bill 74 immediately.”

I assign my name to this with all my heart.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have again further petitions from CAW local 222, organized by Cecil Mackasey and Rick Roberts. The petition reads as follows:

“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 died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances (carcinogens);

“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;

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

“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 analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation.”

As I am in agreement with this, I add my name to it.

1540

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I am very pleased to present a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

“Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

“Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

“That the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

“Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

“Fight the federal government’s plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

“Ensure that the Ontario government’s sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible.”

I support the petition and I affix my signature thereto.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I am pleased to present a petition handed to me last night at a parent-teacher meeting at Vankleek Hill C.I.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 74 diminishes quality education for students in this province by ensuring teachers will be responsible for more students each day and will therefore have less time for each student;

“Whereas Bill 74 attacks the very heart of local democracy and accountability by creating a system of informers and absolute powers for the Minister of Education;

“Whereas Bill 74 cuts not only the heart out of education but also the spirit by making teachers perform voluntary activities on threat of termination;

“Whereas Bill 74 is an unprecedented attack on the collective bargaining rights of Ontario teachers; and

“Whereas Bill 74 turns over all control over education in this province to one person, the Minister of Education;

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

“We call on the government to hold public hearings on Bill 74 immediately.”

I have added my signature.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 14 people.

“Whereas the prayer Our Father, also called the Lord’s Prayer, has always been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe in the 18th century; and

“Whereas such use of the Lord’s Prayer is part of Ontario’s long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary Ontario life;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord’s Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom.”

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The time for petitions is ended.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I wasn’t here when the pages were introduced and I wanted to be sure that Nicholas Bewick was introduced. Was he introduced? Can I be assured of that? Nicholas Bewick.

The reason I wanted to be sure he was mentioned with the rest of the pages was that he comes from the riding of Perth-Middlesex. I know that I’m not supposed to mention, either because of Nicholas or our rules, that his mother is in the west gallery. We welcome Terry Bewick from beautiful downtown Listowel.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): May I make a point of order, Mr Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: I can’t, because you’re Mr Sterling right now.

Hon Mrs Marland: I’ll be in my seat in one second.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the late minister.

Hon Mrs Marland: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just because you did that, I think it’s important to recognize that a member of the official opposition, Leona Dombrowsky, also has her daughter in this session as a

page. I’m not sure whether she was introduced either, so I’m just confirming that she was, the way that you were for your constituents.

The Deputy Speaker: Our congratulations.

1550

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 74, An Act to amend the Education Act to increase education quality, to improve the accountability of school boards to students, parents and taxpayers and to enhance students’ school experience, when Bill 74 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 to the standing committee on justice and social policy; and

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

That the standing committee on justice and social policy shall be authorized to meet the morning of Wednesday, June 7, 2000, in Barrie, for public hearings and on Friday, June 9, 2000, in Ottawa for public hearings and on Monday, June 12, 2000, in Toronto at its regularly scheduled time for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, and that the committee be authorized to meet beyond its normal hour of adjournment on that day until completion of clause-by-clause consideration; and

That, at 4:30 pm on the final day designated by the committee for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, and not later than June 12, 2000, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration, and not later than June 13, 2000. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on justice and social policy, the Speaker shall put

the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, two hours and thirty minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill. At the end of such time, 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; and

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.

1550

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Klees has moved government notice of motion number 51.

Hon Mr Klees: Mr Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to turn the floor over to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed? It is agreed.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'll be splitting my time with two other members, the member for Durham and the member for Northumberland.

I'm certainly pleased to discuss Bill 74, the Education Accountability Act at this stage of the proceedings. This particular piece of legislation is very clear in terms of the standards that the Minister of Education is establishing. A number of those standards are set out already in the legislation, but the areas that I want to specifically focus on today are dealing with co-instructional activities, instructional time and class size.

In the Education Act, there is currently no definition of the term "co-instructional activities." At this time, though, we have put together a definition of co-instructional activities, which are "activities other than providing instruction that (a) support the operation of schools or (b) enrich pupils' school-related experience, whether within or beyond the instructional program, and includes but is not limited to participation in school-related sports and cultural activities, parent-teacher and pupil-teacher interviews, staff meetings and school functions."

Certainly, the powers of the minister are set out in the Education Act, and they deal with a number of areas where the minister has those powers, for example, diplomas and certificates, courses of study, courses in areas of studies, reviews of effectiveness, tests, policy guidelines, assessments of academic achievement guidelines, roles and responsibilities of board members and officials, policy and guidelines, policies regarding pupil representatives. Those are just a couple of areas.

The way the Education Act is set up, it sets out the powers and functions of the Minister of Education. It also sets out the powers and roles of the school board and the powers, roles and functions a principal will have.

What we're setting out here clearly under co-instructional activities are the obligations teachers have with respect to this area, because unfortunately with respect to

co-instructional activities it has been made into a labour relations matter, and that's something that should not be brought into education. I firmly believe that the withdrawal of the services that are performed by teachers on a normal daily basis should not be used as a negotiating tool; they should not be used as a tool in any manner to remove and downgrade the quality of a student's education. This is a matter of debate in terms of how this should be done, but the legal mandate that's set out with respect to a trade union is obviously to promote the economic well-being of their members. If that is their mandate and that's the law under the Labour Relations Act, then to promote that well-being at the expense of co-instructional activities, to the benefit of the students, is something that shouldn't be done by trade unions.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Knocking down unions.

Mr Tascona: The member across the way from Brant talks about knocking down trade unions. I know he's a big proponent and supporter of trade unions, but quite frankly I'm not. I'm not a big proponent of trade unions at the expense of quality education—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I did want to tell you that we can't have shouting back and across. Some of you may expect that a presiding officer would warn you and so on. If you expect a warning, then you should interpret this as a warning.

The Chair recognizes the member for Barry-Simcoe-Bradford.

Mr Tascona: I'd like to debate this bill, and I don't like my time being wasted by the member across the way. I think the people of Ontario would like to hear what I have to say. I know the members and my constituents would like to hear what I have to say instead of being yelled down by the member from Brant.

But I will say this: In terms of standards we've been very clear in what we expect with respect to instructional time. The intent of the minister has been clearly set out. We still expect the same amount of instructional time from secondary school teachers as we have set out before. But what was asked for by school boards and by trade unions was clarity as to what that would be. What we have done is, we have changed the measuring of instructional time that is expected from school boards in terms of how they allocate their teaching time across the school board and also the principals' role with respect to how they assign the duties across their schools.

On aggregate, what has been set out in the legislation is 6.67 courses out of eight, which is clearly defined. It's very transparent in terms of what is expected. I think we are moving towards the Canadian average. We are still below the Canadian average with respect to instructional time for—

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Barry-Simcoe-Bradford.

Mr Tascona: Instructional activity is something that we have been striving to increase. I don't think anyone would object to my saying that the more time a teacher can be in the classroom teaching the students is time well spent. In the elementary panel we have not had that issue; they have been at the Canadian standard, and that has not been something we have had to address. But at the secondary level we've had to address that issue. There are no surprises in terms of what the minister's intent was and that this would be clarified if in fact there were areas that needed to be addressed to assist the boards and the trade unions in dealing with this issue, and that is a standard of what is expected in terms of instructional time.

We have also set standards for class sizes. We have put money into the system to reduce class sizes at the primary division, from junior kindergarten to grade 3, and also at the secondary level. The money that is going into the system, to the tune of \$263 million, is to ensure that those class sizes are attainable. I believe the size of a class certainly has a direct impact on the quality of education that is taught within that classroom.

Why set class standards? What was happening before was school boards were negotiating with trade unions to increase the size of classes at the expense, obviously, of quality education so that they could put more into the package at collective bargaining for their members. That's their objective. No one disputes that. That's what's required of them under the Labour Relations Act, to be a trade union obviously to promote the interests of their members. But it's our responsibility as the government—and certainly schools boards' responsibility—to make sure that they provide quality education. So we have established standards that have to be satisfied by the school board, and that is one very important area.

1600

In this legislation, we find standards are being set with respect to co-instructional activities, with respect to instruction time and with respect to class size, because those issues should not be held and should not be in the labour relations area. That should be out of the labour relations area. There's no room in the education system for quality standards to be eroded at the expense of our students. We cannot have in our education system a willy-nilly withdrawal of services which are expected to be provided for the quality of education for a student, when the trade union says: "We're not happy with this. We're not happy with that. We're going to withdraw our co-instructional activities because we're after something in negotiations," or "We don't like the way the school board's doing certain things."

We have made the responsibilities of the school boards crystal clear with respect to co-instructional activities, what the principals' responsibilities are and what the teachers' responsibilities are. We've also made it very clear to the trade unions what we expect of them and

what the penalties are if they do things that are not according to the law, because there's no room for co-instructional activities to be used as a negotiating tool by trade unions, and I'm particularly pointing at secondary schools. We have not had that problem in elementary schools.

One other aspect of the bill deals with accountability. Parents and taxpayers expect accountability. The member from St Thomas probably doesn't expect accountability; he's yapping over there while I'm trying to speak. But I'll say this: Accountability is important in the education system not only at the ministry level but at the school board level, at the principal level and at the teacher level. Accountability is important. So what we have put in place is a system for the minister—who already has the power to investigate where there's financial mismanagement or intentions to financially mismanage the system—to issue directions, to issue orders or even take over the school board if they're not going to satisfy the standards for quality education.

Accountability in the education system is here. This is what this act brings forth. It brings about education standards and it puts a mechanism in place so that the minister has the ability to ensure that those standards are satisfied. Those powers with respect to financial mismanagement were already in place previously in Bill 160.

In respect of my colleagues who want to join me in this very important debate with respect to Bill 74, the Education Accountability Act, I will sit down at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): It's a pleasure for me to be able to speak to this bill. First of all, I have to say that I sit and listen with frustration to some of the rhetoric as they speak to Bill 74. This bill is simply about arrogance, it's simply about centralized power and nothing about making our public education system better. In the opening explanatory notes of the bill, it starts off with this change of even the definition or the terminology of "extracurricular" to "co-instructional" activities. This is where the sham begins. This government has changed the word "extracurricular" to "co-instructional." I just wonder, does this now mean that by changing this name from "extracurricular" to "co-instructional," it's somehow made more relevant, and that for teachers who have been volunteering for years for extracurricular activities, that extracurricular activity terminology somehow is not as relevant as this co-instructional activity?

I'll state that educators are professionals and have known for years and have volunteered their talent and time for years to make the educational experience of students more than this archaic industrial model this government is using across this province for education.

Instead of doing what a good manager would do and give credit to the teaching profession for their contributions to education, above and beyond the call of duty, what this narrow-minded, and I'll use the word "arrogant" again, and autocratic approach does is to insult the integrity of the profession and to propagate the negative

image that teachers do not participate in extracurricular activities, not because this is fact because for the most part this is not the case, but because this government would like the public to believe that is the case. I call this propaganda: not based on fact but based on distortion of the truth to justify its attack on this honourable profession.

I read in a recent publication that Joseph Goebbels—he was the Nazi propagandist—described propaganda as this: It is the art of simplification, constant repetition, appealing to the instinct and the emotional, and simply ignoring unpleasant facts. The word “propaganda” in my estimation is quite appropriate in the manner this bill has been spun.

Where in any other sector across this province has voluntary service been forced upon a profession? How does this increase education quality? In my opinion, both the minister and the Premier do not understand the value of educators and the complex role of what education is all about. The only other explanation I have is that, simply, maybe they're just on a power trip.

Quality education is best achieved in an environment of respect and of being valued for the excellence that is achieved, and by politicians here at Queen's Park realizing the positive and negative effects their decisions are having on the front lines. Understanding education and what works, listening to those front lines of educators who are professionals and know first hand what they face every day, would be the ethical thing to do. When you want to know what's working in crime control, you talk to the police forces on the front lines. You don't attack them because one or two of those officers may not be doing their job very well.

I would argue that quality education is not achievable with sustained confrontation of the educators. Quality education is not possible by the blind political ideology of neo-conservatism that does not value what is best in our society, does not value one of the strongest forces that shapes our society and provides the best competition in this post-industrial age, and that is the education system and the educators.

1610

Both you and I know and understand that this far-right ideology is all about power and privatization. This is the only explanation for this type of bill in this province.

Subsection 1(1): ‘co-instructional activities’ means activities other than providing instruction”

I would like to go into the instructional time, as dictated, of the 1,250 minutes that this government has quantified. This again is based on an industrial model that is not applicable in education.

The problem with this government specifying working conditions for teachers is that the assumption is present that teachers only work when they're in the classroom in front of students. Hence the day and the teacher's hours are defined by the amount of time they're in the classroom. When the final bell rings and the school day is over, the teacher's no longer working, according to the

1,250 minutes a week that this government has dictated to the teachers.

We want to talk about clarity here. To increase the instructional time to 1,250 minutes per week meant—this is what's happened and we'll talk about clarity—that the school day should be extended by 20 minutes. This definition was a means to force high school teachers to teach an extra class throughout the year; that is, seven of eight classes scheduled in the high school. But because the school is semestered, this means teaching four classes one semester and teaching three classes the next.

Please remember that labour laws are never applicable to the teaching profession. Teaching four classes means this: This is clarity. You teach two consecutively, you have lunch, then you teach two more; or you can teach one, you have lunch, then you teach three; or you teach three, then you have lunch, and then you teach one. That's the reality of clarity, by the way. Furthermore, this workload was not to be for everyone but for two-thirds of the teaching staff. Such a directive was opposed of course by unions, and this agreement was bought into and the assignment of six out of eight classes.

What I want to say is that this bill is not about quality education nor is it about accountability; this bill is about the neo-conservative government giving itself extreme powers. The minister will have absolute powers in many cases. It's about discouraging and ultimately silencing local democracy. It's about muzzling critics, with the power to fire any employee who should refuse to follow orders from Queen's Park. Unfortunately, that is what this bill is really about.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's certainly a pleasure for me to be able to respond to this particular bill. There's a lot of confusion on this bill, or at least a lot of confusion that the union is trying to put forward, a lot of rhetoric that we're hearing from them, which is indeed most unfortunate.

I think back to the kind of rhetoric we were hearing at the time of Bill 104 and Bill 160. That was the extremism that was coming forth from the union. I found it very upsetting. Even the board chair in my riding said that, with Bill 104 and Bill 160, a school board won't even be able to buy a toothbrush. What kind of garbage is that being put forth by the local school board chair, and obviously dead wrong, but wanted to create emotionalism and get the public all upset with our government?

They were going around about these unprecedented powers and how the government of Ontario could take over the school board. What was in that act was exactly what's been there for several decades. Similar things are in the health act for hospital boards. Similar things are there in the Municipal Act for municipal councils. This is nothing exceptional, nothing was different, but they were trying to make a big thing over it and get the public all stirred up and all upset.

They went on to say that the student was never mentioned once in all of the act; they used the term “pupil.” If I remember correctly, and I'm trying to go back some three years, it was used something like 160 times, but

they were trying to play games because the word "student" wasn't being used, which is most unfortunate.

Then they came out with that because of those bills some 10,000 teachers were going to be laid off. We know what happened. That certainly did not happen, although again they were trying to create this kind of rhetoric, create that kind of emotion in the public; and that was very unfortunate.

What Earl Manners, who is the head of the union, is now saying about Bill 74—his first press release said that we were going to lay off teachers. Then what did his press release say just two or three days later? Oh, but Bill 74 is going to create a teacher shortage. He must be a Liberal. He would have to be a Liberal to be coming out with both those positions at the same time. I consider it the same time, two or three days apart, whatever it was. It was within the week, one right behind the other.

The reality of what's going on here is that there are expanded positions for teachers. We're reducing the class size, both in the secondary panel as well as in the elementary panel, by roughly one student per class, investing millions of dollars to ensure that happens. That really means there are going to be expanded positions for teachers. Maybe Earl Manners just can't add that up, I'm not sure, but he should because he's writing a lot of speeches for the NDP. When they're speaking, obviously it's union rhetoric they're putting forward.

I think it's also interesting, what with all this rhetoric, that the applications for teachers' colleges are up something like 40%, and I understand enrolment is up the same. The teaching profession must be looking good to our young people, the opportunities. In my opinion, and from what I'm hearing, that is certainly being reflected in those kinds of applications. I applaud them. I think it is a great profession. My second daughter is a vice-principal in the Durham board and writing some of the textbooks for education. My hat is off; she just does a tremendous job.

As I say that, we hear the Premier speaking highly of teachers—I've never heard him criticize a teacher—all three education ministers we've had speaking highly of teachers. What they criticize is union activities and the system. The system needs to be corrected and changed. Also, some of the things that unions are doing are absolutely unsatisfactory.

What we're doing in this bill is clarifying the instructional time that was set out some three or four years ago in Bill 160, but in the interim they've negotiated away some of that instructional time, and boards and the unions have been saying repeatedly that they want it better clarified. So that is exactly what we are going to do with Bill 74. It shouldn't have been necessary if the unions' interest was really the students. If they had the students' interest at heart this wouldn't be happening, and if they hadn't negotiated away that quality time for our students.

I think it's also very important that we get this legislation passed before the end of June, prior to the House rising, because of some of the negotiations that are going

on. We really do need to move along with this legislation, and that's part of the reason for the time allocation motion we're debating here today.

Parents, teachers and students have told us that such duties as parent-teacher interviews, writing reference letters to accompany scholarship applications and co-instructional activities like coaching basketball games and band practices are not extras. Bill 74 would ensure that these things cannot be withdrawn as part of a work-to-rule campaign. That's really what this bill is about.

1620

I personally think it's very unfortunate that we have to bring in a bill with this content to require teachers to do this, but the basic reason is what happened with the union requiring, demanding that teachers not volunteer outside of the classroom time. I find that absolutely despicable. It's just unacceptable and it's unfortunate. But what does a government do when a union is using these kinds of tactics? The only thing, as I see from the Minister of Education, our government, is to come forth with a bill that will require that there be some.

As you walk your way through it, we're not saying how much co-instructional time there should be or what they should or shouldn't be doing, even though union rhetoric that I'm getting in mail says they're going to have to be on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. As a veterinarian, I can tell you that in eight years in private practice, I know what it's like to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are not too many basketball games at 2 am. That just doesn't happen. Yes, there are some on a Saturday that they might be appointed to. But this works out to, first the board sets the policy and then once the board has set the policy, the local school, with the local school council, in concert with the principal, decides the kind of co-instructional time that will be spent. Then it's the principal's responsibility to assign that.

We know that all teachers are not qualified to coach basketball or hockey. Take myself, for example; I certainly wouldn't be qualified to teach music. I couldn't carry a tune in a basket. But nevertheless, with the kinds of qualities various teachers have, they would assign appropriately. There are some teachers, with the kinds of courses they have, where it doesn't blend well with extra-curricular, but I'm sure they do have skills that would apply extremely well.

I have another two or three minutes here. I know the member from Durham is really anxious to fill out this time allocation to our party, but I want to talk about one teacher from Campbellford by the name of Dave Noble. This is an example of a teacher really taking on extra-curricular activities. He has been leading a jazz ensemble and they have been winning praise all over Ontario, and nationally as well. They've enjoyed success at MusicFest Canada. They've been winning in regional festivals. Even recently, when they were performing, one of the adjudicators actually begged them to come out for an encore. They've been on radio and they've been on tele-

vision. This is an example of a teacher just doing a tremendous job in that area.

Actually today, they're being honoured by a parade in Campbellford-Seymour. The mayor of Campbellford is recognizing them and also the town council has dedicated and designated this week as the CDHS Jazz Band Week, all because of this particular teacher. He has made it cool to be in this particular band. He's also won the 1999 TVOntario teacher's award.

We have another teacher, a geography teacher in Cobourg West, who similarly has done a tremendous job and is being recognized, and shortly in the House I will have a statement about this particular teacher.

I think it's so important to recognize what's going on here, and the issue that teachers and the unions seem so concerned about has to do with the co-instructional time. It will all be worked out through the different committees and the school councils. This wouldn't be in legislation if the union hadn't kept teachers from going forth in certain boards to do volunteer work. We've had teachers end up with nervous breakdowns because they couldn't do this, they couldn't help students with extracurricular or co-instructional time. That's most unfortunate.

If the unions had stayed out of it this would not be in the legislation. I think that's important for the public to know. Thank you very much for the time. I'm giving 14 minutes to a great member from Durham and I'm sure he'll expand on some of the comments I've made.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): We have seen already today a major retreat on the part of the Harris government—not by the Premier himself; he was nowhere to be found this afternoon when the retreat was announced. I wanted to send out a posse to find him so that he could make the announcement of the full retreat on the issue of a full public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Walkerton, Ontario, the most tragic and unfortunate circumstances on the issue of water safety throughout this province.

I would want to see this government make yet another retreat, and that's on this bill. I would applaud a retreat on this bill because it think it represents yet another attack not only on the teaching profession but on public education in Ontario. Ultimately, we must always look at what is good for the students who are in various aspects of school—elementary, secondary and post-secondary education—when we're looking at legislation that's forthcoming. The government has been consistent in putting the boots to the teachers of this province, unfortunately. The government members like to characterize this as an issue between what they refer to as unions and the government. This has never been a fight between the government of Ontario and the teachers' federations of Ontario. This is a fight between those who believe in a strong, vibrant, high-quality publicly funded education system and those who do not. That's what this bill is about; that's what most of the legislation is about when we deal with it in this House.

What has also happened—and those who have served on school boards would know this and must feel pangs of

conscience when they see it—is the government is really putting in a vise the school boards of this province. Many people who served on school boards are members of the Conservative Party, or were in the past, at the very least. They had a strong dedication to education.

When I was first in this House a number of years ago, people like Tom Wells, Bob Welch and Larry Grossman were committed to public education and cared about public education. Yes, there were some disputes over the years with individual members of the teaching profession and perhaps the federations, but usually those were resolved by sitting down together at the table and coming up with a solution.

The difference here is the government has designated teachers as the enemy. They know that there's a certain segment of the population out there who resent teachers, who perhaps didn't do exceedingly well in the education system and would look to teachers as being part of the reason they did not, or others in certain professions and so on who may feel that they are in a much more difficult position than teachers, and they play to that particular sentiment.

That's most unfortunate, because the role of a Premier is to bring out the best in people in the province. Unfortunately this—and I wish I didn't have to say this—in my opinion, is not what this Premier does. He divides and he hopes to conquer when he divides. I know there's a lot of desk-thumping and applause when the Premier puts down certain groups—he calls them special interest groups. Apparently those on Bay Street are not a special interest group; those who are in the corporate sector who just got huge cuts in corporation taxes are not a special interest to the Premier; and the very wealthy people who did the best with tax cuts are people who are not seen as vested interests or special interest groups by the Premier.

You see, we must approach the province as a whole and say, "What is best for the education system in Ontario?" I think this bill is a major step backwards. Teachers are very, I wouldn't use the word "disgruntled" as much as "discouraged" by what they see with this government. I know the government can claim victory from time to time, and it feels good to think that somehow you've put somebody in their place.

I admire members of the medical profession, who have once again wrestled the government to the ceiling in terms of the negotiations that went on. I happen to think that members of the medical profession should be paid well and their services are very valuable to the province. But I notice that the government has a great fear of the medical profession, so whenever they get into negotiations I look at the ceiling, to see the doctors on the ceiling, having been wrestled there by members of this government. I admire their ability to do so; I think they're deserving of that.

Bill 74 is about doing education on the cheap, first of all. It cuts the instructional funding for high school by at least 7%. The Harris government has reduced its share of education funding by some 29%, or \$1.6 billion, since it came into office. It dilutes the students' learning experi-

ence. It reduces the amount of time teachers can spend on each individual student, and that is what they want to do: spend that time with those students. It increases the workload of teachers by 30% one quarter to one half of the time, and that is a workload which goes far beyond—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: The member for Northumberland laughs, as he always does in these particular circumstances, but it's most unfortunate, because that's exactly what happened. I've talked to teachers who have gotten up at 4 o'clock in the morning to go out to the rowing course in St Catharines to coach rowing, then go in to school, teach all day, work with extracurricular activities, perhaps not of a sports nature, and then go out and coach the football team or the basketball team, sometimes two and three teams. Yet this government wants to say: "That's not good enough. We're now going to force you to do so." People will do things much more of their own volition, voluntarily and happily, for the students with whom they work, without the Mike Harris government telling them when and how they must do that.

1630

It creates the likelihood of strikes and learning disruptions in the fall where none existed before. I didn't expect there would be any. I think we will see it with this legislation. It disrespects and discourages educators in this province. You know, now they retire almost the day they can. I can remember when teachers used to stay in almost as long as they could to continue to work with the students. But there is so much despair out there in the education system, so much disruption, so much anxiety, that we have outstanding people leaving the teaching profession the day they can and we don't have that fine balance we need of experienced people and new people coming into the profession. It forces teachers to do mandatory after-hours work on any day of the week and at any time. It fires teachers who don't comply with that. It strips away the right to bargain any of these work conditions. It eviscerates the independence of community school boards to make significant decisions. It imposes a staffing funding formula across the province that was previously used only at two out of 72 boards—in Durham, they were—which themselves had serious dysfunction as a result. It fines, penalizes and bars from office any school board officials who don't comply—in other words, who dare to question Mike Harris's best wishes in education. It gives the minister power to take over whatever she has concerns over, what a board might or might not do, and creates a terrible precedent for reckless use of central government power. Teachers and school boards have no right to appeal.

The government is obviously afraid to have the terms of the bill discussed in public, allowing only one and a half days of public hearings and a total of four days of debate. This is a major and significant part of education, a major and significant piece of legislation, and this government wants to have next to no hearings. I think it would be important to hear not only from teachers, who are directly affected by this, but the students, who are

indirectly but importantly affected by this legislation, from parents, from the general public. I think there are a lot of people out there who say the government has gone too far. Even some who support some of the reforms the government has been involved with—I don't support very many of them, but even those who support some of those reforms are saying to me, "The government has now gone too far." That actually happened with Bill 160, where it was mostly parents of people who are teachers, or perhaps spouses or perhaps someone who was a neighbour, who said, "Why does the government continually go out of its way to pick fights with members of the teaching profession and ultimately to put down public education?"

The extreme right wing, aided and abetted by reports from the Fraser Institute out on the west coast, wishes to discredit public institutions, wishes to create a crisis of confidence in public institutions so that the public will accept radical solutions which normally they would not accept. We're seeing this in health care, where there is a hope that the government is going to somehow now have a two-tiered health care system, privatize it. We're seeing it in the education system, where this government is moving quickly towards charter schools and beyond that. It's most unfortunate, and I think the government should withdraw this bill.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon on this motion dealing with Bill 74 and how to move forward to ensure that—really, I think it's about ensuring that the students of Ontario have a full education opportunity.

I think it's important, with all these large provincial issues, to always start with yourself and try to understand, was there a need for change? Of course the important thing is the royal commission. I always think of it as the background piece. The royal commission, started by the NDP government, acknowledged the importance of reforms in education. There would be differences of opinion; that's to be expected with such a significant amount of change, in curriculum and governance and how each child is funded equitably. Those issues were central to the theme of the Royal Commission on Learning. There are going to be differences, because in some respects it is 10 or 12 years of the model that was in existence, probably from the Hall-Dennis report—there was a serious lack of accountability and there was a serious lack of equity in the system between northern communities and southern communities, between large, assessment-rich communities and rural communities, like in my riding of Durham. So there was the equity issue.

Really, I think in all of this the students got lost. The evidence is clear, Mr Speaker, that class sizes were going up so boards could afford larger and larger wage increases for teachers. I would say to you, right here on the record today, that I believe you could not pay a good teacher enough. In that respect, I think it's like they are a profession. As a profession, there should be differentials in how much they're paid. There isn't enough money to pay a good teacher who will affect the future and poten-

tial of my own children, and all the children. There are teachers who clearly shouldn't be in the classroom. That's part of what this whole College of Teachers debate was about.

We've established, without question, the important need for change in education and that, in that dynamic of change, there are people that are strongly opposed to, and defensive of, the status quo. They're strongly opposed to the changes in defence of the status quo. I sort of come at this as a parent of five children. I've probably said that several thousand times in the House, but it bears repeating because my wife is a teacher. I know that she puts a lot into it. I know teachers, as we speak, are probably—well, they'd be home by now, but they'd be marking report cards, or correcting, or filling in the extensive work that's required to do the out-of-the-classroom activities. In high schools in a couple of weeks, the actual classes will have finished and they'll be invigilating exams.

There's not just teaching the 6.5 credits. That's just a small part of what's expected of a professional teacher today. I know they're up to it. I'm clear about that. I've explained the motive of change. Dave Cooke, who's now the co-chair of the Education Improvement Commission, is a previous Minister of Education who started many of the reforms, the Education Quality and Accountability Office. That was, I think, Bill 33. He also started the College of Teachers. A big debate about that—the unions wanted to have control of the college board. That was the simple argument: They wanted control. They wanted power.

Then there was the whole idea of testing in grade 3, and I believe it's grades 6 and 9. That was started prior to the election. Moving forward, we're continuing to address the quality of education and putting the students first. The whole issue in Bill 74 that is important is to set about some confidence in being able to complete what Bill 160 started, and that's to deal with the whole issue of instructional time. There's no one here on this side of the House who would expect anyone to do any more than that 1,250. If you just do the simple math on that—and I recognize that there's preparation time in preparing a basketball or a volleyball tournament. I recognize that there are times outside of that four hours and 10 minutes or something a day—

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Twenty minutes.

Mr O'Toole: Four hours and 20 minutes, I guess it is, as the member is saying. That's 21 hours a week. Clearly there are other responsibilities, and there always have been other responsibilities in their assignments in working with children, in counselling and guiding and moulding their lives. I'm primarily addressing this in the secondary school environment, because my own five children attended—I say this without trying to boast about it; maybe there's some lack of stability or something. They're all either in or have finished university. But respectively, they went to the Durham public school system while living in Port Perry; they went to the

Durham separate school system; they also went to what was then called the Northumberland-Clarington boards of education in Bowmanville and Courtice, and the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Roman Catholic Separate School Board as well. For the record, they attended all four systems.

I was a trustee, twice elected, for the separate board in the area. I also ran for the public board. I believe there's a lot of value with the boards working together.

So clearly the changes in not just this bill but in education are not complete. I really feel that there are a few things that I do want to put on the record. I'm very disappointed, primarily with the position of OECTA, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. I'm extremely disappointed in their positioning on most of these issues. I want to read for the record a couple of things that will certainly clarify why I feel that way.

1640

The information I have would indicate that there has been a strategy developed. I'm quoting an OECTA internal memo dated May 23, and it says: "It is important to note that Bill 74 has not yet been passed into law and is therefore subject to change. There are also many particulars yet to be made clear in regulations. While you have no doubt heard reports that OSSTF," the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, "is 'planning' for strike action in the fall"—how sad. I'm reading it here. It's right here: "planning for strike action in the fall." This is our children's future. This is the plan and it's Earl Manners to a T. His main thing is power. Where is the students' cause in all of this? It just doesn't seem to matter.

To go on: "While you have no doubt heard reports that OSSTF is 'planning' for strike action in the fall, the message delivered by Barbara Sargent, OTF president, at a special OECTA council of presidents held last Thursday is contrary to this type of action." They want a work-to-rule strategy, which is to withdraw other services, ie, co-curricular. "Sargent stressed that a direct confrontation with the government would only serve the government and that this is exactly what" the Harris government "is hoping for. Sargent also spoke of the need for all the affiliates to 'stick together' to fend off the government's assault on teachers and education." It went on to say that they formed an alliance with the federation of labour—all of the union groups kind of working together to put Harris in his place.

I should say here for the record, Premier, stay the course. We're behind you, and a lot of the people of Ontario are behind you. I believe firmly that the election in June 1999 was about finishing the task, the challenge we started in 1995. I believe it was completing the changes to improve the quality, accountability and accessibility of education—quite clearly, Mr Speaker, you were part of that government—that Dave Cooke, then Minister of Education, started. I have the confidence in our Premier that he will deliver on his promises. His caucus is squarely behind it, and our Minister of Education,

Janet Ecker, is prepared to work with all the stakeholders to put students first.

This is a very important time in history, and I'll be listening intently as speakers from the opposition try to map out some reason why the education system shouldn't change along with the rest of the world. That's all we're asking. Think about the time, the 1,250 minutes. Yes, we recognize—and I've heard reports that there's 10 months of the year and that's the way it's been for a long time, that they only work 10 months of the year and they should withdraw their services.

Unfortunately, I should have had more like an hour. I spoke to Vanessa on this earlier and I was overridden by the House leader's office, but there may be a chance that with unanimous consent they'll extend the time for me.

The propaganda that I, through some spies I have—I shouldn't disclose who they are. It's not my wife; strike that from the record. She wouldn't be very pleased with me. If you're watching, sorry about that, Peggy. Nonetheless, some of the stuff that appears within the staff rooms is absolutely—it shouldn't be there. It's politicizing the educational environment. It's just not acceptable any longer. This one here, for instance, is an editorial, an opinion, and it's a very politicized statement opposing education reform. This is an OECTA circular on May 19 and it says, "Legal counsel Elizabeth Shilton highlighted the dangers of Bill 74." This stuff is sitting around the staff room and in the hallways, using our fax machines to propagate and propagandize our children's learning environment—totally unacceptable. My heart is saddened right at this very moment as I speak to the people of Ontario. This is about Earl Manners's sense of power. I am saddened.

I have to get back on track, because there's a lot more to be said. There are a few things, though, most of it—

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: Mr Speaker, a little more attention is appropriate right at this time because I'm winding down.

Most appropriately, I have just recently sent about four or five thank you letters to teachers in my riding. I respect every one of them individually, even those who aren't listed here.

Karen Graves has just commissioned a dance and drama combination at the Bowmanville high school—rave reviews. Art and theatre's alive and well at Bowmanville high school.

Cartwright high school is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Just recently, the band from one of the smallest high schools in Ontario won a band competition in eastern Canada—John Verness, the principal conductor.

Courtice Secondary School—I'm working with the students there. Johnathon Brown, the e-commerce guy, e-education guy, and Jeff Brown and John Winder—I was just there a week or so ago, and some of the wonderful things they're doing with the Science Olympics, the Learning Olympics, is absolutely inspirational. Linda Greenwood, the principal there, is a very empowering person.

So there are many, many positive things. Keep the union out. In fact, keep the government out. Let our schools operate and let the people operate, empowered professionals. A power struggle between Mike Harris and Earl Manners does nothing for our students' education.

In conclusion—I know a lot of people have been waiting for that line—nonetheless there is a section in here that I have challenged the Minister of Education on. For the public record here, this is dealing with paragraph 7.1. Just the wording and the tone of it—I want to find the person who wrote this, the little bureaucrat who wrote this. They caused this problem of implying that somehow teachers were on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. That's simply not here. What this is about is making sure that every student has the opportunity for outdoor education, that every student has the opportunity to exercise extracurricular activities and the fulfilling aspect of life in high school. Depriving our students of that is simply unforgivable.

This bill has to pass so we can resolve these problems and move on to ensure our kids have quality, accountable, accessible education in Ontario. The very, very best for our students is the least we can do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): I want to bring to the attention of the House the presence of Margaret Harrington in the visitors' gallery. She was the very effective member from Niagara Falls in the 35th Parliament. Welcome, Margaret.

Further debate?

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): The member just said he's saddened to have to speak. Well, I'm very saddened to have to speak to this bill. Talk about putting politics into education. Your government has done more to politicize the education system and done more harm to the education system than any other government previously.

Here we go again with this time allocation motion in front of us cutting off debate. This is unprecedented, what we've seen with this government, the unprecedented use of time allocation motions in this House. Every one of you members on that side should be totally ashamed of yourselves at how you're undermining the democratic rights of this House. It's shameful the way you put forth these time allocation motions. If the government had any sense—and they don't have any common sense—they should do the honourable thing and withdraw this Bill 74.

This government loves to talk about accountability, but their actions don't speak any louder than the words. Look at your record of accountability to individuals, to the George family with Ipperwash. Look at your record of accountability to the people of Walkerton, to the health care system of this province, to the Province of Ontario Savings Office. Where's accountability on that side of the House?

This government is going to be held accountable for the growing lack of respect you have caused among the teaching profession in this province. This government is the cause of that. One of your biggest problems is that

you can't help but go out and continue to negotiate in the media. Look at the ad campaign you put forth one year ago, the information you put out and what that did to the teaching profession. You talk about trying to bring respect back into education. Well, you know what your government is doing. Your government is removing respect from individuals who are supposed to be out there doing what is best for the children of this province.

Just today, we talked about the code of conduct that's introduced. It's so ironic to stand in this House and sit in this House and watch the terrible, deplorable state and way that this Minister of Education acts in this House. It is just terrible listening to her constant heckling. She yells and she screams like a schoolyard bully, and that's a terrible example that the Minister of Education is setting for this province.

1650

They talk about the brain drain that exists in this province. They love to blame the federal government for the brain drain. But this government is causing a brain drain within our education system and I think that is a real shame. The actions of this government are leading to an unprecedented exodus of good individuals from the teaching profession, individuals who should be there helping our children lead good lives, but your actions are leading to this unprecedented exodus. What we're also seeing is a loss of veteran teachers who have done so much for the teaching profession.

You talk about mandatory extracurricular activities. How do you mandate volunteer activities? I look at the example of a teacher I had at Arthur Voaden Secondary School in St Thomas. Ed Williamson spent 30 years of his life in the teaching profession. Ed Williamson spent countless hours as a football coach every evening of the week, starting in August. He wasn't paid for that. He did that out of love. And this government is now going to start to mandate that.

The other thing that really bothers me is that it's all about power. This government is so bent and determined on power—power of the centre of the Harris office, power of the government. That's what it's all about, this whole education, Bill 160 and now Bill 74. It's centralizing control and taking away—this is a scary thing because it's happening not only within education; it's happening all through government agencies right now. It's taking away local decision-making authority and centralizing that decision-making authority in Queen's Park, and that's wrong because what's right for Queen's Park isn't always right for what's going on in Elgin-Middlesex-London.

What they're also doing is that there's a serious threat to the collective bargaining process in this province. What I'm extremely concerned about is that the doors are being opened with the teachers and that what this is leading to is a real threat to the whole collective bargaining process in this province. But do you know what this government loses sight of in all of this? This is all about children. This government has done more to disrupt the lives and the education of children than any other govern-

ment in the history of this province. They're pitting one side against the other: teachers against trustees, parents against teachers. Who's stuck in the middle? The students, and that's very shameful.

I want to read into the record some comments of Patrick Dunne, the director of education at the London Catholic District School Board. He talks about today's teachers being truly heroes. "Given the government's determination to break their backs, belittle their efforts to shape the minds, the hearts and the souls of our children and youth, and provide for them within school and outside of the school a nurturing environment that is absent in many homes, it is beyond comprehension that they are still willing to bring such vigour and enthusiasm to the important work they do."

Members of the government, do the honourable thing: Withdraw Bill 74.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I'm pleased at this moment to speak on this bill as I just came from the grand foyer of the Legislative Assembly, from meeting a class from a school in the new part of my riding, at Markstay and Warren, right along Highway 17.

It was a grade 7 and 8 class and they were very keen to be here at Queen's Park to see how government works. They asked me what I thought about the Premier and about what was going on here. They were full of questions. I'll be sitting down before they actually come in. They're on a short tour right now and will be coming in. It's nice to see those school children because that's what it's all about. That's why we're here dealing with bills that deal with education and our school system across the province.

It's very tragic to see the bullyness of the Harris government in wanting to destroy traditions that have been forever in this province: the way teachers dedicate their time over and above the classroom time to their school, to their students and to their community.

It reminds me of when I was the Solicitor General critic and we had a bill regarding firefighters. This government put in a clause that firefighters would not be allowed to strike in Ontario. As you know, firefighters never went on strike in this province. It was part of their code that they would never go on strike, yet this government decided to bully the firefighters.

In this case, they're bullying the teachers. I remember in my day that I enjoyed sports very much, and I was involved in all sorts of team activity. Some of my fondest memories, probably because I wasn't the most serious student at the high school level, was of my sports activities and after school. Some of my fondest memories of the teachers, those who probably inspired me the most, were those I spent time with after school, out of the classroom—going on a trip to the United States for an international track meet; and the time that Mr Pennick from OTHS would dedicate, those weekends travelling with us, taking our young relay team down to Ohio, the same high school where Jesse Owens still held the record at that time. He spent the whole weekend with us. This was part of his love. He was a teacher because he loved

to teach and he loved to transfer the athletic skills to the new crop of students coming along, the new crop of athletes. In fact, he took us right to the all-Ontario meets, where we won a medal.

That has been the tradition, and that's why parts of this bill are just not needed to bully teachers, to attack them, to believe that teachers would abandon that tremendous time that they dedicate and have always dedicated and will continue to dedicate to the students in this province. It's absolutely unnecessary, but unfortunately and sadly typical of this government to create an issue where there's no issue at all.

They decided, in their zeal, to somehow rebuild the education system, but they decided to do that without a blueprint. So they took a wrecking ball to the system, and now bit by bit they're having to do more and more to it, because they busted the whole thing up. They've completely demoralized everybody in it. It's very sad to see that. I saw some teachers downstairs with those students, and they're not as happy as they were a year ago and two years ago, because of the continuing attacks from this government. I would ask for a cease-and-desist order from this government. Why don't you leave educators and education and the students alone and let them do their job to the betterment of this province?

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It's indeed a pleasure to follow the remarks of my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

The idea that seems to be particularly eluding the government in putting this bill forward is that this needs to be discussed in the interests of children. The government has apparently decided it is afraid to reveal what's in this bill. It is afraid of public reaction. It's afraid to reveal anything that is substantive in terms of their real intentions here.

I say that because we're debating a time allocation motion today, which is a fancy name for cutting off debate. There will be no debate after today on this bill until it comes back to be voted on as a result of this motion. It will be voted on in 10 days time by the fiat of this government, afraid to hear from the people of the province and hoping, crossing their fingers, that parents in particular won't catch on to what they're really up to.

Tomorrow and the day after and Monday and Tuesday of next week there won't be any hearings and there won't be any debate, because this government is afraid to have debate. They don't want to have the debate in London. They don't want to have the debate in Guelph. They're afraid to go into Durham. They don't want to show up in any of the communities in this province except for two.

Incredibly, they have the audacity to put forward this tawdry bill, this shameful bill with really almost a stunning lack of insight, lack of knowledge of education reflected in it, with incredible aspects to it that I'm going to touch on in a moment and then to try to hide it from the people of Ontario, to say: "In our power as government, we've decided we don't have to tell you about the bill. We're afraid, we're not courageous, we won't tell you, the people of London, what's in this bill that will

affect your children come the fall." I find that highly problematic.

1700

They're saying in this bill that for the two million kids in Ontario whom they propose to negatively impact with this bill, they will permit, in their grace as the government in power, they will give to the people of Ontario two, maybe three hours of hearings in Barrie next Wednesday, and then they will deign, in their majestic splendour and majority power, to provide the people of Ottawa and area with one day of hearings. That's all there is. That's because they're afraid. That's because the government is afraid and doesn't have the courage of its convictions.

If you read and understand the bill, you can well understand why there are not members of the Conservative governing party standing up and saying, "I want this in my riding." In fact, I wonder what lottery the member from Barrie and the member from Ottawa, representing the government party, lost in order to have it in their communities.

What it's fundamentally about is a government that wants to do education on the cheap, that wants to run down the existing system. We have a document demonstrating beyond any doubt that this government has cut its share of education funding by 29% since they've come into office, \$1.6 billion. I've challenged any of the members opposite, including the minister, to debate that, to put their figures on the table. It has now been almost 10 days and none of the members opposite have produced any figures to the contrary.

The public watching out there can be assured that these figures, derived from the public estimates, are a true reflection of the lack of commitment of this government. It's part of the agenda, because they've done it with some subterfuge. They've done it by downloading certain things to municipalities. It takes an explanation. We want to offer to people that if they apply to my office, we will send them a copy of this report so they can see that in fact there has been a \$1.6-billion reduction—especially when you include inflation and enrolment increases; those have not been provided for—and then real cuts, real dollars left, of about \$871 million as part of that.

This is not what the kids of this province need. This is not what the students need to bravely meet the future. They don't need a tepid government afraid to explain themselves. Every other jurisdiction in North America that we have to compete with is saying: "We will develop our children in the best manner possible. We will spend more money on them." The governor of California says: "I'm going to take away income tax to attract the best teachers. That profession, I think, should be so valued, they don't have to pay income tax any more." Other jurisdictions are saying: "We are going to pay more for teachers. We're going to put more money into the system. We're going to have smaller class sizes. We're going to have a means of actually making sure that

everybody in the system is able to drive towards one goal: good quality learning experiences for children.”

Sadly, the government is going in an utterly different direction. This bill does further their tawdry agenda. It does allow them to cut more money. They will claim smaller class sizes. What they don't tell you is that there will be fewer teachers out there, so the overall workload increase is at least a 7% cut in instructional funds to each and every school. You would think that when members are sent here by their constituents that they would be alarmed and upset to know that each of their local schools is losing 7% of its instructional budget. But nobody on the other side will stand up. It's unfortunate. They won't stand up for hearings. They will not say that we need to be out there listening to the public. There has been so much change inflicted on this system that the people of London and the people of Durham need to hear about this, and they need to tell us what has to happen in the system. That's not the view of this government. They want to dilute the learning experience of students. In a very strange way, this bill is one of those inside-out bills: It claims to be doing something about education, but it's really a blame-and-distract bill.

The government actually proposes that we need a law to deal with problems in extracurricular. But when you question the government, for example, the assistant deputy minister, Norbert Hartmann, and you say: “Mr Hartmann, has the government done any studies? Has it done a report, an analysis to demonstrate any problems with extracurricular in places like London and Durham and so on? Does it have something?” and if they're recommending a law and taking the time in this Legislature, surely that's what they've done. Disconcertingly, there is no report. There is no analysis. This government has put forward a recommendation to this Legislature to pass a law without any substantiation whatsoever. It's an incredible use and abuse of their power. It's something this government unfortunately has become very accustomed to and very dependent on, that exercise of power.

What we have, then, is a bill that instead creates a problem, reduces the amount of time that teachers have by loading them up with what is an 11% increase in workload. But in the real world, which these members unfortunately have found themselves much detached from, that means from one quarter to one half of the time it's a 33% increase in workload. That's what it means. What they've done is said to those teachers they'll be working that much more, and of course they will have less time available for the other things that are part of the teaching role.

This government has decided to head off any reduction in extracurricular time by changing it altogether. In other words, we have a law that on one hand proposes to create a problem, lack of access to extracurricular by loading up teacher time with other classroom duties, and then on the other hand says, “We need to solve the problem we're going to create.” It's an incredible conceit that a government would wish to hide that from the public, would conceal that, would be afraid to say to the

people of Guelph, “You need to know that we're going to have less attention per student by our teachers and we want to know if you agree with that.” That's not the approach or the attitude of this government; it simply isn't. I think it is a very low watermark in our development of education to see this kind of tawdry, disrespectful legislation go through.

Much has been spoken by my colleagues, rightly so, about the attitude that this implies. All around this province, thankfully, despite this government, we have private sector employers that are investing in the learning and knowledge of their employees. We have people, for example, in the region of Durham in the auto industry, and what are they doing? Are they putting in big centralized laws and pushing down with their thumb on the people who work for them? Does the head of General Motors have a screen that they view the plant floor with and do they crack the whip and make people do things? No, they don't. They are developing workers who can think for themselves, who can act on their behalf, who can bring them forward and make some advances. Instead, we have a government going back and bringing us 30-year-old labour-management ideas. They're just going to force people to do whatever they in their Soviet-style wisdom here at Queen's Park—this must be a corporatist government, I guess, if we find them on the political spectrum. But they believe in big central government that doesn't listen to communities. They say, “You shall do this.”

It is insulting in the extreme, when this government has no evidence to the contrary, that they would try to force and compel teachers to do what they currently do today out of love and respect for the students. What they do is jeopardize the amount of extracurricular that is there and then they try to blame somebody else, the teachers themselves, for having done that. That's unacceptable, and we in the official opposition will not be letting this government get away with that.

But I challenge the members today, if they wish to stand up for their communities, because they are also taking away any say their communities have. They will permit the Minister of Education, if she just so much as has a rumbling idea about something gone wrong, to step in, and she can dictate to every one of their school boards, she can fire their employees, she can exercise \$5,000 fines, she can make them liable for any expenditures they have made and she can bar them from holding municipal office for five years. That's what these members agree with. These members agree with those excessive, punitive abuses of government power.

These are like kids in a candy store. They have found that the candy is there. They're stuffing themselves. Only what the people opposite are eating is power. They're chewing on it. They believe that politically they can keep gobbling it up in the education system until they've run everybody who has decent concerns for it out of it. Well, this is going to be sour candy indeed. This government will pay for the bill that they're putting the choke on for us today.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): We're dealing with a closure motion. Where to begin? There's so much to say. Where do you start? I'm going to start with closure, because this government is fond of closure motions. They don't like debate. They don't like debate in this place and they don't want to take this debate outside of this place. That is why these people have a fondness for closure motions.

This bill is titled the Education Accountability Act. You understand why it's oxymoronic, and as I said the last time, more moronic than oxy. They call it "accountability act." It's a buzzword. It gives the impression to the general public that they're making somebody accountable. All you need to focus on is the word "accountable."

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I want to talk about some other accountability that this government doesn't want to speak about. While they make everybody else accountable, everyone in society except the business sector, they don't make themselves accountable. That's why, to my good friend Doug who just came in, I'd like to talk about accountability deficits, because we certainly have a deficit in this place when it comes to a government that enjoys closure motions and when it comes to a government that is not strong enough, bold enough, brave enough to be able to defend itself and its bill by taking it outside for a couple of weeks in the way New Democrats used to do in the past.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: John laughs. He laughs because he enjoyed the benefit of New Democrats making themselves accountable, and calls us fools because he's learned better and knows that the better way is not to consult with the public. That's why we have an accountability deficit, but we smoothly and glibly call this an Education Accountability Act, not accountable to anyone except themselves. Do you understand, Speaker? They're fond of talking about deficits except fond of talking about their own accountability.

That's why I speak of the accountability deficit, because these people don't want to take any debate outside of this place, except for one afternoon. The Lord has been merciful: They have given us one-and-a-half days of debate. One-half day in Barrie—God knows why Barrie—and the other day in Ottawa. It's the capital, I guess; Ottawa makes sense. No hearings in Toronto, because "Who likes Toronto anyway," I suppose the Tories want to say. Perhaps the opposition might be just a bit too much in Toronto, so they want to go to Barrie, of all places, for a glorious afternoon, I presume; a mere afternoon of hearings in Joe Tascona's area.

We have a problem in this place, because some of us are fond of democracy. We define democracy as making ourselves, as politicians, accountable. We define democracy as giving people the ability to speak to the bills that this government passes, because they haven't had another opportunity. The only opportunity they get is to be able to debate a bill once they've decided to put one forward. But if they have the courage to put one forward, they

ought to have the courage to take it out, defend it and allow the public to have its say.

An afternoon in Barrie and one day in Ottawa is not democracy to me, but maybe you good people of Ontario think it is. That's OK. If you believe that that is the way a democracy should be ruled, autocratically, by fiat, by this government, then I submit to you that I might be wrong. But if you believe that this government is afraid to hold itself accountable, you've got to let them know, because I tell you they are engaged in a politics of polarization. All M. Harris wants is 50% of support from the general public for any bill that he introduces in this place. That is all he needs. That is all he needs to get elected, and if he can solidify that 50% of the public, that's all he wants. He doesn't care if half of the population is against Bill 74, as long as the other half is for the bill. That's all he needs. It's polarized politics. It's Machiavellian politics at its best. It's Bismarck in the 21st century. You create a crisis and you fix the crisis. That is why people like the member from Durham and others use the buzzwords like, "We are a government that wants change," and "If you are for the status quo, I want to know, because you are against us because you are for the status quo." It doesn't matter what the status quo is; it must be wrong because the Tories say it's wrong.

Attorney General, the Tories say, "We want change." What kind of change? "It doesn't matter what kind of change. It's what the people want. The people want change. You let M. Harris look after the problem of what change we're talking about and you let M^{me} Ecker look to the solutions about what change we are looking for, because we don't want you, poor citizens of Ontario who are so bedraggled by so many little problems of life, to worry so much about the bills we introduce in this place, because we will look after you. We are there for you. So, good people of Ontario, when we treat the teachers as we treat welfare recipients, please don't think ill of us. We want change. We want accountability. We want quality. We are for the students."

The member for Durham says: "We are for students. Students should come first and that's why we are making the changes, because we want quality in the educational system. By the way, that's why we are going after the teachers, because they're not protecting our interests. You know why? Because we're dealing with bad unions here. We're dealing with those union bosses who are ruining the system. So we've got to protect the little kiddies from those unions, the union bosses. Remember that when you individualize these unions, they happen to be called teachers, but in the collective we'll call them, for the benefit of the public so that they will understand it, 'union bosses.'"

Does that ring well? It rings well if you want to polarize the politics of Ontario, doesn't it, Joe Spina? Sure, it rings well, because what you want is to polarize the public, "We're not dealing with teachers here; we're dealing with union bosses." Yes, that's the politics, but I wish you had the courage to say it. Just say it, so that could feel good. I'm saying it, but the good people of

Ontario might not believe me. If you said it, it would feel so much better, because I don't want to put words in your mouth. I know you speak of all the things that I have uttered. Perhaps I am interpreting erroneously. I don't want to do that. I want you to have the courage to say what you want to say so the public understands you.

So what have we done here? We say we've got a problem in the educational system, don't we, John? Don't we have a problem, because you're fixing it, right? You're saying you're fixing the system so we must have a problem in it, right? So the problem is with the teachers. Now what should we say to the good public as a way of getting them to understand we've got a crisis? We've got to tell the public that the teachers may not be as competent as we would like. Dare I say incompetent? That is the image that we, as Tories, want to be able to project to the public, that they are incompetent. That's why we're going to test them, isn't it, John?

Then what else is it we want to be able to communicate to the general public so they hate those union bosses, ie, teachers? We'll have to convince the general public that these teachers are, dare I say again, overpaid and underworked? Oh, yes. Why else would we be introducing, what you're fond of saying, testing teachers? Obviously they are incompetent so we need to test them. Bill 74 says: "They're underworked, so we're going to get them to teach one more period, and overpaid. Well, they'd better not ask more than inflation, even though they haven't had a raise in eight years."

The public that is tired, stressed out, says: "These teachers are well paid. These teachers have a lot of time to relax." So the politics of polarization is: "Keep the public thinking and believing that. We want the public to be visceral about those attitudes and we want them to attack those teachers so that when we assault them, as we have done since 1995, they will be on our side, they will be unquestioning." Don't they love ignorance? That's what the Common Sense Revolution is based on; it's based on ignorance. Because if common sense was that common, they wouldn't be happy with what we've got in our hands.

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I have to tell you, this government and these members love to talk about fewer taxes and less government. That was part of their Common Sense Revolution. I tell you, the corporations certainly benefit from this government, because most recently they have given away \$5 billion to the corporate sector—\$5 billion of your money, good people of Ontario. "We have a good economy," say the Tories. So I naturally say, if we have such a great economy, why are you giving \$5 billion away to the corporate sector? Please ask them, when you meet some of these fine people in your ridings, why they're giving away the money. In a good economy, when we have more money than we need, literally, you are giving \$5 billion of our money away to the corporate sector. You've got to ask them, when you go meet them. Please, go to their offices and chat with them. There is less government for the corporate sector and more money

back. Don't you love it, John? I know you do, because you and your corporate buddies are like one, colluded together, literally glued together.

So what do we have? We have more centralized government for teachers and the educational system than I have ever seen before and less government for guess who? The corporate sector. Ain't that grand? Isn't that a beautiful thing? It's like a dream made in heaven for the corporate sector to have these guys. The Common Sense Revolution says: "Less government. We're going to get off your back." Oh, is that what they mean in Walkerton: "Less government. We're getting off your back"? Because I've got to tell you, that's what less government means to the people of Walkerton. And a whole lot of other communities are worried about what you mean by less government, because it means two things: the firing of thousands of civil servants, which you call waste; and the other is less regulation for the environment. Less regulation for the environment, more regulation for teachers, less regulation for the corporate sector; good people of Ontario who like this government, how do you like it so far?

I tell you, when Harris says, "Yes, we admit we fired hundreds, perhaps thousands, of civil servants, but that surely hasn't affected the quality of the work," can you believe that? It's nuts. He's the Premier of Ontario saying stuff like that. It's like he's saying a soccer team can be played with five players and it won't affect the game. Do you get it? Or a hockey team, where you need six players on the ice but Mike Harris says, "Yes, it's true, we have taken three players away from the rink, people who are playing at the time, but it won't affect the quality of the game." That's what he's saying. He's saying: "Good people of Walkerton, don't you worry your little heads, please. We are sorry, yes, for the tragedy, but to think that somehow privatizing the testing of water and firing thousands of workers from the Ministry of the Environment, to think there's a connection would be silly." Because he read Mr Silly, you remember.

We've got a serious problem on our hands. I have to tell you, I'm worried about a Premier and a minister who are—

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Where does worry get you?

Mr Marchese: You are worrying me. You're not just worrying me; you're worrying all of Ontario. That's why I raise the issue of Walkerton, as a way of establishing that less government is not good for humans. It isn't good for Ontarians at all. It means less regulation, meaning we have no watchdogs to watch, in the instance of Walkerton, to keep an eye on the drinking water that we rely on. There's nobody home. That's worrisome.

I know the people of Ontario are worried and I'm trying to establish a connection in terms of what the Common Sense Revolution said and the effects of those cuts, the effects of less government on the population. Yes, getting off your back all right, but how do you like it so far if you're living in Walkerton? I tell you, if I was living there I would be livid. I would be angry as hell and

I wouldn't be taking it. I can't imagine what those victims are suffering, but I tell you it is tragic to the extreme. The best thing that M. Harris could have done was to say, "I'm sorry," when he went there last week, I think it was. "We take responsibility for this and, yes, the cuts we made are directly connected to this tragedy, but we won't ever let it happen again." Had he said that, he might have been able to save himself a little bit, but he didn't. Yes, the people of Ontario have a lot to say and have a lot to worry about.

You remember first they went after the boards of education and they said: "There are too many. We've got to amalgamate. Amalgamation is good." In Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury and Toronto, we created boards that are bigger than some countries in the world. How can trustees get around to seeing the schools and the parents of those areas? How do they do it? They don't; it stops. They amalgamated boards of education at a tremendous cost and then they went after trustees because trustees were just too political and we have to do something about that. So what do we do? We make sure that they are not anywhere long enough in any school or school board for them to learn what it takes to run a school system. We give them \$5,000 and no more for their remuneration so as to keep trustees ignorant and to keep them servants of this government, servants of members like Mr Tascona, in whose riding we're going to get these hearings on the way. What we have is servitude these days. That is what we are experiencing and that is what teachers are experiencing under this government.

The poor teachers, I feel bad for them. When they went after welfare recipients there was nobody there for the welfare recipients. Now that they're going after the educational system, and more directly the teachers, there's nobody there for them. They went after boards, they went after trustees, they went after the bureaucracy, and then they went after central control of the educational system. Why on earth do you think they centralized education financing if not to squeeze money out of the educational system? Why on earth would you do that if not to squeeze? That's why they did it—centralized control from Queen's Park. I don't want to say Toronto because I hate everybody hating Toronto. I hate that. Centralized from Queen's Park in the hands of M. Harris, while he's in power, and M^{me} Ecker, God forbid, while she's in power, and God willing, not for long—centralized in their hands.

Do you like it? Taking away all of the control from boards of education, where boards and trustees no longer have any power, have no say over anything? Is that what you people of Ontario want? I don't believe you do, but that's what they've done. They've taken education financing out of the hands of trustees—no more flexibility to be able to deal with problems in your area. You've got refugees coming into your area? Tough luck. The minister isn't there to help out. You've got poverty in your cities across Ontario? Tough luck. You ain't gonna get the flexibility you need to respond to that. You've got boards bigger than some countries in Europe? Tough

luck if you're trying to connect to the parents and you are unable to have a communications plan with the parents because it's so big that even if you wanted to, parents cannot be actively involved. It's pitiful.

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And then we got Bill 74. There's so much else. We had curriculum changes they introduced, curriculum changes without any support, drastic curriculum changes without any support to the teachers. I suppose they are professionals and will manage. Normally in the past, governments helped out when they made drastic changes. This government? No siree. You're on your own, teachers, and if by some mishap you are not doing the job as well as you would like and it affects the quality of education, well, it's tough luck, I guess.

We had the code introduced today. Unfortunately, I was doing the Rhonda London show near Hamilton, so I couldn't be here to respond, but here's another piece of work. This is the law-and-order government. We had the code of behaviour introduced in 1994, a more comprehensive and intelligent piece, I think, a code that permitted teachers and the school system to treat students as human beings rather than as animals that need to be punished and need to be booted out of the educational system. These people are fond of law-and-order issues, where a code of conduct is introduced on the basis of creating an impression that only Mike Harris is able to deal with those tough, tough, tough bullies like himself. Only he can do it. Only he can be a bully. I wonder whether the code of conduct will apply to Mr Harris in the last couple of weeks, in terms of the remarks he made in this House. I don't think it will.

This code of conduct is designed to create the impression that they are going to be tough on the students, on those miscreants out there who need to be caged, and if not caged, at least thrown out. Who will deal with them? God only knows. But they'll come back into the educational system and somebody will have to deal with them, presumably the teachers again.

The code of behaviour introduced by the New Democrats was a more intelligent piece of work, and more comprehensive because it permitted teachers to do a whole range of activities that treated students with respect, that treated students who had problems with a sense of a process on how to deal with that behaviour as a way of correcting it so that when they come back into the classroom they can teach them again, rather than booting them out.

Creating that wonderful impression to the public out there that this government is going to set things straight, is going to set these boys and girls straight, they introduced the Parental Responsibility Act with the impression that this bill will be tough on those young boys and girls who would commit a crime against property with a \$6,000 fine that a person can go to court and seek damage from. But they won't tell you that the bill that we have in place, particularly section 68, deals particularly with this matter and gives more power to people to seek retribution from an individual who may have caused

them physical and/or personal harm. It even goes further than physical damage to a building or a structure. It goes even to seeking money for damage costs to the person. The present bill that we have in place is stronger than the one they introduced. The lawyers know, or ought to know, and if they are articulating a different position, I tell you, don't seek them out as lawyers, because they're no good to you. This law is presented on the basis of giving the impression that they are tough on law and order, and it's nothing like it. What we have is better than what they've introduced, repackaged, but packaged in a way that says Mike Harris is tough. "We'll fix the problem." Scary stuff.

Is this the kind of government you want to lead you, a government that says, "We've got a problem. We'll fix it. We'll boot him out," versus saying, "We've got a problem. How do we help that individual?" That's what I would love of a system or a teacher if I had a problem.

Bill 74 is introduced and it says that teachers who used to do volunteer work after school will no longer be able to volunteer, because they will be conscripted to do it. I call that servitude. I call that changing labour relations. I call that changing the rules unilaterally.

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): Come on.

Mr Marchese: The members say, "Come on," but I don't quite understand "Come on," as if somehow I'm saying something that they either don't understand or they disagree with.

Mrs Elliott: You know they can still volunteer. You know that 99% of them volunteer.

Mr Marchese: A former minister says what I was about to say: "You know that 99% of the people volunteered." Indeed they did. Why in God's name, good people of Ontario watching, if people are doing it voluntarily, would you then conscript them to do it, then tell them, "Sorry, we know you're doing it voluntarily, but we don't like that; we're going to force you to do it"? It's dumb. It's nuts. It's stupid. You've got to wonder who is leading this province. "Sorry, we know you've been doing it voluntarily, but we don't like it; we want you to do it by force."

Speaker, you understand my situation. You understand what I'm trying to express.

Mr Galt: We sure do.

Mr Marchese: Sure you do, Doug, because it's stupid to the ultimate degree.

Mr Hastings: Rosie, you're so hurtful.

Mr Marchese: I need to be hurtful so as to reach you, because you don't want the good public to understand. You don't want people to be thinking about these issues. You want to make sure they feel the issues, not that they understand them. So we take the time to say to people, "You gotta think something is nutty over there when someone has been doing it for a hell of a long time, with goodwill, with passion, with desire, but now they say, 'You can't do it voluntarily any more.'"

They're changing the rules.

Mrs Elliott: No.

Mr Marchese: Sorry—is there something I'm not communicating very well? Help me. Say something so that I can rebut in a way that is perhaps intelligible to you. But here I go again trying to communicate with the enemy when the people I want to talk to are the people watching this parliamentary channel. We are on live, and those are the people I'm talking to. Here I am being dragged into a discussion by members that I consider to be a bit—

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: There's another matter. In fact, one of the parents on the Rhonda London show called in, saying she thought parents should do the after-school activity, even though she says it's working well at her school. I thought, OK, this is interesting. It's working well in her school, but she thinks they should be doing it. My point is, if they are doing it, what is your problem? I couldn't understand it. Is she perhaps suggesting that more teachers volunteer more of their time to do other activities? Perhaps. Maybe that's what she was saying. And is she then saying that if people are voluntarily doing football, let us say as an example—and my son has played on the football team. I went to watch him a couple of times.

Mr Tascona: Soccer.

Mr Marchese: Soccer. I love soccer; you're quite right. But he's playing football. These people put in hours and hours of work after school, a dedicated group of people doing it voluntarily, taking time from their lives, taking time away from their homes, their spouses and their children, to do something they are voluntarily doing out of love. OK. So we want more of them? I don't know that we need 10 or 12 football coaches; I'm not sure that's what we're looking for. We have one already. There's a chess club. We have a teacher who is interested in chess and who is doing chess. What are we missing here? If people are doing it at the moment, what drives us to say they should be doing it by force? We're not looking for more people to participate, because the ones who are doing it are doing it freely.

Mrs Elliott: And will continue to do so.

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Mr Marchese: "And will continue to do so," says the former minister, except you are now forcing them to do it and you've changed the law, which says that activity is no longer free. "You are now, without benefit of any extra remuneration, obliged to do it, and if you don't do it, we consider it a strike. And then, therefore, we can take action against you as a teacher should you refuse to do it."

Voluntary activity is conscripted activity now, with consequences should they not be doing it, including possible dismissal. If you're on strike, the minister, through the board, will take action that is necessary against that teacher.

I've got to tell you, poor young principals—all the senior ones are gone. After all the decimation of the education system and taking the principals out of the federation, most of the principals have left, to the extent

that we only have very inexperienced young people in that profession. Do you think they're looking for such a power? No. Teachers weren't looking for the power to expel either or to suspend.

But the minister and these other types over there say, "We've consulted the teachers and we talked to them." Good God, what teachers are you talking to? The majority of teachers who responded most recently to their most hated individual, Earl Manners, in the polling they've done, are opposed to what this government is doing: 94%. So which couple of people are they talking to? It's a fictitious teacher. They've invented these consultations with the teachers.

The Toronto Star says—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: I know, it's the Toronto Star; a good Liberal paper, I know. Bear them out briefly. "Bill 74 is an unprecedented attack on basic legal protections that are supposed to apply to everyone."

What else can they be when after-school duties are mandatory "on school days and on days during the school year that are not school days; during any part of any day during the school year; on school premises and elsewhere"? That's the language contained in Bill 74, this fine piece of work right here. This dictum would override any applicable provision on restrictions in a collective agreement. Collective agreements are irrelevant now, according to this bill. If the government can override teachers' contracts at will, what is the meaning of the sanctity of any contract?

It declares that judges cannot serve certain orders without Education Minister Janet Ecker's permission. The bill says, for example, that a teachers' bargaining unit or members of that unit can be changed without teachers having any say. This is union busting of a new order. You remember the union bosses, individualized teachers?

This bill, in other words, makes Ecker a law unto herself, able to investigate school boards if she has concerns and punish them if she is of the opinion there is evidence—not fact—of disobedience. How much democracy is left in the education system? There is none. They virtually have taken every power away from boards. There is nothing they can negotiate with teachers any longer. There is literally nothing left except money, but there is no money. Boards are left dry. There is no money. How can you negotiate literally the last thing that's left for boards and teachers to negotiate?

Mr Peters: They can close the schools, though. That's what the government wants.

Mr Marchese: They can close the schools. They've closed them good and forever in Toronto, outside Sault Ste Marie. In all of our rural communities they're closing them up like you wouldn't believe, these fine Tories from these fine rural areas. That's the kind of system, that's the kind of government we've got. What democracy do we have left?

Teachers are leaving the system, and I haven't heard a Tory chuckle yet. They're leaving the system. The US,

which used to underpay teachers—they used to pay about \$18,000, \$20,000 American, 10 years ago even, in a country that should be overpaying their teachers by who knows how much—is turning it around. They're paying their teachers well because they need them and they want to keep them.

What are we in Ontario doing? We're sending them away. We had a system that was relatively good, and they are breaking it to the point that the teachers are so demoralized that they are leaving in droves, and they will leave for jurisdictions where they will be respected and well paid. We have lost the respect of the teaching profession, people we rely on to teach our kids. We rely on them, yet we force them to teach an extra period every day. That's what Bill 74 does. Changing the definition of instructional time means that boards and teachers cannot any longer negotiate any agreement that suits the interests of students and teachers. They've changed it so "instructional time" now says, "You will teach an extra period." That's not contact time with students; that's more time teaching more students, meaning fewer teachers are needed, meaning a lot of teachers are fired as a result. Then we bring them back, saying, "We're reducing class size," because they know the facts on class size say that it has gone up at the elementary level and that it's gone up at the secondary level as well, in spite of the stupid rhetoric of this government.

Teacher Liz Laporte says:

"I am a teacher with the Greater Essex County District School Board. I have been teaching for nearly 15 years. Up until recently, I have been able to overlook many of the frustrations of working for a government that demoralizes teachers. I now go to sleep at night feeling sick about the prospect of spending the next 15 years struggling to maintain my dignity while doing the job I love so much. Our government's announcement that it is making my extracurricular activities mandatory is beyond insulting.

"I regularly volunteer in a variety of ways to ensure all students in my class receive the best education possible. I contribute to the entire school's activities and I'm involved in the community in which I teach."

I have four other letters that I will not be able to read, but the feeling is the same. These are the people we rely on to teach our students, the people we rely on to build our future, and yet we are treating them in such a way that they are not able to teach in a way that brings about the quality they are seeking in the system.

You are destroying the education system. Your constant cuts remove any hope of providing quality education. On a daily basis we hear of dirty classrooms, schools with fewer maintenance workers and secretaries, schools sharing principals, special education students being sent home, long bus rides on dangerous winter roads, a school system threatened once again with instability. And in the end, who suffers? The teachers. In the end who suffers are the students we pretend we are helping by bringing about greater quality in the education system.

You, good people of Ontario, if you value democracy, you've got to make them accountable. You've got to go to their offices and say, "We want to see this bill and we want to speak to this bill and we want more than one-half day in Barrie and more than one day in Ottawa. We need you to hold yourselves accountable in the way you hold everyone else accountable." We have an accountability deficit that you are perpetrating on the public. Democracy means, "I want my say, and I'm not getting it." If you don't demand that, you'll get what they give you.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Klees has moved notice of motion number 51. 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 view, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary

Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Flaherty, Jim
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Guzzo, Garry J.

Martiniuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan

Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Turnbull, David
Wilson, Jim
Young, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 44; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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

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

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt
Ted Arnott, Marcel Beaubien, David Christopherson,
Doug Galt, Monte Kwinter, Tina R. Molinari,
Gerry Phillips, David Young
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

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Toby Barrett, Marie Bountrogianni, Ted Chudleigh,
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Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro
Clerk / Greffier: Viktor Kaczkowski

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Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
James J. Bradley, Bruce Crozier, Leona Dombrowsky,
Bert Johnson, Morley Kells, Tony Martin,
Joseph Spina, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

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

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: R. Gary Stewart
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Brad Clark
Marilyn Churley, Brad Clark, Caroline Di Cocco,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Jerry J. Ouellette, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N.
Tascona, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John C. Cleary
John C. Cleary, John Gerretsen, John Hastings,
Shelley Martel, Bart Maves, Julia Munro,
Marilyn Mushinski, Richard Patten
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Brian Coburn,
Garfield Dunlop, Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy,
Frances Lankin, Bill Murdoch
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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