

No. 56A



N° 56A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 10 May 2000

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 10 mai 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 10 May 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 10 mai 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION
EDUCATION WEEK

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): Aujourd'hui, en cette semaine de l'éducation, la ministre de l'Éducation déposera un projet de loi qui va sans doute avoir un impact substantiel dans la vie quotidienne de tous les enseignants et de toutes les enseignantes au niveau secondaire.

This government seems to be unable to acknowledge the important role of the teachers of this province. This government always seems to be unable to realize that our education system is fortunate enough to have a number of assets: professional, excellent and devoted teachers as well as parents and volunteers who ensure its quality and its good working order.

Je veux profiter de cette occasion afin de proclamer ce que j'ai toujours connu et ce que j'ai vécu comme enseignante : que le personnel enseignant de l'Ontario est la clé du futur de nos jeunes.

We must recognize their professional behaviour, their ability to evolve and their capacity to innovate. We must also thank them for their absolute devotion and for their willingness to share their skills as educators.

La profession enseignante ne nécessite pas de législation les obligeant à participer à des activités parascolaires ; la profession enseignante s'impose déjà cette obligation. Au lieu d'exprimer de la reconnaissance envers notre personnel enseignant, ce gouvernement semble toujours s'acharner à exprimer un mépris profond envers nos professionnels.

Instead of showing gratitude toward our teachers, this government insists on showing a great deal of resentment toward our professionals. To quote the Ontario Teachers' Federation message: "Great expectations, great teachers and government support will lead us to superior results."

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Members' statements, the member for Etobicoke North.

Before the member begins, I would just remind our friends in the gallery—I know they probably don't know; I suspect they're probably a class—that you're not allowed to clap. I'm sure you didn't know that, but just

so you know. What happens normally—when somebody sees somebody they clap, it's a natural thing to do, but unfortunately in the House the gallery can't. Thank you very much for your indulgence.

The member for Etobicoke North.

MISSING CHILDREN

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I'll confine my statements to the two minutes we're supposed to keep our remarks to.

Today marks the opportunity to inform this House that this marks Ontario's ninth annual Green Ribbon of Hope campaign. This campaign highlights the issue of missing, runaway, lost, kidnapped and abducted children in Ontario and throughout Canada. Each year, more than 50,000 children in Canada are listed as missing by the RCMP's missing children registry—enough to fill every seat in the SkyDome. Ontario alone registers over 40% of all missing children cases—over 20,000 in 1998.

Child Find Ontario, a 15-year-old registered charitable organization, is a community partner in the search for missing, abducted and runaway children and teenagers. With the support of 1,000 volunteers in communities across Ontario, they offer support to the families and work with investigating officers to help publicize these traumatic cases. Happily, with the support of the community and in partnership with law enforcement, customs and immigration people, more than 90% of missing children are successfully located.

I would ask that all members please wear green ribbons of hope throughout the month of May and especially on May 25, National Missing Children's Day in Canada.

OAK RIDGES MORaine

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and remind people that all across the wonderful ecological masterpiece known as the Oak Ridges moraine, from Caledon to Cobourg, people are still meeting and fighting to preserve the whole moraine. They haven't been misled by the minister's 1% map that is a non-solution. They want to protect 100% of the moraine. The moraine is just not Richmond Hill. It goes through beautiful places like the Northumberland forest, the plains of Rice Lake, to Orangeville, Caledon, Palgrave. So people are not going to stop fighting for the

moraine because of this 1% announcement the minister made last week.

Next Monday, right here in Toronto, people from all over the moraine will gather in Holy Trinity church near the Eaton Centre to defend and talk about the moraine. We're even going to have Canadian actor Kenneth Welsh speaking beautifully about the moraine in a new poem.

On Wednesday, May 17, people will be meeting in beautiful Ballantrae. There will be 200 or 300 people talking about defending all of the moraine, the 200,000 square kilometres of the moraine, not just that postage-stamp-sized piece the minister talked about. It's all or nothing. It's a comprehensive plan for all of these natural wonderlands that make up our beautiful moraine.

GREAT CANADIAN TOWN BAND FESTIVAL

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On the July 1 weekend, the sound of music will be echoing throughout the village of Orono as the Great Canadian Town Band Festival gets underway. The event has created a lot of enthusiasm, not just in Durham riding but with musicians across Ontario and indeed the United States, primarily because the festival is the only one of its kind.

This three-day musical celebration is the brainchild of Mr Dave Climenhage of Orono, and will be hosted by the Clarington Concert Band, whose director, Barry Hodgins, has taken this as a personal challenge.

This is a true community event. Many residents have devoted months to this huge undertaking, like Janet Cringle, Sonny Young, Elva Reid, Frances Tufts, John Thompson and Margaret Zwart, to name just a few. Our own Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation has made a wonderful \$35,000 grant to this very worthwhile endeavour. I might also say that my staff member Lori Kay will be participating in the band.

I think this is a great way to showcase the rich musical history of Ontario's rural communities. At last count, 22 bands and performers have been scheduled to appear. There will be a military tattoo at Orono's fairgrounds and an old-fashioned Victorian ball at the town hall. Festival visitors will also have the chance to see the traditional Callithumpian Parade on July 1.

I invite my colleagues and all Ontarians to attend the unique Great Canadian Town Band Festival, running June 30 to July 2. I can assure you everyone is welcome and everyone will have a great time.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): It's an ironic twist that during this Education Week, notices to principals regarding closures have been sent to five rural schools in Lambton-Kent. The inflexible funding formula of "one size fits all" is having a devastating effect on rural schools. Watford public school, East Lambton Secondary School, East Sombra public school, Warwick public school and Zone Township Central school have

been advised to prepare for closure at the end of this school year.

The funding formula that has been waved around as efficient by the Minister of Education is grossly unfair to rural communities. It is not effective and it is forcing closure.

Does this minister understand the value and the need for our community schools to continue to survive in rural Ontario? Rural schools are more than bricks and mortar; they serve as community centres that reflect the vibrancy of smaller towns.

I would ask that the minister show moral and conscientious leadership by requesting that there be a moratorium on these closures and assess carefully the negative impact on these rural communities. Is this province only going to allow mega-size schools? Is there no room for smaller rural schools in southwestern Ontario?

1340

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): The Minister of Education made an announcement earlier on today, which she'll do again this afternoon. She introduces her remarks by saying it's part of its plan to continue improving the quality of education for students. I can't help but be frustrated at the skill these people have to continue telling the public that this is all about improving the quality of education for our students, and presumably our teachers as well. It's got nothing to do with that at all. That's the political game they're playing, making people out there feel good that they're doing something about something or other that has nothing to do with the quality of education.

Two of the issues have to do with extracurricular activities. We all know that 99% of the boards are providing this activity for free, voluntarily, after school. Yet for the 1% in her board, the Durham board, where they've taken away the service, she feels compelled to force every other teacher now to provide it, whether they like it or not.

Secondly, she wants teachers to actually meet the provincial standards set two years ago for the amount of time secondary teachers spend performing key duties. What this means is, we're going to have the same teachers teaching more students, meaning that fewer students will have a better quality of education in the classroom. This is the kind of quality education this minister refers to.

We'll have more time to talk about it this afternoon.

COURAGE TO COME BACK AWARDS

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): Today I would like to draw members' attention to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation's Courage to Come Back Awards. Courage to Come Back is an annual campaign to increase public awareness, raise funds and recognize individuals whose actions and example help

reduce the stigma associated with addiction and mental illness.

The campaign honours individuals from all across the province who are overcoming the challenges of living with a serious illness, an injury or an addiction. This year, nine Ontarians, who are role models and an inspiration not only to those facing similar challenges but to all of us, were honoured.

Anthony Aquan-Assee is a young teacher who has fully recovered from a devastating motorcycle accident. Muriel Cadotte struggled with physical abuse, phobias and alcohol dependence. Emily Markle has recovered fully from a rare and aggressive brain cancer. Carolynne Pratt suffered several complex mental illnesses and has triumphed over homelessness and suicide attempts. Roger Roberts actively volunteers. Robert Ross has recovered from alcohol and heroine abuse. Katherine Simard is overcoming a horrific automobile accident, and Herbert Simpson is inspiring others after recovering from a massive heart attack.

This year's celebrity honouree was Ron Ellis who was nominated and has been treated by Homewood. His stature as a hockey star and a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame is going to be used to increase public awareness of clinical depression. For this he is to be commended.

I congratulate the centre for their leadership in highlighting these truly inspiring individuals—inspiring to all of us.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today Sudbury's medical community has issued a dire warning that a health care crisis is imminent in our area. As of June 1, patients can expect even longer waiting times, and referrals to southern Ontario for some specialized care.

Sudbury is supposed to be the referral centre for northeastern Ontario. Here's what the doctors are saying.

Dr John Fenton states that we are severely underserved in areas, including emergency medicine, pediatrics, neurology, thoracic surgery and psychiatry. Dr Wayne Lambert says that in the last year and a half we have lost 16 physicians. Dr David Boyle, chief of staff, points out that we simply do not have the resources to cover this shortage.

Implementing the seven recommendations found in the northern doctors' study entitled From Crisis to Stability will avoid a monumental crisis in health care in the north.

This Friday the chiefs of staff from the major northern hospitals are holding an emergency meeting and they're looking for the minister or the deputy minister to attend. Our doctors have the unanimous support of northerners as they request that you, Minister, or your deputy commit to coming to this meeting and bringing your resources with you.

As Dr Boyle states, we are talking about a lack of appropriate health care for the one million people living in northern Ontario. Everyone in Ontario should have the

same access to quality health care, regardless of where they live. Minister, my community awaits your decision. Please attend this meeting.

ROBERT BALDWIN

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): This Friday is the anniversary of Robert Baldwin's birthday. The Honourable Robert Baldwin was a prominent lawyer, political leader and co-Premier of the United Province of Canada in the 19th century.

Many historians and political scientists recognize Robert Baldwin for his role in democratic reform. He developed and promoted the concept of responsible government for Upper Canada and envisioned an executive council that would be accountable to an elected legislature. This vision of responsible government became a reality in the 1840s and remains our system of government today.

Baldwin was also active in the reform of local government. He passed the Baldwin Act in 1849, allowing for the incorporation of municipalities, each having an elected council.

Because of Robert Baldwin's enduring contribution to public life in Ontario and given the lack of public recognition for what he accomplished, it is fitting to designate May 12 each year as Robert Baldwin Day. That is why later this afternoon I'll be introducing a private member's bill to do just that. A day in his name not only provides the respect he deserves, but it gives Ontarians a reason to remember our political history and gain a better understanding of who we are, where we came from and why our world has turned out as it has.

I'm requesting your support for this initiative because it will provide Ontarians with an important link to our distinguished past.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): I've been informed by the clerks' table that although this is a historic occasion, a bill being reported from committee after first reading, not having had second reading yet, I'm not allowed to comment on that.

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, as amended:

Bill 33, An Act to require fair dealing between parties to franchise agreements, to ensure that franchisees have the right to associate and to impose disclosure obligations on franchisors / Projet de loi 33, Loi obligeant les parties aux contrats de franchise à agir équitablement,

garantissant le droit d'association aux franchisés et imposant des obligations en matière de divulgation aux franchiseurs.

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

The bill is therefore ordered for second reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the ninth report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2000 LOI DE 2000 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ EN ÉDUCATION

Mrs Ecker moved first reading of the following bill:

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 / Projet de loi 74, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation pour rehausser la qualité de l'éducation, accroître la responsabilité des conseils scolaires devant les élèves, les parents et les contribuables et enrichir l'expérience scolaire des élèves.

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 "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1349 to 1354.

The Speaker: Order. Would the members take their seats, please.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael D.	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Palladini, Al
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	
Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Cleary, John C.	Kennedy, Gerard
Bartolucci, Rick	Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Bisson, Gilles	Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances
Boyer, Claudette	Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David
Bradley, James J.	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Brown, Michael A.	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martin, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 46; the nays are 30.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ROBERT BALDWIN DAY ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE JOUR DE ROBERT BALDWIN

Mr Galt moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to proclaim Robert Baldwin Day / Projet de loi 75, Loi proclamant le Jour de Robert Baldwin.

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

The member, for a short statement.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): In recognition of the tremendous contribution Robert Baldwin made to responsible government, which by the way resulted in the Act of Union and the Baldwin Act, this bill will proclaim May 12 each year as Robert Baldwin Day.

1400

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): Parents have told us that we need to provide more direction to Ontario's publicly funded school system to ensure that students come first. They want school boards to be accountable for delivering the benefits of Ontario's education reforms to their children. The legislation I have introduced today, the Education Accountability Act, will amend the Education Act to respond to those requests. It will keep this province firmly on the path towards the quality education we all want for Ontario's children.

From the beginning, our education reform agenda has aimed at ensuring that Ontario's students have access to the best quality education. The key elements of education reform—fair, student-focused funding; more resources in classrooms; new, more rigorous curricula; regular tests to show how our students are doing; standard report cards—have all been investments in quality. Initiatives such as

the code of conduct and a teacher testing program are also key parts of our quality agenda.

Greater accountability for school boards will strengthen these quality initiatives and ensure that their benefits reach the students of this province.

The proposed amendments, if passed, would require school boards to ensure that their secondary school teachers are meeting provincial standards for time spent teaching in the classroom. In 1998, we set province-wide standards for instructional time based on the national average. For secondary teachers, the standard was an average of four hours and 10 minutes of instructional time a day for a total of 1,250 minutes a week. We have seen that in some cases the standard has not been met and there has been uncertainty about what teaching duties the standard includes. This has not been an issue in elementary schools.

The amendments we propose today would maintain the standard while providing the clarity requested by both school boards and teachers, and ensure that boards and teacher unions meet the government's requirements on teaching time for secondary school teachers. The amendments would restate, not increase, the instructional time standard of four hours and 10 minutes a day for secondary teachers in terms of credit courses. Each school board would be required to ensure that, on average, full-time secondary teachers are assigned to teach 6.67 credit or credit-equivalent courses a year. Credit-equivalent courses or programs would include remedial instruction as well as special education and other very important programs for our students.

We are not asking teachers to do more than meet the standard set two years ago, and we are investing in this standard to ensure that it is implemented to benefit students. Last March, we announced almost \$90 million in additional funding to support extra remedial help for high school students. That's very much good news for those students and their parents.

The learning that takes place during the regular school day, also called the instructional day, is one part of a quality school program. Many other aspects of school life contribute to a good education. Outside their regular classes, students participate in a wide range of sports, arts and cultural activities. Teachers are also involved in many other important activities, such as parent-teacher interviews, staff meetings and school functions that also contribute to a quality school experience. Many teachers undertake these activities because they care about their students and because they regard them as part of the job.

Parents know these activities are not an extra. From soccer to drama to curriculum night, they enrich the participation of both students and parents in the life of the school. They are an important part of a student's education. Parents expect these opportunities to be available, and teachers have often said that making these opportunities available to students is an important part of their professional responsibilities.

When we introduced provincial standards for instructional time in 1998, teachers reminded us that co-instruc-

tional activities were an important part of both their professional and school life, and that their day consists of more than just the time they spend in the classroom. But we have seen some teachers' unions hold students and parents hostage by threatening to withdraw or actually withdrawing their participation in these activities in high schools.

Parents do not consider this acceptable and we agree. We are therefore proposing amendments that would recognize all of these programs under the title of co-instructional activities, and we will require that school boards make sure they can provide them.

Within this board framework, principals will have the responsibility to plan and implement a co-instructional program on a school basis, with input from the parents on the school council. They would have the authority to assign teachers to these activities, if required.

These amendments, if passed, will ensure that students and parents continue to benefit from teacher participation in a full school program. For all school boards, these changes will help to ensure that their students get the most out of their school experience.

The amendments will also enhance the province's authority to uphold quality education standards. Parents and taxpayers expect publicly funded school boards to meet their obligations to deliver quality education, to meet provincial standards and to manage their finances responsibly.

This government agrees. We are therefore proposing to provide the authority to investigate the affairs of a school board where there is concern about compliance with the board's legal and educational responsibilities. Where necessary, there will also be the authority to ensure that those standards are met.

In 1998, our government ended a province-wide trend to increasing average class sizes. We set clear provincial standards for maximum average class size: 25 at the elementary level, 22 at the secondary. We ended the practice of some school boards and some teacher unions negotiating increases in class size as part of their contract bargaining. Now we are taking the next step and lowering class size for children in the earliest years of their education and in the challenging high school years.

The Education Accountability Act, if approved by this Legislature, will establish a maximum average class size of 24 students to each teacher in primary classes—junior kindergarten to grade 3—and a maximum average class size of 24.5 students for the elementary level overall.

As announced in the Ontario budget, the government is providing an additional \$101 million a year in permanent funding to support smaller classes in the elementary panel.

I am also pleased to inform members of the House that the government is committing a further \$162 million to reduce maximum average class size at the secondary level to 21 students to each teacher.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff in my ministry who have worked so hard and diligently to prepare these amendments. I would also like to thank the many

individuals in the education sector whose advice has been extremely helpful in this regard.

I am confident that these proposed amendments are good for our education system. They signal this government's firm and continuing commitment to achieve the promise of education reform for Ontario's students. I invite all members to join me in supporting this bill.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): We have heard a charade perpetrated by the Minister of Education today. We have heard from her the contrary of what most Ontarians hold as important for public education to be conducted in this province. Instead of treating teachers as professionals, we hear something different. Instead of saying to communities, "You can control your education," we hear a Soviet-style approach to taking control of education.

What parents and kids out there wanted to hear from this government—this government looked out on the land and saw—

Interjections.

1410

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member take his seat. Stop the clock. Order. I think it was about—I hate to do this—five seconds, if we could on that. Sorry for the interruption.

Mr Kennedy: Thank you, Speaker.

I can understand why the government would be sensitive, because they're all perpetrating this. This is about money. This is about a government that has reduced its share of funding for education in this province by \$1.6 billion, and every one of the members opposite has been complicit in that.

We have today not just an attack on teachers but an attack on public education. They looked out on the land and saw 70 out of 72 boards and teachers' federations prepared to have arrangements to make sure that kids could get a good education next year, and that didn't satisfy this government. They wanted instead to disrupt what's happening in schools, because if public education does well, the agenda of this government does not.

They are exporting the Durham formula. There are two boards—they happen to be in the minister's riding—where the arrangements with the boards and the teachers do not work, where there are overstressed teachers, where there are arrangements that are not working, and that very formula, with the minister's announcement today, is proposed to become the law of the land. With the Durham formula comes the Durham disease, comes the approach of this government to divide and separate the people who have the kids' interests at heart. Instead of letting them focus on kids, they want to create this fight.

I say to the people of Ontario out there, don't be fooled. The \$1.6 billion they've taken away is what this government has to stand accountable for. Instead, what they should be providing is the funding and the support to the individual communities to be able to make arrangements. This is a phony war that the government has arranged for. It is going to increase, for example, the

ratio of students to teachers. In other words, we will have fewer teachers and more students. That's what this bill does. What this bill does is talk, in a very phony way, about accountability for everybody in the school system, but not for the government.

What we really need is a code of conduct for Mike Harris and Janet Ecker and for all the rest of this government, because what they are doing is proposing to take away the discretion from principals, take away the discretion from individual teachers, take away the ability of boards to provide for the best interests of the kids in the best way they know how. This is a government reaching into communities and upsetting perhaps even contracts that have already been signed, upsetting long-standing arrangements around extracurricular activities, upsetting things that work in the interests of kids. Why? Because this government wants to take more money out of the education system. We caught them with their hand in the cookie jar. Until today this government was removing a further \$176 million this year. They now say they're going to put a little bit of that back. I refuse to be appreciative of a government that has already robbed the education system of the ability to create the quality it really requires.

This government has not at any time put the interests of kids first. They have done everything they can to upset the teaching profession. The biggest issue facing the quality of teaching today is the morale of teachers, who year after year have had attacks by this government, and those attacks form one singular purpose: They are there to distract from this government's real agenda. This governments' real agenda is to defund and destabilize the public education system, to tilt us towards, I'm afraid, charter schools, vouchers, the kinds of things that the ideologues in the Canadian Alliance opposite really believe in.

If this minister, who perpetrates this charade on behalf of the rest of their caucus, really believes in public education, she wouldn't be attacking teachers, she wouldn't be taking away their ability to do anything except strike in the face of being able to come up with arrangements that are good for them.

If she's really not afraid of what parents want from her, which is for her to be accountable herself for what she's doing to education, then she'll make sure this charade is brought to public hearings. We'll see the figures and the points they want to bring in the light of day, because they simply can't survive that kind of scrutiny.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want people across Ontario to know what is—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We'll start the clock back at five. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Last time. Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member from Hamilton East, come to order, please. Now the leader of the third party. He has

five minutes. It's now his time to speak, and I apologize for the interruption. Start the clock at five minutes.

Mr Hampton: I want parents and mostly students across Ontario to know what's really going on here. The reality is that boards and teachers across this province negotiated agreements whereby teachers would spend time in the classroom, fulfil their duties, and also make available on a scheduled basis remedial time for students who need and want extra help.

This government is going to override that. This government is going to override scheduled periods of remedial time by teachers. Why? Because what is more important to this government is to get more teachers out of the schools. By creating a longer instructional day this government knows it can get another 1,000 to 1,500 teachers out of the schools. It is all about having fewer teachers teaching more students—that's what it's all about—and when you have fewer teachers teaching more students, it means the Harris government can come along and scoop out another \$600 million or \$700 million to finance yet more tax cuts for your well off friends. That is what is really going on here.

But that creates another problem. If you're going to continue to lengthen the school day, it means teachers are not going to have the time to engage in extracurricular activities. They won't have the same amount of time for coaching or for the band or for drama or for the chess club. They know that's going to create a problem. The government tried these tactics in the minister's own riding, in Durham, and it didn't work. It has blown up in their face.

So now they come along and they say: "We're going to legislate. We're going to command extracurricular activities." That isn't going to work either. I cited the case of Ken MacKay, someone who has been coaching in the school system for over two decades, an incredibly successful baseball coach who's been acknowledged across the province. He said: "I do this willingly. I do it because I want to give to the kids, I want to contribute. But if some hammerheaded, ham-fisted government is going to come along and try to order me to do it, command me to do it, then I'm not doing it. You can order me to do some kind of extracurricular activity. Perhaps I'll coach the chess club. Perhaps I'll take the home ec club. But I am not going to devote my energy, my creativity, my dedication to a government that doesn't respect me, a government that believes it can command these sorts of activities."

I want to say to the government: Yes, you may get your \$600 million or \$700 million out of this, but you are not going to create better schools and a better learning environment for our students. You're not. In fact, this is going to be a province-wide disaster. People who go out there on weekends, after school, at noon hour, before school, to coach, to contribute to the school band, to the school choir, to the drama club, are not going to give of themselves when you try to command.

With the crumbling of the Iron Curtain, I thought most governments realized that a command economy and a

command style of government doesn't work. Obviously you haven't learned that. You still believe that you can somehow command behaviour from people. This is not going to work. This is going to be a disaster.

I say to you as well that this pathetic attempt to cover it up by saying you're going to make available another \$160 million is nothing more than that. It is a pathetic attempt to cover up the fact that with the other hand, you're going to lay off teachers and you're going to take money out of the schools. People are on to you. This is going to be a disaster, and I'm sorry to see this kind of day in Ontario education.

DEFERRED VOTES

LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT (CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY), 2000

LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL (INDUSTRIE DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 69, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 in relation to the construction industry / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui a trait à l'industrie de la construction.

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

The division bells rang from 1420 to 1425.

The Speaker: Order. Would the members take their seats, please.

Mr Stockwell has moved second reading of Bill 69, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 in relation to the construction industry.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Palladini, Al
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Johnson, Bert	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	
Guzzo, Garry J.	Newman, Dan	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The eyes are 49; the nays are 35.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Minister of Labour.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Referred to the justice and social policy committee.

The Speaker: So referred.

SPECIAL REPORT,
INFORMATION AND PRIVACY
COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Before proceeding to oral questions, I have received a point of privilege from the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise in accordance with section 21(c) of the standing orders to raise a point of privilege that I consider a serious one, and I beg the indulgence of the House to make my case quickly.

The case of privilege that I want to make arises from the special report to this Legislature made on the 26th day of April, 2000, by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr Ann Cavoukian, concerning disclosures of personal information made by the Province of Ontario Savings Office. It will be my submission, Mr Speaker, that various officials inside the Ministry of Finance and elsewhere have perpetrated a contempt on this Legislature. Let me make my case, and I want to do it quickly.

Section 4 of the relevant statute, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, states very clearly that the Information and Privacy Commissioner is “an officer of this Legislature.” I think that is an important point with which to begin. Ms Cavoukian is an officer of this Parliament, and she has a mandate from this Parliament. She is appointed on an address from this Parliament, and she has duties set out for her, or any officeholder in that position, in the legislation. So my first point is that the Information and Privacy Commissioner is clearly an officer of this Legislature.

My second point concerns contempt. What is it to be in contempt of Parliament? Let me quickly cite two references from the 22nd edition of Erskine May. Quoting from page 108 of Erskine May on contempts:

“Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of

his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.”

I think it’s pretty clear what the authority is indicating in that case.

On page 125 of Erskine May, 22nd edition, under the subtitle “Obstructing Officers of Either House,” I read, “It is a contempt to obstruct or molest those employed by or entrusted with the execution of the orders of either House while in the execution of their duty.” Further on it is indicated, “Both Houses will treat as contempts, not only acts directly tending to obstruct their officers in the execution of their duty, but also any conduct which may tend to deter them from doing their duty... .”

In the recently published House of Commons Procedure and Practice by Marleau and Montpetit it is similarly affirmed that it is a contempt of Parliament to stand in the way of an officer of Parliament who is doing his or her duty. Let me cite one reference from Marleau and Montpetit, page 67. This refers to a ruling of M^{me} Sauv , who was Speaker in 1980, when she wrote: “... while our privileges are defined, contempt of the House has no limits. When new ways are found to interfere with our proceedings, so too will the House, in appropriate cases, be able to find that a contempt of the House has occurred.”

That is my brief recitation of the authorities on contempt. Now to the report. I would say seriously to all members that if you haven’t read the report tabled by Ms Cavoukian, dated April 26, 2000, you should do so. This is a very serious matter. We were talking earlier today about accountability and responsibility. I’m not going to recite, because it would be improper for me to do so, all that is in this report. Let me quickly highlight what she tells this Parliament.

She cites a situation that occurred in the summer of 1997, when, in the exercise of looking at privatization, the Ministry of Finance allowed the entire database of the Province of Ontario Savings Office to move from its control out into a general or public domain. Fifty thousand customers—I happen to be one—of POSO had their names, addresses, phone numbers, accounts, account balances and social insurance numbers just dumped over the fence. As the commissioner points out, the private sector players in this—CIBC Wood Gundy and Angus Reid—deserve a great deal of credit because their behaviour throughout the piece in the private sector was always better by far than our behaviour as government.

What does the commissioner conclude in her report? She concludes three things. The information that was released was “personal information” under the act, it shouldn’t have been released and, if released, represented a breach of the law. She says that clearly on page 25. She says as well that the Ministry of Finance and other government officials, to use her words, did not take “reasonable measures” to protect the confidentiality of that material. Those are her findings on page 25.

That is not my primary concern, although it ought to be a real concern to all honourable members. I repeat:

Remember what has happened here. For whatever good or bad reasons, 50,000 citizens had confidential personal and financial information of theirs released by government, according to this agent or officer of Parliament, improperly and illegally. That happened in the summer of 1997.

When earlier this year the *Globe and Mail* newspaper reported these events, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, our agent, our officer, undertook an investigation—and this is the critical point that I believe we have to, with your guidance, Mr Speaker, deliberate and take action upon. In this report, the commissioner details in an addendum six or seven pages of the frustration and, I would say, obstruction she encountered this year when she was undertaking her investigation. I'm going to very briefly cite three or four of those frustrations.

Reading from her addendum entitled "Obstacles We Encountered During this Investigation," the commissioner, our agent, says, having been promised co-operation by the Deputy Minister of Finance, they were given much less than co-operation: "We were not given any reason for the government's reticence in this particular case, unlike other cases. This was the source of some concern, given our past experience in similar matters where the full co-operation of the government had been immediately forthcoming." She notes, in this case, a significant departure from her past experiences with the government.

She says further on, and I mentioned this a moment ago, "It is interesting to note that of all the private sector organizations involved in this matter co-operated with us fully and immediately." That was the private sector. She tells us through chapter and verse that our government did not do nearly as well.

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She points out an extraordinary situation that I gather has not happened to her before. She says: "Some documents," in this matter, "sent to us were partially blacked out or 'severed,' even though the ministry"—in this case finance—"is well aware of the fact that we routinely review highly sensitive unsevered documents and are bound by a statutory duty of confidence. Not only was this highly out of the ordinary, but in our view, disrespectful of the mandate of this office."

I repeat: Our officer, this Legislature's Information and Privacy Commissioner, is telling us that in her investigation of this serious matter she was treated in a way that she felt was unusual, extraordinary and "disrespectful of the mandate of this office." That means disrespectful of the people who employ her—us; you and all of the rest of us who constitute this Legislative Assembly. I'm coming to the conclusion.

Interjections.

Mr Conway: There should be no laughter. There should be absolutely no laughter. I raise this because in my 25 years I can't recall an officer of Parliament reporting to Parliament in such clear terms that her duties, her inquiry was frustrated and obstructed on a matter of real public interest, important, and we are told by her, illegal

conduct. According to the commissioner, the law was broken. In this exercise she was never able to interview anyone from the privatization secretariat. She was not able to interview Tony Salerno, known to many of us as a distinguished public servant. He is over at the Ontario Financing Authority. They had significant responsibility. He was not willing or allowed to speak to our officer.

We talk about accountability; we talk about responsibility. This is our officer. She is doing our work, and this is her report to us. I repeat: 50,000 account holders at the Province of Ontario Savings Office had their confidential financial and personal information dumped over the fence in an illegal way by their government, and the head of the Ontario Financing Authority won't go and give an accounting of what was done by himself and his officials in this matter.

I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that that does constitute a prima facie case of contempt. I submit these matters to you for your urgent and serious consideration, and should you agree with me that there is a prima facie case of contempt, I tell you and my colleagues in the House today that I will be expecting, in that event, that this important matter will be taken up on a priority basis by the Legislative Assembly committee.

The Speaker: I thank the member for his point of privilege and also for the notice that was given. The government House leader on the same point of privilege?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, in that I did not have notice that this point of privilege was going to be made, I would like to reserve the opportunity to make submissions to you in writing. However, I will say this: I would suspect that many of the precedents on which the member opposite relies probably related to members' privileges, as opposed to a servant of the Legislature, and I'm not certain—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I listened very quietly. It's not like a situation with health care or the environment, where there are some differences of opinion here. I need to hear it. I need to do it in total silence, no heckling. The other side did that, and I would appreciate it by both sides. This is not a partisan issue. I need to hear very clearly both sides of the argument. Your member had an extended period of time and did a very good job explaining it. I need the same co-operation for the government House leader, please.

Hon Mr Sterling: Therefore, the references and the evolution of those references and the reasons for the rulings made by speakers before probably emanated out of a breach of privilege or a threatened breach of privilege of members of the House of Commons or a legislature somewhere in the British parliamentary system.

Number two is that the assumption that there has been something done illegal has never been proven in a court. If in fact Dr Cavoukian says that something was done illegal, that may be her opinion. But there may be other opinions as well as to whether or not there was something done illegal. It is for a court to decide whether or

not there has been a legal or an illegal activity undertaken by someone.

Also, I understand and I would like to put forward perhaps another point of view from the Deputy Minister of Finance as to whether or not there was co-operation. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I would like to reserve the opportunity to submit to you my arguments in a fuller sense in writing since I was not given notice of this point of privilege before it was brought up.

The Speaker: I thank the government House leader and I will look at any submissions. The member for Hamilton West on the same point of privilege?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I want to support the question of breach of privilege that has been raised by the member from Renfrew. As you will know, we raised that in this House—I raised it, my leader raised it in lead-off questions the day this report was actually tabled—and really didn't get much of a commitment at all from the government on a matter that is indeed very serious. The only thing that could be more serious in terms of personal information that has been given up unlawfully, at least according to the freedom of information commissioner, would be medical records. That is the only thing that could be more personal than your personal finances, and yet the freedom of information commissioner has taken the unprecedented stand, and says so in her report, she has taken the extraordinary step of listing a number of the questions that were not answered and that remain unanswered as to whether or not this is a question of privilege. Given the fact that it is an officer of this Legislature acting on behalf of the Legislature, when that officer is obstructed and denied access to the information that she needs to carry out the request of this place, indeed collectively we have had our rights breached, but individually, if they're collectively breached, they have to have been breached individually.

There may even be an element of criminality involved here, and we may ultimately see the police brought in because, according to the commissioner, laws were broken.

The government says they want to get to the bottom of this, and I'm sure you'll hear that in the written submission you'll receive from the government House leader. But the fact is that we offered to give unanimous consent to immediately pass legislation that would give the commissioner the final powers and authority she seeks in order to get answers to all the questions she outlines. You will know it's very rare for an officer of the Legislature to actually state that they feel they've been obstructed and to actually outline the questions they believe still need to be answered in order to comply with their duties, which in this case are to review matters of a privacy nature that are raised by members, individually or collectively, in this House.

I would urge you to please give every serious consideration to the issues that have been raised by my friend from Renfrew, up to and including whether you would deem the breach to be so serious, given that the commissioner states that laws were broken, whether or not it's in the interests of this Legislature for our Speaker

to call in the police and have a criminal investigation in addition to the one the commissioner has undertaken on our behalf. I urge you to take this with the utmost seriousness, because we certainly do.

The Speaker: I thank the House leader for the third party as well and can give the member the assurance that I will take it very seriously. I thank the member again for raising the point of privilege and I thank the government House leader. I will reserve my judgment. I thank all members for their participation here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question today is for the Premier. I believe in open and honest government. That's why we've been working so hard to get to the bottom of your land scandal. Premier, we know that we're getting particularly close now because of the extensive damage control that has kicked into high gear as of yesterday.

For weeks you've told us that you can't comment, and your minister has told us that he can't comment on this matter; you told us that the ORC officials can't comment on this matter because the auditor has instructed you not to comment. But then yesterday the ORC sent around some so-called fact sheets to reporters containing certain carefully chosen and selected details in connection with some of the deals which I've raised in this matter in this House with you.

Premier, tell us which it is: Are you refusing to follow the advice of the auditor or were you really, as we have suspected all along, free to comment on this matter and you were just using the auditor as a shield to hide behind?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The only thing I saw that happened yesterday was that you raised a case, and then I read that the Globe and Mail says they investigated that case and the facts they presented were entirely different from the facts you presented. The Globe and Mail also indicated, according to the article I read, that the deal was a good deal for the taxpayers. So the only thing that has happened between yesterday and today is that all the facts you presented yesterday were debunked.

1450

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I got the sheets put out by the ORC yesterday and I read them very carefully. I looked for the seal of approval from the OPP anti-racket squad, which is presently conducting an investigation at the ORC, and I looked for the seal of approval from the independent auditor, who is presently conducting an audit of all activities at the ORC, and none of these seals of approval were there. Until they are there, these matters remain shady deals and you remain the author of this misfortune.

I will ask you again: Now that we know the ORC is willing to release information, let's see it release all of the information. Will you now undertake to release all of the documents, all of the memos, all of the letters associated with all of the deals we have raised in this House in connection with land flips? Will you undertake to do that now, Premier? Now that we know the jig is up and you're prepared to put forward information through the ORC, will you do that?

Hon Mr Harris: To the best of my knowledge—I know I didn't, my office didn't—I don't think the minister or the minister's office has talked to the ORC at all about what's released. It's up to them. If there is a matter that is not under investigation, if there is a matter not being reviewed by the auditors, if there is a matter not being reviewed by the OPP, then I would assume that they would go ahead and make that information public, particularly to correct the record when the information you presented was factually incorrect.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I can see why you're not up to speed. If you only work one day a week, it's pretty hard to stay up to speed on this stuff.

Let me tell you what the ORC recently said.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Member take his seat. The member will know that when you say something controversial, it is going to strike a reaction and it's difficult to then maintain order. I would ask the member to try and be careful in choosing his words. Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I have a—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Take his seat. Stop the clock. I have said that. Now I say to the government members, in situations like this, I have warned the member; I don't need you yelling at him when he's trying to ask the question. I give all members a warning. I can see that this day is going to start off very controversial because of what's happened and I will tell all members that I'm going to be very quick to name people today. You're all on warning. To everybody in this House today, there are going to be no more warnings for anybody. If I have to stand up, I'm going to name people today. We have controversial subjects on the table today and the House is starting off, I think, in a very aggressive manner. I'm going to be very quick to name people and I want everybody to know that.

Start the clock. Final supplementary, leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, you should be aware that there was a letter sent to your minister Chris Hodgson on March 21. It came from Joe Mavrincac, chairman of the board of directors. In it he says to the minister, "You are aware of the auditor's request that details of previous ORC sales not be released publicly as it could prejudice his review." So what we've got now is you telling us you can't provide us with any information because it would be wrong to do so, but now you're saying it is OK for the ORC to provide us with that information. Yet we have a

letter here from the ORC saying they're not allowed to provide that information.

Premier, back to you one more time, because it seems to me that ultimately in all of these matters the buck stops with you: Why don't you begin to release all of the facts that are connected with all of these deals? Surely we can get away from this death by a thousand cuts. Why don't you release all of the information in connection with all these deals and undertake to do that right now?

Hon Mr Harris: I certainly did not, nor did the minister, release any information on anything yesterday or on any of these. It's up to the ORC. As you know, they have notified the minister that if something is under investigation, he is not to release any information he may have. I've got to tell you that every member is free to ask questions. The member sitting beside you told the minister he'd like to meet with the ORC. The minister called, arranged that and he refused to meet. The fact is, you don't want the facts. You don't want the information. There is a lot of information that is available on a number of these that can be released. The ORC will be the ones, in conjunction with the auditors and the OPP, who will decide that.

When I look at the information you present, totally contrary, as we found in the papers today from those who had actually looked at it, to the information that is factually correct, I have to say this: I think your father would be embarrassed to see you stand here day after day in the gutter ruining the reputation of your father and your—

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock. I would appreciate if the Premier, in situations like this—I just finished warning the other side, and I said that situations like that are totally uncalled for. I must say, Premier, in order to keep this House in order, it would be helpful if we didn't refer to situations like that of a personal nature. I have warned the Premier before and I would ask him to think before he says something that could be considered controversial in the House. I would ask the Premier if he would please withdraw that remark.

Hon Mr Harris: Mr Speaker, if you object to me referencing what I feel his father would think, I'd be happy to withdraw it. I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. When we're doing withdrawals, we can't get into long detail. Either you withdraw it or you do not. Because somebody was yelling, I missed it. I would ask the Premier to withdraw it, and just withdraw it. And I will say this, because I did the same thing to the Minister of Education yesterday: You can't go into long detail. Either you withdraw it clearly and without giving a long discussion or, I must warn the Premier, just like I said to the Minister of Education, I will have to name him if he does not withdraw it.

Hon Mr Harris: Yes. I said I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

Mr McGuinty: The second question is for the Premier. Premier, for the past month, I've been asking you to fire the Chair of Management Board while the

police investigate this matter. Instead, you have let him twist in the wind, the same way you did to Steve Gilchrist. Worse, you have left him in a position to preside over investigations. This minister is incapable of getting to the bottom of this scandal because I believe he is at the bottom of this scandal.

Here's what we know. You promised during the course of the campaign to sell off taxpayer lands. After the election, you directed ORC officials to sell off taxpayer lands. We know this minister attends board meetings. We know that major political contributors to your party have made millions of dollars through land flips. Premier, why have you refused to fire this minister who is responsible for what's going on at the ORC today in Ontario?

Hon Mr Harris: I'm surprised to hear the member stand in his place and say he believes the minister is at the bottom of the scandal when there's not a shred of evidence to support any of that. I would be surprised if he would stand outside and say anything factually that that is the case. I know here in the confines of this room you seem to—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Premier take his seat. I warned the member for London-Fanshawe. It was him that I did before. I have no alternative. I warned you and I said I'd be quick. You can't be shouting, and I say to any other members who are yelling while I'm doing this, they will be named as well. We can't continue to have that. I explained the situation. I have no alternative but to name the member for London-Fanshawe and ask that he leave the chamber.

Mr Mazzilli left the chamber.

1500

The Speaker: Before we begin, I will clarify again. I've said on a number of occasions that heckling is a part of this place and I understand that. Sorry, the clock is stopped and we'll go back and add some time on that. I've often used the reference of two sides of the House: The member for St Catharines and the Minister of Labour will do some heckling. They're short. They don't continue on. They don't talk over people. They get their points across on both sides of the House. That's acceptable.

What is not acceptable is when somebody gets up and shouts, or the slogans being shouted are just continually repeated. Heckling is a part of this place, but we can't continue when we have situations where we shout across at each other, because clearly the alternative is that I stand up here and the clock ticks down for a whole hour and there will be no questions. What happens is there may be some members doing that and there are some members on both sides, back benches and front benches, who do want to ask some questions. We are going to try and maintain order in here. I would appreciate the cooperation of all of the members. This is obviously a difficult day and I would ask, if I may, the leadership on both sides to take the lead on this with their members.

The Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: As I indicated, I am surprised that you would make this unfounded allegation today. Because a number of deals have been questioned, the minister himself has called in and supported the board of the ORC in having an audit team in, and also having the OPP in, on the advice of the Deputy Attorney General, to take a look at transactions by this arm's-length agency. That is entirely appropriate. The minister is doing his job as he ought to do it and I encourage you to do yours as you ought to do it.

Mr McGuinty: Don't worry about me doing my job, Premier. I will continue to do it day in and day out, and one of my responsibilities is to get to the bottom of your land scandal.

Premier, you still refuse to acknowledge how serious a matter this is. If you take a look at the most recent court document filed in connection with this matter, it says, "There is now compelling evidence that ORC staff have received secret commissions, bribes or other benefits in connection with frauds." The court documents filed a little while back talk about compelling evidence of bid-rigging in which certain employees of the ORC participated. It talks about fraudulent bidding. It talks about no legitimate competition for contracts. It talks about fraudulent invoicing. It talks about kickbacks. It talks on and on about dirty deals that are happening at the ORC. Do you know what it says as well? We also know that your Blueprint specifically promised that you were going to force a sell-off of taxpayer lands in Ontario.

You lent direction to what's going on at the ORC. You can't continue to say that what is happening over there was never prompted by you and that you have nothing whatsoever to do with it. At the end of the day, it's this minister who must take responsibility for that. I ask you one more time to do the right thing and the honourable thing, at least pending this investigation, and fire this guy.

Hon Mr Harris: The litany of allegations are just that—allegations. None of them includes the minister. None includes the chair of the ORC. None of them includes me. That is why I think the minister, quite properly, should be in his place trying to get to the bottom of these allegations that go back even to your administration.

Mr McGuinty: There's no doubt about it as far as you're concerned: You, the minister and everybody at the ORC should be canonized. They should all be formally declared saints for everything they've done in this connection.

Your platform speaks for itself. It tells us who is responsible. It tells us who was driving this sell-off of taxpayer lands in Ontario. You wanted to sell off those taxpayer lands. You gave clear marching orders to the ORC to sell, sell, sell. You failed to put in place proper controls to protect things like appraisals, tenders and mortgages. You let fraud, kickbacks and bid-rigging rule the roost over at the ORC. You appointed the board of directors. Your minister attends board meetings. Your contributors have made millions of dollars on this stuff.

You are responsible for the scandal at the ORC. Will you now take responsibility by firing this minister?

Hon Mr Harris: Let me respond to the class act of allegations that this member will not repeat outside the House and say this: The case that he raised yesterday turned out to be totally different than the facts that were presented by the member yesterday. What we had yesterday was a piece of land that I understand—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Harris: Because I actually trust the Globe and Mail more than I do your facts. The Globe and Mail indicated that this was a piece of property that the ORC had been directed by the government to sell under the Liberals. They couldn't sell it. It was a piece of property that had been directed to be sold by the NDP. They couldn't sell it. It was a piece of property that couldn't be sold over a period of 10 years. Did we want the piece of property sold, as you did? Yes, and the piece of property was sold, according to the Globe and Mail, at good value for the taxpayers.

So the facts of the matter are, you will make allegations and statements in here that you won't repeat outside only because you have privilege in here to say whatever you want. I don't think that's becoming a member of the Legislature. That's my opinion.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Last year, doctors from across northeastern Ontario gave your government two reports warning of an inevitable crisis unless your government took immediate steps to deal with the shortage of doctors. These physicians from North Bay, Sudbury and Timmins put together a number of proposed solutions, but regrettably your government has ignored them all.

Now, as of June 1, another six doctors will be leaving the Sudbury region—five specialists and one family doctor. Since January 1999, 15 doctors have left what is in effect the health centre for northeastern Ontario. But these latest gaps can't be filled: a radiation oncologist; emergency room physicians; the only full-time thoracic surgeon; the only full-time neurosurgeon. We know from experience that it becomes harder and harder to recruit as more doctors leave, because the people you're trying to recruit say, "I don't want to be alone," or "I don't want to be overworked."

Premier, you had warning of this crisis. You had solutions proposed to your government. You ignored them. What are you going to do now about this crisis that has occurred under your Minister of Health?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): First of all, I'm surprised that the member would raise this issue, given that during the current round of negotiations with the OMA, when a number of initiatives were worked out with the OMA—and that deal is still subject to ratification. But we all know this member's record. He opposed it; he doesn't want us to encourage doctors; he

doesn't want us to pay doctors more money to go into the north.

Apparently, he's opposed to the \$90 million we brought forward for 85 small and rural hospitals to improve access to physicians and emergency rooms. I suppose he's opposed to \$10 million for 106 new nurse practitioners for rural and northern communities. I suppose he's opposed to \$79 million to enhance community-based mental health services. I suppose he's opposed to the six community development officer programs to assist with recruitment. I suppose he's opposed to the initiatives in the budget to do all these things, all over on top of what his government's abysmal record was: an inability to attract doctors to the north.

Mr Hampton: Premier, this shortage of physicians is occurring under your government, and it's gotten worse in each progressive year. As for your agreement with the Ontario Medical Association, in that agreement you actually did away with the provision that said that doctors who located in overserved areas wouldn't be entitled to full billing. In other words, your agreement actually makes it more attractive for doctors to move into over-supplied areas, which puts undersupplied and under-served areas at greater difficulty. Your budget says you're going to pay for tuition fees for medical school students who want to return to the north, but everybody in northern Ontario knows that's not going to produce anything for seven years, if it produces anything then.

As far as anything else in your OMA agreement, all you've agreed to is another study. All of these things don't address the issue. The effect of the crisis in Sudbury is going to be felt across northeastern Ontario, because the waiting lists are going to become ever more unreasonable for specialists, for family doctors and in the emergency room. There are going to be more and more referrals to southern Ontario, which are going to cost more money.

1510

Premier, these physicians wanted to work with your government. They put forward a number of solutions. They made two reports to your government, and your government hasn't acted on any of them. In fact, you've done the reverse. What are you going to do to deal with this doctor shortage—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: He's the leader of the party that slashed places in our medical schools by 10%. I'm really disappointed to hear you're now opposed to our proposal to offer free tuition to doctors to encourage them to go up into the north. However, in spite of the fact that you seem to be opposed to all of our initiatives and in spite of the fact that you failed when you were in government, let's set the record straight. We did commission a report from Dr McKendry, who consulted with a number of the communities in the north and underserved areas. He made a number of recommendations. We responded immediately to several of those: \$11 million right away to implement the short-term recommendations. We continue to work on a number of those in short-term areas. We continued

expansion of that in the budget. We committed to the doctors in Thunder Bay to give them more flexibility, because they said our program was well-intentioned, they applauded us, but we needed to keep providing more individual flexibility. Yes, those are short-term; yes, it's not perfect; yes, we have more to do. I'm just disappointed that you oppose some of the longer-term solutions such as free tuition. I think that's disgraceful, when you're the government that slashed places for doctors in our medical schools.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): Premier, I'm glad you raised that issue. I guess we should admit that it's true: We agreed with the Mulroney government's directive, along with every other province in this country, and maybe in hindsight that wasn't the right thing to do. You can cast blame all you want, but right now there is a crisis. There's a crisis in Sudbury. They're 40 doctors short in Thunder Bay. It's not only remote or northern communities; it's other communities like Kitchener-Waterloo, Cornwall, Windsor and Niagara Falls. None of them can find enough physicians, and it's getting worse under your government's watch. Three years ago there were 100 family doctor vacancies in 68 communities; today there are 415 family doctor vacancies in 100 Ontario communities.

Right now, as a government, you have to take steps. I hear all of what you say you're going to do, but there's a crisis in Sudbury and in northeastern Ontario. Those physicians are wanting an emergency meeting. I'm asking you today, will you attend an emergency meeting with the physicians and representatives of northeastern Ontario? Failing that, if you won't, will you direct your health minister to be there? The time for talking at the civil service level is over. They need accountability from your government, either you or your minister. Will you do that?

Hon Mr Harris: As you know, I attended a meeting with doctors in northwestern Ontario. In that meeting I think I got 12 hours' notice. Actually, the doctors said, "We didn't even ask for the meeting," and I met with them. So, of course we are a government that is happy to respond, happy to meet, either me or the minister, officials who can assist.

We have a serious problem; we have a challenge. I don't know if the New Democratic Party is suggesting that we now order doctors where they are to practise. I doubt, because they wouldn't do it, that that's going to work. We have to work on programs, and we are working co-operatively. But this was the government that—through the social contract you slashed \$60 million out of psychiatric hospitals and you never put a cent into community-based mental health services. It wasn't until we came along that we put a moratorium on the closure of psychiatric hospitals, while we reinvested over \$150 million in new community spaces. Nothing closes down until we get more into community-based care. You're the government that slashed—

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

ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Premier—and the issue is the shortage of doctors, Premier. But I want to ask you again about the Ontario Realty Corp. Two weeks ago, my colleague from Sault Ste Marie asked the Chair of Management Board to table in the Legislature the names of companies that currently have property under contract with the Ontario Realty Corp. Your Chair of Management Board said that if there were no legal impediment he would do that. Surprise, surprise. Two days later his staff call up and they say that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act prohibits them from releasing. So we called back and said, "Can you cite for us what sections prohibit you?" and we got no answer. We looked at length through the protection of privacy act to find the sections and couldn't find anything.

Premier, on the one hand, we saw yesterday that your government is willing to make information available when it suits your purpose to leak it to the media, but on the other hand, when there's a request for information that frankly ought to be out there—and we can't find any section in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act that prohibits it, and your government won't say what sections prohibit it. Can you explain to us why we seem to have these two contradictory situations?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think you heard the intervention from the member from Renfrew on privacy and on information. We treat this very seriously, as you know. We have concurred with the member that there ought to be a legislative committee take a look and to review practices, because there seems to be some disagreement of individuals, from the commissioner to people within various ministries and lawyers, over what should be released and what shouldn't. We want to comply, of course, as best we can with these areas. The details or the specifics I cannot get into. I can tell you this: We have not asked for any information not to be released nor asked for information to be released on anything to do with the ORC. There has been no political direction, certainly, given in that area. Should you wish to ask a supplementary on the specifics, the minister may have more information on that. But we treat privacy very seriously and we take these matters very seriously. We want to do the best we can, and we ask our ministries to do the same.

Mr Hampton: Premier, I hate to tell you this, but the member's point of privilege was about how your government isn't respecting the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. We see here that when we ask for information, you obliquely try to cite the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, but you won't refer to the specific sections that prohibit the disclosure of the information. But when it suits your government's spin, you're more than happy to provide the information.

The Premier says he wants to get to the bottom of this. He makes allegations that some of this may have happened under the NDP in the early 1990s or even earlier

under the Liberals in the late 1980s. Premier, if you really want to get to the bottom of this, then I have a suggestion for you. Why not hold a public inquiry? The Supreme Court of Canada has said that you can structure a public inquiry such that it would not prejudice potential criminal charges. It would allow, for example, the auditor to come forward. It would allow for the subpoena of witnesses. It would allow those people who want to tell a different side of the story to come forward. If you truly want to get to the bottom of this and you want to stop selectively leaking information that promotes your government's spin, meanwhile shutting off other information, then let's really get to the bottom of it. I don't care if you want to go back into the early 1990s or into the late 1980s. I'm prepared to work with you on that. Let's get to the bottom of this. Let's have a public inquiry so all the information can get out there.

Hon Mr Harris: I think this is about the 96th request for a public inquiry. I think all members have been supportive of calling in the forensic auditors in support of the OPP in doing their job, and I think we ought to allow them to continue to do their job. At the end of that process, if there is still more information, we certainly would want to look, post this period, for how we would like the ORC to operate. I think you would not be shocked to think that we don't want it to operate the way it did under your government or the Liberal government or the early years of our government. We all want to get to the bottom of this.

Certainly I think it's entirely premature to suggest that alternative now, but I appreciate the member's advice which follows, I think, Mr Brennan who first made the call, and now you and he concur. At the end of this process, we'll look at any vehicle to give us proper procedures to operate in the future.

1520

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Premier. We believe that gun crimes are becoming a very serious and pressing issue here in Ontario. Yesterday Peel Regional Police acted on a serious problem by seizing 3,200 phony guns. Chief Catney was very concerned that these guns are not covered under both federal and provincial legislation. Ontario Liberals share this concern, and that's why we have put forward a bill that would make it illegal for anybody under the age of 18 to purchase a phony gun, and also would require that anybody who proposes to purchase one of these guns pass a background criminal record check. Premier, you've now had three weeks to look at this bill. Will you support our bill and call it for debate immediately, or are you just loud on crime and soft on guns?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Either the Solicitor General or Attorney General may want to get into some of the specifics, because when the bill was introduced by the member for—you can help me—

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): St Paul's.

Hon Mr Harris:—St Paul's, I applauded it as the first sign of any interest in the Liberal Party in crime, in gun control, in any of the areas that would be a meaningful effort. I appreciate that now, trying to make up for five years of inaction, the leader of the party wishes to get in on this bill. So do we. We thought it was a good initiative, a good idea. We're reviewing it. We're taking a look at it. The police obviously treat it seriously.

There is within the laws of the land the power, as you saw, to seize the guns as they did, but we're taking a look and I know it is being reviewed. It may be that we would like to go a little further, but I certainly applaud your backbench member for raising the issue. I think he is on the right track, and actually, congratulations to you for recognizing that, albeit late, and trying to get into the front of the parade that's already moving.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, we know where you and your caucus stand when it comes to the gun parade in Ontario. You've got a caucus member who is appearing on United States of America television pimping for the NRA—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I would ask the member to withdraw that, please.

Mr McGuinty: I withdraw that remark, Speaker—advocating on behalf of the National Rifle Association. We have the spectacle in our province of you, Premier, allowing the NRA to put books in our children's schools which tell them how to load, point and shoot handguns. You have yet to stand up and speak out against that development. Premier, one more time: Stop being loud on crime, start being hard on solutions. I ask you again: Will you support this bill? Will you bring it into this House so we can begin to debate it? It's a very short bill. You've had it for over three weeks now. Can we not get on with this? Our police are asking for it.

Hon Mr Harris: I'm not sure I know exactly why the leader of the Liberal Party has such a hatred for the leadership and members of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, but aside from that, let me say that we have members in our caucus who think it's a disgrace that the Liberals have wasted \$200 million or \$300 million or \$400 million—we're not sure how much yet—on a very flawed piece of legislation that doesn't meet anybody's intention of proper gun control. We, of course, would like to see those dollars channelled into other areas.

While we have caucus members who believe that, we will also soon have a caucus member who has led and championed the right for gun control, that being the future, to-be member, Priscilla de Villiers, from the great riding of Wentworth.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The people in my riding of Durham listened closely to the

budget presented in the House by Finance Minister Ernie Eves last week. In fact, they're quite grateful for the recent significant capital grant to Durham and they want to extend their thanks for that.

While I believe that my constituents on the whole were pleased with the nature of the budget and the positive steps it takes to ensure continued prosperity in the province of Ontario, some of my constituents were hoping that a plan to make Durham College a university would have been announced. I'm sure you and I have spoken of this. I know that the college president, Gary Polonsky, and the board chair, Terry Hing, were expecting that announcement.

Minister, the region is growing quickly and would be an ideal location for a new university. Can you inform the House today, and my constituents—hundreds of whom, by the way, have written me—whether a plan to create a university in Durham is on the agenda or otherwise?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I thank the member for Durham for his question and I can assure him that the members from Durham and the constituents of Durham have written me hundreds of them as well. For that, I think they should get some credit, and the credit is because this province is looking at new and innovative ways to provide quality post-secondary education for our students. I think the creative thinking that's going on around this province and in Durham is to be commended, because these are new and different times, but always times for quality and accessibility.

Durham's initial plan certainly brings forward the idea of innovation and partnership. That is something we want and support and are looking for. The honourable member will know that we announced new ways, and I'm now talking about applied degrees and private universities, and we also said at the same time that there are three goals: first of all, a quality degree; second, lots of choice for students; and third, the protection of our students. I'm looking forward to these kinds of discussions with Durham.

Mr O'Toole: I commend you—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. Sorry to interrupt. The member for Hamilton East on a point of order.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. In the previous response, the Premier referred to the riding of the by-election as "the riding or whatever." I'd clarify the record: It's the riding of—

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. I have said that we would try to keep the points of order—in other Houses they don't even entertain points of order. I've done that, and if we get into that, that's what I'm going to get into and we won't get up on situations like that. I would appreciate if we didn't use the points of order to debate on all sides of the issue.

Sorry for the interruption to the member. Start the clock, please.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much, Minister, not just for that response but for the courage to think outside the traditional box on the college and universities. I commend you for that.

As I understand it, part of the proposed changes you've discussed in Ontario's post-secondary education system allows colleges to grant applied degrees. That's very imaginative and I commend you for it. Durham College currently offers, in partnership with Trent and York, a number of widely valued courses and programs, such as automated manufacturing, e-business, policing and justice, to name but a few. The college as a whole, as you know, has an exceptional record, not just for job placement but for general performance. Could you explain to this House what criteria you will be using to decide which colleges will be involved in the pilot projects? Quite sincerely, Minister, I'm looking for your assurance that Durham College will be on that list.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The honourable member never lets up. He, once again, is supporting his great college. I think everybody knows that students and employers are increasingly looking for new combinations of skills to meet the demands of today's world of work and the rapidly changing global economy.

I accept the compliments from the member with regard to applied degrees. They are long overdue. As a matter of fact, Howard Rundle, the president and chair of ACAATO, stated: "This significant and visionary action by the government of Ontario recognizes the quality of Ontario college programming, the needs of Ontario students and the job market. Applied degrees will give students greater choice in the knowledge economy."

So, in direct response, we will be recognizing a maximum of eight pilot projects a year for three years. Each project will typically consist of one college offering one program in a field where the college demonstrates academic excellence.

1530

TEACHERS' PENSION FUND

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Chair of Management Board and has to do with the budget. We notice in the budget that the teachers' pension plan now has become a source of considerable revenue for the government. I gather that fortunately the teachers' pension plan has invested well and has very good returns on investment, and rather than an expense on teachers' pensions there's a revenue of about \$700 million, which is terrific. That is as a result of the good investments that have taken place.

My question to the minister is this: Recognizing that the stock market does tend to fluctuate, and I believe that a majority of their investments are in the stock market, how solid is that \$711-million revenue? In your judgment, can we count on \$711 million of revenue from the pension plan in this fiscal year?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The Minister of Finance's numbers

have consistently been prudent, cautious and over-achieved. I might add that his numbers have been consistent that way since 1995, and your annual report each year has always been off. So I would have trust in the budget as tabled by the Minister of Finance.

Mr Phillips: I take it, then, that the government does expect a \$711-million revenue from the teachers' pension, because it's in the budget. That is a considerable amount of revenue coming in to the government from the teachers' pension. We looked at the expenditures in the elementary and secondary—and in the post-secondary, but particularly elementary and secondary—and when you account for the replacement of the property tax cuts that you've implemented, provincial support for elementary and secondary schools has actually dropped. Why did you decide that you would not use some of that \$711 million of teachers' pension revenue coming to you to invest in elementary and secondary?

Hon Mr Hodgson: In the budget, and again in the Minister of Education's announcement today, we are investing more in our children in Ontario than at any time in our history. So that's the issue about which your misinformation campaign is not accurate. We are investing more in education and we have the numbers to prove that.

To return to your question on the pensions, the Minister of Finance's numbers have been consistently accurate. I will pass on your comments to him and he can probably get back to you with more detail. But you would be aware that there are rules around how the gains in the pension plan can be spent; also the difference between PSAAB accounting and cash accounting. There's two systems when you record it.

Mr Phillips: There aren't two books, are there?

Hon Mr Hodgson: Your government had the two books. Don't be so stupid as to try to say that. You would know the difference—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member is going to have to withdraw that. The time's already gone down and I say to the member of the third party that his lead question, the second and third questions were well over the time limit as well. I ask the member to withdraw that.

Hon Mr Hodgson: What would you call it, Mr Speaker? I withdraw it.

The Speaker: The members can't continue to do this. You either withdraw it or you don't, the same thing that I said to the Premier.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Just a moment, please. We can't have situations where there are qualifications with the withdrawals. I believe we're on to a new question.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): My question today is for the Attorney General. Although it's not a new phenomenon, various news reports have indicated recently that organized crime appears to be growing in

the province of Ontario. Now, it's my understanding that organized crime can take many forms, that it costs our economy billions of dollars, but most troubling is that it takes advantage of our most vulnerable citizens. Minister, with all the other justice-related initiatives being put forward by our government, and I do applaud you for those, I would like to know if fighting organized crime is still a priority for you and for the ministry.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Guelph-Wellington for the question. I would like to assure the member and all members that this government takes organized crime very seriously and that we will do everything possible to stop the expansion of organized crime in Ontario.

It is estimated that the Ontario economy loses over \$1.5 billion every year due to organized crime. Organized crime is drugs and thugs, but it's also spread to contraband, car thefts, telemarketing scams that threaten our seniors, fraud, tax evasion, money laundering and counterfeit products which hurt our economy. These corrupt organizations were responsible for over \$1.8 million in direct consumer losses last year in Ontario. Car insurance premiums, for example, have risen more than 10% since 1995 to cover theft claims, and organized criminals are infiltrating legitimate businesses with money laundering and counterfeit contraband creating unfair competition for legitimate businesses that pay taxes and are working to keep Ontario's economy strong.

Mrs Elliott: The tentacles that organized crime seems to be able to infiltrate into legitimate businesses are disturbing indeed. What I'm curious to know is if there are specific initiatives that you're undertaking in your ministry that are going to protect citizens from being attacked by this insidious business.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Last week's budget provided some \$4 million a year for new government initiatives to fight organized crime and corrupt organizations. This funding will allow my ministry to develop and implement new tools and techniques to attack criminal organizations and it will also help my colleague the Solicitor General to enhance policing in this area.

Currently we are consulting with experts to examine the tools and strategies used in other jurisdictions to fight corrupt organizations and take the profit out of organized crime. It is important that we study what works, what doesn't work, and why, in order to come up with the best solution for Ontario. Following these consultations, we hope to develop our own tools and techniques to attack corrupt organizations and take the business out of organized crime in Ontario.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Education, and it's about today's announcement. Currently in high schools across Ontario, teachers, as I understand it, teach six of eight periods. That is, they're teaching a credit course for six

of eight periods; for two periods a day they are doing prep time, they're available for remedial instruction, they're on call or they're doing substitute supervision.

Under your announcement today, the law will now require that each teacher teaches 6.67 credit courses. In other words, the teaching day—the number of classes they're responsible for—is expanded. If each teacher is teaching more, that is, additional classes, we estimate that that will allow your government to reduce the number of teachers by at least 2,000 across Ontario at the high school level. Do you deny that your new law will reduce the number of high school teachers across the province by at least 2,000?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): First of all, the workload standard, the instructional time standard, that I introduced in the Legislature today, the 1,250 minutes a week, four hours and 10 minutes a day, or 6.67 out of eight, however you want to calculate it, is the same standard we had two years ago. Secondly, there is no question that things like on-call, which was being double-counted, we said would not be double-counted.

I would also like to remind the honourable member that each teacher is not teaching X amount. It is a board-wide average, as it should be. We recognize that teachers have different kinds of workloads, different kinds of courses, different kinds of pressures, and we believe the educational system should be able to recognize that. So we have clearly flagged that.

The final point is that we are concerned about potential job loss. That's why we propose, if this Legislature supports the legislation, to bring down the class size in secondary, and we are putting \$162 million out there to help make that happen, because we don't want to have job losses. Not only is it a benefit for OSSTF, it has the added benefit for teachers and students in the classroom of smaller class size. So we think it's an important investment in quality.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary, the member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I have a supplementary for Mme la Ministre with respect to the extracurricular activities. I know that what she's trying to do is to solve a political problem with the withdrawal of services. They resented the fact that teachers have done that in response to what they did to teachers, so they want to solve that political question so it never happens again.

Here is the effect, though. They want to make a voluntary activity involuntary. They will oblige teachers to do something they have done voluntarily for a long time. So here I am, a phys ed teacher with a passion to do my extracurricular activity because I love to do it, and Madame la Ministre is now going to oblige me to do it. Does Madame la Ministre think that same person who did it with love and passion—now that she requires me to do it, does she believe I'm going to do it?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, just a comment about the first question his leader asked. There are many boards that have signed agreements at more than six out of eight, so to somehow believe that this is simply a problem in

Durham—the information they are providing was not accurate in that regard.

Secondly, the reason teachers do those extra-special activities in a school, what we believe should be considered co-instructional, is that teachers told us, and we were all on the receiving end of that message—they said loudly and clearly that they do more than simply stand in front of a classroom. We agree. Of course they do. They do an incredible amount. Not only is there the coaching of the teams, but there are also the parent-teacher nights, the other special events: graduation ceremonies, Remembrance Day ceremonies, marking and lesson preparation. There's an incredible amount that those teachers do. This legislation recognizes that.

We do hear the concern about workloads; we do hear the concern about job loss. That's why we're proposing to bring down class size and put \$162 million more—

The Speaker: The member for St Paul's.

1540

GRANDVIEW TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): Minister, I got off the phone with Patti Kelly, who is one of hundreds of Grandview survivors. She told me that she received notice in February that her counselling benefits were being cut off, effective March 31. She also told me, I'm sad to say, that when she learned of this news, she returned to a practice of slashing herself, self-mutilation, because she no longer has a counsellor. In April of this year, I'm sorry to report to this House, her daughter, who is also a victim of the Grandview survivor tragedy, committed suicide. Minister, in the name of Patti Kelly and in the name of Crystal Kelly, will you please rise and reverse your position and extend benefits to the Grandview survivors for counselling, and extend those benefits also to their family members who so desperately need this counselling?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for the question. As he may know, the Grandview agreement was negotiated by the previous government, by the NDP government, and negotiated to a conclusion in 1994. As part of that agreement, there was to be an apology in the House, which I made previously. Counselling was to be extended as part of the agreement. The member may not be aware but the administration of the Grandview agreement included the provision that therapists working with survivors would refer them to other support services within the community at the conclusion of the counselling program. If that is not happening or has not happened in a particular circumstance, I certainly would be concerned and I'd be prepared to follow up and make sure the terms of the agreement are being honoured.

Mr Bryant: Minister, what a member of your staff said yesterday was, "It's still our position that the province has fulfilled all commitments contained in the agreement." If you're saying that you're willing to look

beyond that and extend the benefits, then I applaud the minister for that.

But I have to tell you, these people are incredibly fragile. I didn't know this but I found out today, Minister, that in the same week you and I apologized to the Grandview survivors, three of those women committed suicide. They are at the edge of the abyss and their families are at the edge of the abyss. No position taken by any of your ministry officials that does not offer some compassion is going to assist them. I have to say that we'd better not head down the path whereby we have a sequel to the bullying of the Dionne sisters. I would urge the minister to not look into it but to stand up and commit to extending the benefits of the counselling to the Grandview survivors and to extend those benefits to their families. Will you do it or won't you?

Hon Mr Flaherty: This is not a partisan matter. The abuse at Grandview Training School should never have happened. There can be no excuse for it. On behalf of this Legislative Assembly I have expressed sincere regret for, and condemnation of, those events. There were discussions between the previous government and survivors of Grandview. So far, the survivors have received \$17.5 million in compensation, which includes financial awards, counselling, medical and dental treatments as well as educational and vocational training.

As I said in my response to the first question, the administration of the Grandview agreement included the provision that therapists working with survivors would refer them to other support services within the community at the conclusion of the counselling program. If that is not being done, then the agreement is not being complied with, and I will certainly follow up in that regard. We are all concerned with the survivors of Grandview, as the previous government was.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the Honourable Helen Johns, who represents the great riding of Huron-Bruce. We've heard a great deal in this House about last week's budget, how our government is lowering taxes, balancing the budget and creating jobs in the process. What we haven't heard a lot about is how this is benefiting our arts and culture communities, including, for instance, the city of Stratford, where our government is committing \$2 million towards the refurbishing of the Avon Theatre for the Stratford Festival.

Minister, what else is our government doing to promote arts and culture across the province?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I'd like to thank the member for Perth-Middlesex for the question and I'd also like to thank him on behalf of the arts community in Stratford for his support of the Avon Theatre through this process. As people across the province may know, the Ontario

Science Centre and the Avon Theatre in Stratford were recognized within the budget. We talked about a commitment from SuperBuild to put a sports, culture and tourism partnership incentive into place. This incentive includes \$300 million invested over five years to ensure that we rebuild and enhance community structures all across this great province.

This not only includes cultural structures that the member was talking about; it also talks about recreational areas, arenas, sports complexes as well as tourism opportunities all across the province. It's wonderful that we were able to do this, and it couldn't happen, of course, without a strong commitment to tax reductions, deficit reduction—

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

Mr Johnson: I can tell the minister that the news about the Avon Theatre has been well received in my riding. We're now looking to the federal government to commit its fair share to this excellent project.

On a related issue, we've all heard about how well Toronto is doing as our Hollywood North when it comes to filmmaking. What measures are taken in the budget to spread the benefits around the rest of the province and to smaller communities of this sort of venture?

Hon Mrs Johns: One of the initiatives in the budget was to ensure that we showcase the entire province when it comes to making films in this great land. Our hope is that we can take more and more films that are being produced in America and bring them to Ontario so we have a larger and larger film production area. This gives us jobs, it gives us spinoff industries and it helps all areas. Within the budget we have looked at different opportunities so that we can move films from middle America through to the Stratfords of the world and rural Ontario and northern Ontario and we continue to do that.

For all of the communities that are interested in having films in their area, I suggest they talk to the OFDC, as it is today, and make sure there's a film library there so that filmmakers all across America can look to your community to make films.

1550

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Mr Speaker, my question is for the Premier, so I'll defer to you as to how we solve that problem.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I believe the Premier was here. You can address it to someone else.

Interjections.

The Speaker: One of the problems we have is that the timelines are such that today we actually started question period—if we don't start very quickly, we won't even get to petitions. We can't do anything about that. I apologize for the delays. As you know, we started late, with the points of privilege and so on. So if you could address it to one of the ministers, that would be great.

Mr Levac: Thank you for your patience, Speaker. I appreciate that. My question will then be for the Chair of Management Board.

In a recent letter from the Ministry of Health addressing the concerns I presented to her on behalf of the constituents of Brant regarding the shortage of physicians that my riding has, she stated this: "As you know, Brantford is currently designated as underserved for 17 additional family practitioners, and Paris is designated for three more." This does not even include the shortages of specialists that Brant is now going through.

Minister, your own government is identifying the problem, the Minister of Health has identified the problem, a problem that has existed in Brant for many years. Why has your government failed to provide the citizens of Brant with access to a family doctor?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As the member of the opposition points out, it is a serious problem. We have identified it. It's one we are taking steps to address.

It took us a long time to get into this mess and it's going to take us a while to work our way through it and get out of it. The agreement with the OMA takes another step toward solving this. The problem we inherited was that the medical schools had decreased enrolment by over 10% back in 1992 by the NDP government, and a number of other factors. The underserved area program was a step to try to address that. We need more physicians. That's why free tuition for people who want to go through medical school and then reside in an underserved area is a step forward—primary care, trying to encourage more doctors to go out and form a practice.

As you know, in the underserved areas it's not just about money, it's about quality of life. Sometimes one doctor alone is overworked and gets burned out. So we've taken steps to try to encourage the primary care model, where a group of doctors can work together and provide better access to the rural areas of this province. I encourage you to work with us on our initiatives to try to make it better for your area as well as all the other underserved areas in the province.

Mr Levac: By the way, Minister, it's not a rural area we're talking about. We're talking about the heart of a very large population of this entire province. I want to make sure you understand something: We're talking about today. The minimum amount of time you're talking about is seven years before we get those medical students out.

In the budget, the Minister of Finance stated that we are "announcing today that we will implement Dr Robert McKendry's recommendation to increase the number of spaces for medical students." We know that's not the case. The budget announcement was a reannouncement. You're playing with words with our people's health. What we don't want is the platitudes of saying, "Somewhere down the line we're going to find you some doctors." What we want now is action from the Premier, from the Minister of Health and now from you to simply say it's not a political question; this is a question of our

citizens' health. Will you instruct the Minister of Health to commit to increasing the number of medical school placements in order to assist the members of Brant? Would you also provide us with the tools we need to entice those doctors to come to Brant?

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I pointed out before, we recognize that this is a very serious issue. It's an issue that affects my own riding, as well as many of my colleagues' ridings. Our government has taken unprecedented steps to address the issue of physician supply and distribution in this province. We're actively working on long-term solutions. Our budget commits \$100 million to expand primary care reform; \$75 million to transfer doctors in the academic health science centres to alternative payment plans; \$4 million for free tuition to medical students willing to practise in underserved areas; and \$11 million annually to address the McKendry report. This is on top of numerous other initiatives to try to improve the health care that we receive right across this whole province.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have even more petitions to the Legislative Assembly with regard to the northern health travel grant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

These petitions are signed by literally hundreds of my constituents from Hornepayne straight through to Killarney.

CAMPING

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a petition signed by literally hundreds of people from the riding of Timmins-James Bay and other sister ridings with regard to the 21-day provision of the MNR, restricting camping for people within those particular areas. I've signed this petition and submit it on their behalf.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that 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 do affix my signature along with a number of others from my constituency.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Certainly, the people who sent petitions in for the northern health travel grant may be responsible for the minister finally reviewing the program. I will read mine once again. We have hundreds more here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment

outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

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

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

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

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

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

Much like my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin, I have petitions from all across northwestern Ontario. Thank you very much for this support.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to standing order 30(d), I am required to interrupt the proceedings and immediately call orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DIRECT DEMOCRACY THROUGH MUNICIPAL REFERENDUMS ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA DÉMOCRATIE DIRECTE PAR VOIE DE RÉFÉRENDUM MUNICIPAL

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 27, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 62, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various Acts in order to encourage direct democracy through municipal referendums, to provide additional tools to assist restructuring municipalities and to deal with other municipal matters / Projet de loi 62, Loi édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois en vue d'encourager la démocratie directe au moyen de référendums municipaux, de fournir des outils supplémentaires pour aider les municipalités restructurées et de traiter d'autres questions municipales.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 1, 2000, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Coburn has moved second reading of Bill 62. 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.

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

The division bells rang from 1600 to 1605.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): All those in favour will please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Ernie	Palladini, Al
Chudleigh, Ted	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Coburn, Brian	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Tasca, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Cleary, John C.	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	McGuinty, Dalton
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David		

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 45; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 1, 2000, this bill will be ordered referred to the standing committee on justice and social policy.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS ACT, 2000 LOI DE 2000 SUR L'ASSOCIATION ONTARIENNE DES EX-PARLEMENTAIRES

Mr Gilchrist moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to establish the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians / Projet de loi 65, Loi constituant l'Association ontarienne des ex-parlementaires.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): We had a chance to make very brief comments when the bill was brought back to the House from committee, but this

really is a historic piece of legislation because it represents the first time that the new standing order 124 was used for the creation of a piece of legislation. As members of this House and many other people across this province know, traditionally there have been only two vehicles through which legislation could be brought forward and the laws of the province changed. Those were, of course, bills introduced by the sitting government and bills introduced by private members. The private members' bills are a fairly regulated process, and we each get one turn each session, but there's not a great opportunity for us to advance other initiatives in a timely fashion.

The Legislature changed the standing orders last session and now there is a third mechanism, and that mechanism is through committee. Every member of a committee has the opportunity to propose a piece of legislation once each session. They have a further guarantee that it will not only be debated in committee but they will have debating time here in the House if it passes committee. This bill represents the first such opportunity to move forward legislation and I really want to congratulate all members of the standing committee on general government. It really was a non-partisan initiative, and I want to thank my colleagues not just from the government side but from the Liberal and NDP parties as well. I think it was very much in the flavour that Ontarians would like to see us deal with legislation wherever possible. Suggestions are made, amendments are made, but at the end of the day we all make compromises and fashion a bill that meets the test of the best possible change to standing legislation.

This bill creates, in effect, an alumni association of former parliamentarians. We've all seen, sometimes with tragic consequences, what happens when members who are defeated or choose not to stand for re-election leave this place and have to reacclimatize themselves, have to get back into the workforce, back into the working society. We had one incident in Ottawa where the transition was far too dramatic for anyone's taste. I really think that having a resource, having a focal point that former members can turn to if they need advice, if they need a rallying point, if they need some counsel, is very much an initiative we should be pursuing.

It follows on the lead of many other provinces and of a similar organization at the federal level, the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, which is currently chaired by Barry Turner, formerly a PC MP. In addition, the Americans have an association of former members of Congress for all the same reasons and with the same spirit. This is not a partisan group. It will not be there to promote any specific legislative agenda. It will have almost no cost, save and except that we will be asking the Speaker to allocate an office, and after that the cost would be borne by the association itself. But we think it's quite appropriate that that focal point be an office somewhere in the legislative precinct.

The other item I have to mention is the fact that even the inspiration for this bill was an all-party effort. The

idea first originated with Reverend Derwyn Shea, who was of course one of our colleagues in the last Parliament, and he was joined by two other members of the Conservative caucus, John Parker and Terence Young. But in addition, Mr Gilles Morin from the Liberal Party and Mr Tony Silipo from the New Democratic Party joined in the efforts, appeared before the committee and in every respect spoke equally eloquently of the need to bring forward this new association.

I'm not going to belabour the point. I think we have pretty unanimous agreement around both sides of the Legislature that this is an initiative which should move forward through second and third reading. I hope we get the agreement of all members today to give both second and third reading and allow this initiative to move forward. There is a steering committee, comprised of former members from all three parties, who will take it from there and bring it to fruition. I wish them Godspeed and the best of luck. I know I speak for all members in wishing them all the best in fulfilling the aims and objectives laid before us in committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments and questions?

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I want to assure the member for Scarborough East, who is also the chair of our government committee, that he does have our support on this side, and that without doubt we will be proceeding as quickly as possible to pass this legislation.

I want to review a couple of items for the benefit of the people who do pay attention to these proceedings and for the record from the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in effect on Tuesday, November 2, 1999. We are making history today, and I concur with the comments that the member opposite said, so I want to review exactly why I think this is very instrumental and very important as a historic moment. This is one of those opportunities where we've been able to change the Legislature for the good of all members sitting. They don't have to be members of a ministry, they don't have to be members of any particular smaller group that gets brought down into the legislative possibilities, to bring legislation to the front of this House, and that's the committee.

“Report to the House: Report may contain the text of bill:

“124(d) Following its consideration of such a matter, the committee may present a substantive report to the House and may adopt the text of a draft bill on the subject matter. Where the text of a draft bill is adopted by the committee, it shall be an instruction to the Chair to introduce such bill in his or her name, as the primary sponsor. The other committee members who support the bill may have their names printed on the face of the bill as the secondary sponsors.”

Not so much to get credit for passing a bill, but the fact that we now have the ability of a committee to introduce legislation to this House is historic, and I commend the Legislature, if passed, to put that into place.

There is still more to do. On a personal note, I do believe that private members' bills need to be tweaked a little bit more so that they can get to the legislative process quicker and better, but nonetheless, for this particular legislation we must compliment the committee members, and particularly the Chair for his leadership in drafting and getting this to the House.

Next, I want to say very clearly that it's—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. These were the two-minute comments and questions. You may have thought this was the full debate; I'm not sure.

Mr Levac: I'm done.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I wanted to take a very brief opportunity, which is all I have in two minutes, to express my gratitude to some people from our former caucus, the Reverend Derwyn Shea and Terence Young, who were very instrumental in bringing leadership to the bill before us today. I believe it is a credit to this Legislature that we're taking this important step to facilitate an opportunity for former members to continue to participate and have some activity in this place in which they have invested so much of their time and energy.

We know that, as a House, on a non-partisan basis, we will all benefit from them having a facility in this place, from our ability to continue dialogue with former members. No doubt many of them, having been here and now having perhaps a different perspective, will be able to give us some advice. That would be very helpful. Sometimes the farther the distance is that we get from this place, the better perspective we get on many of the issues. So I want to thank these two gentlemen, and I know there are others from other caucuses who will be giving credit to members on their side of the House for their initiative on this.

I want to thank the committee for the work they have done in bringing this forward. We look forward to giving unanimous consent, I trust, to third reading and passage of this bill this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

The member for Scarborough East has two minutes to respond.

Mr Gilchrist: I certainly won't take that. I simply thank the member for Brant, the member for Oak Ridges and my colleagues from all three parties for their involvement in the committee, and our colleagues who have formerly served in this House, who I'm sure will benefit immensely from the work of this association once it's formed.

1620

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Brant.

Mr Levac: I will complete the rest of my five-minute talk in less time, so I appreciate that very much. I also want to thank the member opposite for giving recognition to a couple of the key members who were very instrumental in putting this forward.

I want to continue by adding to the record the very purpose, the objectives of what this group is going to do. I think that might get lost if we don't put it on the record because there's more to it, as we discussed at committee level, than simply having a group of people who get together as alumni. There are some very key components to this that I think the public should be aware of.

The association is a non-partisan organization that is open to all persons who have been members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario but who at present are not serving. The objectives of the association are these: to put the knowledge and experience of its members at the service of the parliamentary democracy in Ontario and elsewhere; to serve the public interest by providing non-partisan support for the parliamentary system of the Ontario government; to foster a spirit of community among former parliamentarians; and the last two items, which the Chair knows I really spent a lot of time commenting and making recommendations on, which are to foster good relations between the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and former parliamentarians, and, finally, the one that I really did spend a lot of time on, and I know in discussions we have really important points to make with this one, to protect and promote the interests of former parliamentarians.

We did hear some tragic stories. We did hear some issues that unfortunately took place because of this transition. I for one believe the human being should be taken care of first and foremost. If we find that any former member of this place is in dire distress, we should be able to help that person, and in particular their family, make those adjustments.

I want to point to another item in the bill that took on a category of its own. It was called the non-partisan group; it is the non-partisan nature: "The association shall not pursue its objectives for any partisan political purposes whatsoever." That was wholly endorsed and supported by all members of all three parties.

As the member opposite did mention, I would like to say that the subcommittee that was formed to look into the drafting of this legislation did an absolutely stellar job, and I think they should be given most, if not all, of the credit. The transition team was comprised of the Reverend Derwyn Shea, Mr Tony Silipo, Mr Gilles Morin, Mr John Parker and Mr Terence Young. To those people I say thank you for having the fortitude to stick it out, because it did take some time. There were some revisions and there were some bumps and hills along the way. I know that through your good work, and credit to you, we're here today to talk about it. I can also tell the Chair without any reservation that the members on this side in the Liberal caucus will be looking forward to a very speedy passage of this bill.

On a personal note, I want to say this has probably been the most joyful operation that I've been part of in terms of what the public want the Legislature to do: to get along, to do the best possible legislation we can do. Unfortunately, these types of pieces of legislation just don't come along enough.

I want to thank the members of the committee and I want to thank the members of all three parties for being such good sports about this and making sure those people get taken care of, because some day we're all going to be there.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I'm honoured and I feel very privileged to be able to stand today and speak to a piece of legislation such as has been presented here this afternoon. I think it speaks to the best that's in all of us. It speaks to the best that is possible out of all of us. It speaks to the potential of this place to nurture the giftedness and the gifts that each of us brings to this place and to recognize after our day is done that what we have done is remembered, respected, supported and celebrated.

Of course the focus of the bill is to make sure we have in place an organization that will look after some of the needs of past members and make sure those needs are identified, worked with and encouraged, that will encourage the development of plans to make sure people are looked after and are well and continue to be productive and active members of the communities in which they live. My caucus supports that wholeheartedly. We have absolutely no difficulty with that.

As a matter of fact, my colleague Tony Silipo in the years I served with him was a person with a tremendously well-developed social conscience, a big heart and an understanding for the challenge it takes to do this job, a person who contributed above and beyond the call of duty, as all members of this place do.

It's not until you get here and you actually take part in the activities of this place, it's not until you begin to recognize the variety of subjects you have to understand and participate in, that you begin to fully understand the time, the commitment, the energy and the sacrifice that is made by members of Parliament.

On the outside it looks like a pretty snazzy job. There are a lot of perks and opportunities to strut your stuff and be out there in the public view and be important and be seen to be important. In fact, after you've been here for a while, you begin to realize that there are moments that, yes, are appreciated and enjoyed but that they're few and far between. Like anything else, this is, after all, a job that we all are privileged to get if we're elected by our constituents. But at the end of the day, if we're committed to it, and I don't know a member in this place over my ten years here who wasn't committed to doing the job they were elected to do, you work very hard. You put in long hours. You get into some debates that are quite gruelling at times. It takes an emotional toll of you from time to time as you win and lose in this arena. At the end of the day, you leave with a mark that in some ways, yes, is very positive and constructive, and in other ways can limit your potential and ability to actually re-enter the regular workaday world of the community from which you come.

This new parliamentary association will hopefully have the resources necessary to be helpful and supportive of each of us, because for each of us, in turn, our day will

come and we will face the challenge of re-entering and becoming not an MPP any more but serving in the ways we want to in the communities to which we will return.

The other thing I think it is important to highlight here is that we forget from time to time that we should celebrate the contribution MPPs make to the quality of life we all enjoy in the communities we live in. We sometimes take that for granted and we think it just happens, that somehow some of the good things we all enjoy as members of a community just fall out of the sky and into our laps and are there.

Well, they don't. They happen because leadership is given from varied and multiple sources in communities. It's given as well in a very clear, concrete and important way from those who serve at senior levels of government, and certainly this is one senior level here. To celebrate those contributions I think would be an important part and role and contribution this new parliamentary association could facilitate for all of us here and for the province.

It's in celebrating and recognizing the contribution that individual members make that we and the people we serve, and the generation behind us who are coming along who are looking at us and saying, "Who are they and what do they do?" will come to understand, realize and appreciate the importance of this place, the importance of government, the importance of politics.

Maybe just every so slightly, hopefully, it will diminish some of the negative connotation that has grown over the last five or ten years in this province, indeed in this country and around the world, when the issue of politics and politicians is talked of and looked at and reviewed in so many of the media outlets and other ways that politics is looked at in this day and age.

1630

This will present opportunity for the very positive and constructive and good things that politicians, for the most part—and again, I speak of my own experience—contribute to the good governance of this province and a building of the quality of life and opportunity and creating of space for people to participate in a province like Ontario. It's important that we do that, that we come to that time. I think this is the opportunity now. It's nice to be standing here today with all parties in agreement that we should in fact do that.

I remember for quite some time, because I'm a big Toronto Maple Leafs fan, watching as Harold Ballard refused to recognize, as other arenas used to around the NHL, the contribution that past stars and past players made. He wouldn't hang the banners and those kinds of things. I'm not suggesting for a second that we start hanging banners in here recognizing the contribution of some of the stars—and eccentrics sometimes—of this place, but just that we all remember and are reminded from time to time of that contribution and the benchmarks they set, that we need to sometimes rise to ourselves.

I think it's important that we put out there—not necessarily by hanging up banners, but in other ways—

things that we might come up with by way of recognition to add to the positive and constructive understanding of the role of politicians and members of Parliament, because sometimes it's that very negative picture that's painted, sometimes that very critical analysis and judgment that's made—

Interjection: The Fewer Politicians Act.

Mr Martin: Yes. I don't want to get partisan here this afternoon or else I would talk about that, and I could, in fact. But I want to be non-partisan and constructive in this.

If we did more in a positive and constructive nature, building up the role that we play in the evolution of civil society here in Ontario, politicians who find themselves moving on, for whatever reason, would have an easier time reintegrating into the communities in which they live. What they have done would be more likely to be seen in a light that would have people perhaps clamouring for their services, to serve on boards and commissions—even to offer them the opportunity of some gainful employment, because we know that the pension out of here now isn't so great any more. It used to be OK. You used to have a pretty decent pension if you served as a politician in Ontario. But since the last changes—and I think the members across the way are beginning to recognize this now—the pension isn't as rich as it used to be.

Interjection: It isn't. It's not even existing.

Mr Martin: Some might claim that it doesn't even exist any more in any real and significant sense. So the need becomes even more pertinent and obvious to have something in place to assist those people who come here, give of their time, serve, and end up having to go back with a five- or 10- or 15-year piece removed from their life where they haven't been building up pension credits someplace else, haven't been building up any relationship someplace else that might lend to taking care of themselves and their families in their retirement. I think that this organization, this new parliamentary association that we're talking about here today, could contribute in a very significant and important way to making sure that that happens.

I'm standing in partnership today with members of the Liberal and Conservative caucuses in saying this is a good move, in saying thanks to those who made the effort to make sure that what we have in front of us here today will do the trick, and we will be supporting whatever effort is put forward to make sure that this happens post-haste.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Just a quick question I have, and there may be room for another member, I hope. Is the member for Sault Ste Marie advocating a provincial senate? I just wanted to ask that question.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I just want to compliment the member for Sault Ste Marie. I'm glad he raised that point about the pensions, because there's a real misconception that those of us who have recently been elected have gold-plated pensions. I think it's important that the public hears that and that it's only

our distant relatives in Ottawa who have those great pension plans now.

I want to compliment, though, the members of all three parties and the legislative staff and former members who worked together to bring this initiative forward. I think it is very important that we recognize those contributions of past members of this Legislature.

I look back at some individuals who have served my own riding. Ron McNeil was a distinguished member of this Legislature for over 30 years. Ron is still active in his community. I think it's important to recognize the contributions of individuals like Ron. Other individuals who have also served part of my riding: Doug Reycraft, another long-time member of this Legislature; Peter North, a former member of the New Democratic Party, and then in 1995 Peter was elected as an independent member of the Legislature, for the first time in over 50 years; Marietta Roberts, another member of my riding, who gave distinguished service and actually sat in the Speaker's chair to serve the constituents of Ontario; and Bruce Smith, who recently was a member of this Legislature. Those are some individuals I think should be recognized for their past contributions and individuals too that we all understand have something that they can give back to the people of Ontario.

It's very fitting that this committee of former parliamentarians has been struck. It has been extremely successful in Ottawa in creating an alumni association and that bond, and continuing those bonds of friendship, because although we may be on opposite sides, at the end of the day we do need to walk out of this room and do what's best for our constituents. With that, I want to commend all three parties for their efforts.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I just would like in these two minutes to put a couple of words on the record with regard to this. Far too often we have engaged in this Legislature—not all members, but certainly from the predominant party, which I will not name at this point—in trying to demean politicians and the work they do. There has been legislation brought forward that in a lot of ways really tries to undermine the work that people actually do when they decide to put their name on the ballot and run for office,

Yes, these are good jobs. When you do get elected it's exciting. There are a lot of interesting things to do. You get to serve your community in a way that you probably can never do in any other job you may get. But we often forget that there's also a price you pay when you get elected. There's a price you pay with your family, and there's also a price you pay if you've been around this place long enough and you try to go back to what you were doing before. Often it's very difficult to go back.

Many people I know from this Legislature have come from various professions. When they've tried to go back into their former employment it has been pretty difficult to do. In some cases they don't want you back. You've been gone for 10 or 15 years. They don't feel you have any right to go back to your old employer. Many people put aside business interests. I was a small business person

myself. I know other people here who were in small business and ended up closing down successful businesses in order to run, get elected and serve the people of the province of Ontario.

Often when you leave there's not much left for you when you get out of this place, so I think it's only right that we try in this little way to give former parliamentarians a chance to make the transition a little bit easier, and hopefully some of the supports provided to some of the members when they leave this assembly will go a long way. This is a small step but an important step in trying to make that happen, and I want to thank the former members who worked on this committee for bringing this forward.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes to respond.

1640

Mr Martin: Just briefly, I want to thank the members from Brant, Timmins-James Bay and St Catharines for participating and responding to the comments I made.

I say to the member from St Catharines that I'm a great believer in public process, as you are. I'm a supporter of government and government processes. I'm a supporter of taking the time necessary to make sure that what we do here is the right thing on behalf of all of the people of Ontario. In fact, we should be doing more, in my view, of a non-partisan nature than we do here in this place so often. If a senate at the provincial level would contribute to that, I'd have no difficulty with that. I'm not one of the people out there condemning any level of government. Each level of government has its pluses and minuses and we should be doing everything in our power to make sure that they in fact work on behalf of people. I think that speaks to the contribution that so many people have made to this place over such a long time.

In my own instance, in Sault Ste Marie, there's a member who comes to mind that I think we should recognize and perhaps put on this committee, and that's Russ Ramsey, a Conservative member who used to be a cabinet minister in Bill Davis's government, who never fails to respond to any event that I lead in Sault Ste Marie. He comes, he participates. Even if it's a fundraiser, he puts his money on the table and he has supper and we celebrate the contribution that all of us make to the common life of the community that we all love and want to serve. I have lunch with him on a regular basis because I appreciate the advice that he gives me on things. I want to hear what he's thinking and what he's feeling about certain things.

I'm happy, as I said before, to support this and our caucus will be supporting it as well, of course.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gilchrist has moved second reading of Bill 65. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I seek unanimous consent to call third reading of Bill 65.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there consent? It is agreed.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FORMER
PARLIAMENTARIANS ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR L'ASSOCIATION
ONTARIENNE DES EX-PARLEMENTAIRES

Mr Gilchrist moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to establish the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians / Projet de loi 65, Loi constituant l'Association ontarienne des ex-parlementaires.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I really don't think there's a need to belabour the point. All parties have put their comments on the record. I certainly appreciate the debate we've had and the input so far. I look forward to a successful vote for third reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments and questions? Further debate?

Mr Gilchrist has moved third reading of Bill 65. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS
AND SAFETY ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LES NORMES
TECHNIQUES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 11, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 42, An Act to enhance public safety and to improve competitiveness by ensuring compliance with modernized technical standards in various industries / Projet de loi 42, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité publique et à améliorer la compétitivité en assurant l'observation de normes techniques modernisées dans plusieurs industries.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, the Honourable Bob Runciman, and speak to Bill 42 which is, I would say, in some ways an administrative bill, but in many ways it reflects the best thing this government does, which is to move towards streamlining and common sense.

It starts by looking from the perspective of An Act to enhance public safety and to improve competitiveness by ensuring compliance with modernized technical standards in various industries. You would know that in a lot of areas industry has changed and technology has changed to make industry adapt. I think this is really what this act is attempting to do.

There are seven existing acts—the Amusement Devices Act, the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, the Elevating Devices Act, the Energy Act, the Gasoline Handling Act, the Operating Engineers Act, the Upholsterers and Stuffed Articles Act—and those seven acts are regulated independently. What this does is bring the seven particular acts together, but the bill does retain the essential characteristics of licensing schemes.

Sections 4 and 5 deal with the appointment of directors and inspectors to supervise and inspect activities in

the technical standards industries. Section 6 provides for a system of authorizations for both persons and things in the areas governed by the act. Procedural safeguards with respect to revocations, suspensions and refusals to renew authorizations are set out in sections 7, 8 and 9. A director's decision with respect to an authorization may be appealed to the Divisional Court by the terms of subsection 11(1).

As you can see in what I've been saying here, it's somewhat technical in nature and, as such, the consultations with the external stakeholders have been very important in reaching some sort of consensus. As in all things, consensus isn't exactly what you get every day of the week.

Staff have prepared some notes for me on Bill 42 and, for the record, I will try to stick to the script. I see some of them sitting there rather nervously that I might say something that isn't exactly scripted. I can assure them that I've listened—in fact I've read the legislation—but I know certain things have to go on the record. It's now 10 to 5, and if you really want to watch *The Young and the Restless* or something, it's probably OK. I'm talking to viewers at home. But I will try to be entertaining on the way through.

I'm pleased to speak in support of the Technical Standards and Safety Act and the potential benefits the bill contains for Ontario consumers.

Bill 42 will provide better protection for Ontario's consumers. Think of it when riding the ski lift, for instance, in my riding of Durham. At the Oshawa Ski Club it's Mount Kirby. So when I'm riding the ski lift, I should be assured that there is safety, as in elevating devices, elevators and escalators, and whenever they fill up a snowmobile. Again, snowmobiling is very popular in my riding of Durham. I think of the Port Perry Snowmobile Club, which is well known, as is the Ganaraska group as well. Procedures for filling up gas tanks are covered by this, as are propane tanks.

This bill unites the province's seven technical safety laws, as I said, into a consolidated piece of legislation. Included in the regulations would be the details and technical standards affecting the operation of the boilers and pressure vessels that heat and cool Ontario's office buildings, schools, hospitals and factories. Safety amusement devices: As we approach the good season in the year 2000, there will be a lot of amusement devices around. In fact, today in the House there were a few amusement devices around.

The legislation would pave the way for businesses in technical industries in this province to continue with the very high standards they have achieved to date. Ontario is seen as the leader in technical safety across North America. This government is committed to building on that reputation to ensure that Ontario can meet the technical and safety challenges into the new century.

To develop this bill, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, the Honourable Bob Runciman, has worked together with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, or TSSA, the province's technical

safety watchdog and the not-for-profit organization responsible for the administration of the statutes.

The TSSA was started up under the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act in 1996. The corporation received authority to deliver technical safety programs and services in the organization's areas of expertise on May 5, 1997. The TSSA performs many valuable tasks for the ministry. TSSA staff review and register engineering designs before equipment is manufactured or installed. They approve, license and inspect facilities and equipment both at the time they are installed and periodically during operation. More than 20 kinds of tradespeople are certified and licensed by TSSA, including operating engineers, gas fitters and pressure welders. I can tell you these are very important trade areas that need to have standards of safety that apply across the province.

1650

TSSA is a testament to the success of the government's strategy of placing responsibility for the day-to-day operation of specialized business sectors with the professionals who know them best.

TSSA has strengthened partnerships with associations and government organizations across Canada and the United States to promote greater understanding of Ontario's stringent public safety requirements. This is helping to achieve a greater degree of compliance among companies from other jurisdictions to allow them to operate safely while operating in Ontario.

In 1998-99 alone, TSSA's record of achievements in improving technical safety for Ontarians was impressive. TSSA delivered the first Safe-T-Rider program designed to reduce accidents on elevators and escalators to more than 8,200 schoolchildren in the province, and launched a similar program called A Safe Ride in five seniors' centres across Ontario.

On the professional side, the authority worked in partnership with industry to design and manufacture a universal elevator rope gauge, a device to automatically measure the diameter of elevator wire to determine when it needs replacement. As you can see, there are many technical aspects to this legislation that have been worked on by the professions themselves.

TSSA also worked on strategies for the enhancement of public safety on the ski slopes through improved risk evaluation for aging ski lifts. We've seen this across other jurisdictions where this can constitute a problem, and I'm pleased to have an action plan here that's working.

By operating on a cost-recovery basis fair to both industry and the taxpaying public, TSSA has been able to increase the number of inspectors and the number of investigations it conducts. As a result, Ontario communities are safer.

Since June 1997, just a month after receiving authority to deliver technical safety programs, TSSA has been working with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations to review safety legislation. The legislation was thoroughly reviewed and we found that a new con-

solidated legislative framework was necessary to keep Ontario at the forefront of technical safety. We planned to develop a new legislative framework that would cut red tape for the industries by modernizing and improving the efficiency, responsiveness and flexibility of the existing legislation.

At the same time, the new legislation was intended to enhance the level of public safety. Obviously the issue of safety transcends all aspects of this legislation. Amalgamating the seven provincial technical standards acts into one uniform piece of legislation and transferring technical provisions to the regulations would allow technical industries to make improvements in safety equipment quickly as new technology becomes available. In that respect, we've outlined in this forum to allow the updates to be handled through regulation, as opposed to having to amend the bill: a far more efficient and flexible way of dealing with the changes in a technically changing society.

Streamlining is key throughout the new legislation. For example, the new legislation provides for uniform decision-making and appeals processes for all of the technical industries administered by TSSA. The new system would be simpler and more cost-efficient for both TSSA and all of its stakeholders. The benefits for affected businesses are in keeping with the government's promise to reduce red tape and provide more effective, less costly services through improved efficiency in the administration of public safety.

In developing the legislation, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and TSSA conducted extensive consultations with industry specialists and groups, and with consumers. More than 200 stakeholders were consulted in drafting the proposed new legislation, and TSSA will consult further as new proposals for regulatory change develop.

Thank you for bearing with me while I had that sip there, Mr Speaker.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Are you feeling better now?

Mr O'Toole: Yes, I'm feeling much better now.

In the areas of fuels safety, elevators, pressure vessels and amusement devices, technological advances that could improve safety are being made every single day. It is our goal to ensure that these new advancements are available to help the people of Ontario.

In the interest of full debate in the House today, I'm asking for everyone's unanimous support for this important piece of legislation. I'm interested in listening today. I believe Mr Caplan or Mr Bradley is about ready to speak, so with that, I think the points have been made. I'm very confident that public input will make for better legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments and questions?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I guess there is general support for the bill, but I want to raise with the parliamentary assistant a difficulty that has

arisen out of this bill having to do with people who require testing in languages other than English. For example, in the past, if you were not from Canada and you spoke Italian and were a tradesperson coming in, let's say as a pressure welder, you were able to walk into the Ministry of Skills Development, ask for an interpreter and they would interpret the exam for you and you'd be able to do the exam in your own language.

Si tu étais francophone, il n'y avait aucune difficulté. Tu es rentré au ministère provincial, le ministère te donnait l'examen en français, et c'était comme tous les autres services offerts par la province. Il n'y avait aucun problème. Le ministère donnait le test en français, l'individu écrivait le test, et si l'individu passait, il avait fini avec son certificat.

But with this new private association, we're finding that you cannot get service in languages other than English. I have had this argument with the TSSA since about last winter. They are basically refusing to give any kind of testing to anybody other than in the English language. If the parliamentary assistant really thinks this is a good thing, I would argue it is only good for those people who speak English. If you are French-speaking or speak any other language and you go in there to write an exam, you're unable to do so in any language other than English. I see that as a diminution of services compared to what it used to be before.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Durham has two minutes to respond.

Mr O'Toole: The member for Timmins-James Bay certainly makes a point. That's what this public discussion is about: listening to concerns. The ultimate goal here is to make this work for the people of Ontario. Certainly there would be provisions in today's seven different acts that we mentioned. We're dealing with the issues that have been raised. When we're consolidating these into a new legislative framework, I'm confident that the issues that are brought forward both here in the House and in the public process will be dealt with. As I said, some 200 stakeholders and individuals have been consulted to date. There is a list of concerns and considerations. I have reviewed some of them. I'm certain the minister's staff and the ministry people who have actually drafted this in consultation are interested in hearing input as well.

I'm confident that as we discuss this very technical piece of legislation we will end up with a better legislative framework, a consolidated framework, that works for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I want to contribute to this debate perhaps in a more philosophical way than the previous, government member, who got trapped in the intricacies and details of the bill, as opposed to the philosophy which surrounds this piece of legislation. I should mention that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, if he is able to be with us and is out of the committee he's involved in at the present time.

The first thing I want to say is that this deals with important devices, such as amusement devices. They might be such things as you find in an amusement park: Ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds and those kinds of things. I know they're not going to have that kind of activity at the Grantham High School reunion, which is scheduled for the long weekend in May; that is, Friday, May 19 and Saturday, May 20. On Friday night people will be going to Governor Simcoe Secondary School, because the old Grantham High School will not be available, and will be partaking of the activities on that evening, including nostalgia rooms, which remind me of this Legislature from time to time. They will be there. On Saturday afternoon there will be a barbecue, and on Saturday night there will be a major get-together at the Garden City Arena, which is now called the Jack Gatecliff Arena, and the Rex Stimers Arena, which adjoin.

1700

So all who are watching the Legislature this afternoon should know that Grantham High School will be having that reunion on that occasion and that people can still sign up. It isn't too late to register, and for only \$30 you can do so. There are actually people who work on staff in this building and in other buildings who attended Grantham High School at one time and would want to make sure that they are going to take part in this particular reunion.

I know there was a Web site for it, because I was looking at the Web site a while ago, where people could contact those who would have further information on this event which is of such great importance. We have already over 1,000 people who have signed up for this event and they will be looking forward to it. I know all members of the Legislature will be telling people in their own ridings about the fact that this special event is taking place at the Grantham High School reunion.

Friday night, from 6 o'clock to midnight, there are nostalgia rooms. You can watch early videos of Grantham in the Grantham theatre. There's live entertainment, bands from the past. Complimentary food platters will be available. The next item I can't say; I think it would violate the Liquor Licence Act, because you can't advertise those things. Saturday the gym will be open at Governor Simcoe Secondary School for, it says, "fun and games." I don't know if that involves amusement devices. Saturday there will be a family barbecue from 12 noon to 2 pm, and Saturday at 2 pm a group photo. Saturday night will be the major dance and get-together. Your favourite beverages are available. I can't say what they are, but they will be available. I'm thinking, of course, of orange juice and various soft drinks. And a free shuttle from the lower-level parking lot.

So you can see this is a major event. This is how you can find out information. As you know, I'm very much into computers so I will tell you how you can get access. Here's what it says on the sheet: http://www.grantham-2000.com/ghs_cost.html. It's all in lower-case letters.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Was that a forward slash or a backward slash?

The Deputy Speaker: It's definitely forward.

Mr Bradley: It was a slash that went like this, for those who are watching, a diagonal dash. Anyway, I think it's going to be a great event and I hope nothing happens as a result of this bill, because there may be something happening there that should be under the auspices of this bill.

My concern about my philosophy on this—I know there's a fair difference between some of us on this side and some on the government side, but I happen to believe that you shouldn't put the fox in charge of the hen house. I prefer a government agency supervising that is detached from it, at some distance from these various groups and organizations that are carrying on activities. For instance, we used to have serious accidents once in a while at a midway, whether it was the CNE or somewhere else. I always thought the government should supervise that—or elevators that can have accidents as well. A government agency completely detached from the organization should be supervising.

This bill changes that and in essence puts Colonel Sanders in charge of the health and safety of the chickens, if you want to use that, so I find myself with some difficulty with the piece of legislation.

But it does mention amusement devices and that reminds me that some amusement devices are now found in racetracks. In fact, the government of Ontario was rushing headlong into 44 new charity casinos. I used to call them Mike Harris gambling halls but others, on the government side particularly, referred to them as charity casinos. There was a lot of opposition to them because people recognized that the people you were going to get at these charity casinos were not flying in from Vegas and they weren't flying in from New York City or London, England; they were going to be local folks who could be spending their money more productively to help the local economy, instead of spending the money on these slot machines.

The government, and perhaps there was some opposition even from government backbenchers, backed off the 44 new Mike Harris gambling halls, operating seven days a week, 24 hours a day, almost 365 days a year. We knew as well that ultimately this would lead to video lottery terminals, the crack-cocaine of gambling, in every bar and every restaurant on every street corner of every village, town and city in the province of Ontario. That was the ultimate goal when the government wanted to get its gambling funds. I well remember.

I want to tell you there are times when I've agreed with Premier Mike Harris and Treasurer Ernie Eves: during 1994 when they were talking about gambling. Our Premier—now the Premier, then the leader of the Conservative Party—said he didn't want to have anything to do with these gambling revenues. Mr Eves was very critical. I used to have the quotations so I could read word for word; I won't read them today.

They talked about the dangers of the expansion of gambling and yet we have seen, with this government in power, a Conservative government which is supposed to

be pro law and order and care about the family expanding gambling opportunities drastically in this province, wanting now to bring in the slot machines through the back door. They slammed the front door shut and said: "We're only going to have four of these new Mike Harris gambling halls, the charity casinos. There will have to be votes and a lot of rigamarole before you could possibly have one set up." So there was kind of a moratorium. But then the back door was pried open and now in so many of the racetracks you have these slot machines. The emphasis is no longer on the racing of horses and the kind of activities related to that, but rather people are sitting at slot machines just feeding the slot machines hours on end.

I notice in Fort Erie they don't call it the Fort Erie Race Track any more, they call it the Fort Erie Race Track/Slots. The real attraction is trying to get some local money in for that.

I happen to feel that's too easy money for government. If governments feel they can justify programs and projects, they should use the traditional methods of taxation to derive the funds, and if they can't be justified, they should not be expending those funds.

The government will say that we spend all kinds of money now on remedial programs, on treatment programs for addicts. We know that the people who often frequent these establishments are the most vulnerable and desperate people in our society, often addicted to gambling. We keep expanding those opportunities. That's what I worry about when I talk about the amusement devices, those video lottery terminals and the slot machines people may spend endless hours at.

I know as well that they have the machines you get money out of. What do you call those? ATMs. You can see that I am technologically advanced. You put a card in and out comes money. People are maxing these out, getting all the money they have, their maximum amount of money out and then blowing the money in the casino or in the slot machines they can find somewhere.

I really wonder how the family values crowd, those who claim to be a family values crowd in this House, can justify this happening and are not demanding of the Premier that he revert to his original opinion of principle in 1994 when he said he wanted nothing to do with funds that were derived from gambling.

I also see this bill deals with the Gasoline Handling Act, which is very convenient.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Gas prices going through the roof.

1710

Mr Bradley: As the member for Eglinton-Lawrence says, the gasoline prices just shot up to over 70 cents a litre today. He was under the opinion that the world oil price had come down and that somehow the prices of gasoline would come down, but they were over 70 cents. No doubt he, when he shares my time as well, will have something to say about that because he is the critic in this field.

I want to say to you as well that this government, speaking of gasoline handling, has a chance within its own jurisdiction to regulate the amount of sulphur in gas. The poor Minister of the Environment—and I'm sympathetic to him. The Former Minister of the Environment Club tends to be sympathetic to a minister. They dealt him the wrong cards. They dealt him all deuces this time, or jokers, because he got a significant cut in his budget once again. The Ministry of the Environment has had one third of its staff turfed out the door, no longer there to do the job. About 40% of the budget's been slashed, and he got another cut this time.

He had a strategy. The whiz kids either in his office or in the Premier's Office said: "You know what you should do? When in trouble, attack the feds." So he called a press conference way out in Etobicoke. I don't think he thought I would go out there—it's so far to go and we all know how bad the traffic is getting there. But I did anyway. I struggled out to Etobicoke to the Ministry of the Environment area, and I wouldn't say I crashed the press conference, but I was there available for comment just in case the media was interested in the other point of view.

The purpose of the press conference, I can tell you, was quite simple. It was to divert attention from the fact that he had just been kneecapped by the Treasurer. He'd just had his budget slashed once again. I would have gotten up in the House and commiserated with him for that, and I would have suggested to the Minister of the Environment that he submit his resignation, not based on incompetence or something like that but based on the fact he's insulted by the fact he had been cut. But let's get back to what it was about.

He said, "The federal government should get the sulphur in gas down to a much lower level sooner." Well, those of us who recall history, and very recent history, remember that a previous Minister of the Environment—not the member for Guelph—got into a discussion about sulphur in gasoline and was taking the side of the oil companies, the captains of the oil industry, side by side, shoulder by shoulder. Then at the very last minute, when he saw he lost the argument, he got out in front of the parade and demanded that it be reduced to 30 parts per million. You can have an average, and you cannot exceed 80 parts per million sulphur in gas. I pointed out to the people who were there, "You know, if he really feels strongly about this, the provincial government in fact has the power to regulate sulphur in gas." In British Columbia they do it. They regulate sulphur in gas in British Columbia. It's a provincial power if you want it, because where you regulate is at the pump.

As you would know, Mr Speaker, as a person who's knowledgeable in many areas, the volatile organic compounds, known as VOCs, are in fact regulated by the provincial government. That's the stuff that evaporates in the summer. If you have your car in a hard parking lot, you'll find that the gas will vaporize easily. You need catchment systems and you need a certain kind of gas so it won't vaporize as much. It's called the Reid vapour

pressure level that you're dealing with. I remember when I was the minister, we regulated that downward. The present government renewed that particular regulation, so again they have the power to do it.

So I say to the Minister of the Environment that it's no good simply to bark in the background; you have to actually bite. In other words, the dog can't just do a lot of barking and pretend he's interested in doing something. He's got to actually attack in this case. I think you would agree with me, being the fair-minded person that you are, that the Minister of the Environment of Ontario should simply announce that in the year 2002, no gasoline will be sold in this province that has over 30 parts per million sulphur on average, and it cannot exceed 80 parts per million at any time. That's what I see with this Gasoline Handling Act, what can be done there.

Irving Oil is moving quickly to this. I'll share with members of the House a little side story. I remember when the New England states said, "We want clean gas in the New England states because we have a problem with smog." They said to Irving Oil in New Brunswick, "You can't sell any gas to us unless it meets this qualification." So we had gas companies that were supplying the US market with clean gas and the Canadian market with dirtier gas because they bluffed certain governments on the Canadian side of the border into believing that the industry would collapse if they had to produce cleaner gasoline.

It's simply a matter of regulating it and being tough with the regulation and penalties, and I urge the minister to do that—in addition, of course, as you would agree, to requiring that if the Lakeview coal-fired generating plant is sold, one condition must be, and the member for Mississauga South would be in full agreement with me on this—

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): I've asked for it.

Mr Bradley: She has asked for it, as well as our good mutual friend Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga. She was out in the field. I saw her picture out there. She was demanding as well that it be converted to natural gas before it would be sold.

In addition to that, of course, we should have a massive investment in public transit so we can alleviate some of the pollution that's caused by all the vehicles that keep coming into the Metropolitan Toronto area day after day. It was a three-hour trip, I must say, from St Catharines today to Toronto, and one of the people appearing before our committee took a long time to come as well, two and a quarter hours from Burlington today.

The minister also has another response. He says, "I'm going to tell you when the smog is coming," and some of the newspapers actually printed that as though it was something great that you're going to know when the pollution is coming. Most people in Ontario said, "Would you do what we can in Ontario to get rid of the pollution?" and not engage in pollution credit trading, where you simply allow one set of polluters to pollute a lot and another set of polluters not to.

Hon Mrs Marland: Jim, you talked about trading emissions.

Mr Bradley: No, that wasn't trading emission at all.

Hon Mrs Marland: You did, though.

Mr Bradley: No. I tell you, they wanted that. You will recall that, with your help, ultimately they didn't have it. The member for Mississauga South, as critic for the Conservatives, was very helpful in committee, along with the Liberal and NDP members of the committee, in ensuring that the recommendation of the committee was that we not allow Ontario Hydro to get involved with what was called "banking." I've always thought very highly of the member for Mississauga South, not only for that reason, but that is one of the reasons. She was very much onside with that issue, I must say.

As I look at this bill, I am concerned, as I think many on this side are, that in fact we should not be turning responsibility for the regulation of certain industries over to those industries themselves. I think it's unfair to them. I think there's potentially a conflict of interest. I think that's a role government should play.

If there is funding required for it, and you people believe in user fees, then you might want to apply user fees to those who are benefiting from the government regulation in that particular case. We all know that user fees are taxes. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence and I have now counted 892 new or raised user fees since this government got into power. The Premier always said, and I agreed with him then, that a user fee is a tax. When I see 892—and perhaps I have missed some of them—that have been raised, we all know that is detrimental to people in this province, particularly at the lower end of the echelon, in terms of the amount of money they have.

I am pleased to have entered into the debate on this. I am sharing time with the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, the critic in this area, and I'm going to now turn the floor over to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, who will deal in some detail with this particular piece of legislation.

Mr Colle: It's always a pleasure to follow my esteemed colleague, the voice of the Garden City. He certainly is at his flowery best today, considering I hear the tulips are in full bloom all along the Niagara Escarpment and the Niagara Parkway. It's a wonderful place in this province to visit and it's not far from any major place. My favourite part of that area of the province is probably Port Dalhousie. It's a beautiful old port city to walk around, with beautiful old homes. We who live in Ontario should be mindful of the beautiful places we have very close to us here. We don't have to go to wherever they go, Aruba and those places. I think they should stay and visit Listowel and Stratford and St Thomas and those places. Anyway, it's a pleasure to follow my esteemed colleague from the Garden City.

1720

Bill 42 has been before this Legislature or in committee for over two years now. There has been a lot of work done on this bill and I think this is the second minister with whom I've worked on this bill. I note that at first blush people think this is nothing but technical

complexity that doesn't affect people. But I can assure you that bills like this do a lot of work behind the scenes to ensure there is enhanced safety in the province. Certainly in opposition we sometimes are very critical, and it's our job to be critical, about initiatives the government takes that we disagree with. We certainly point out the flaws and the faults.

In this bill we've gone through a process of trying to update rules and regulations that sometimes date back 30 or 40 years. So I certainly applaud the ministry and the two ministers. I dealt with Minister Tsubouchi and now Minister Runciman on this bill. I really commend all the work that's been done behind the scenes in putting this piece of legislation together. It is a process where all the stakeholders have been consulted thoroughly. The stakeholders are from a wide range of occupations and industries that affect Ontarians and their safety. That's what this bill is about, enhancing public safety by processes where participants in these industries can set up their own regulations, monitor themselves and improve and also license providers of these services.

I think it is a very positive partnership approach that the government has taken in enhancing safety in these areas. One of the areas that it deals with is amusement devices. As you know, cities and towns all across Ontario have fall fairs. We have the Central Canada Exhibition in Ottawa. We have the CNE down here in Toronto. That's typical of where there are amusement devices, roller coaster rides etc that require safety standards be met very stringently. This bill would help in establishing those benchmarks for that industry which could impact on the safety of a lot of children especially and people who ride amusement rides all across the province. It's much needed and it's something that is in place, and I think it is a very positive step.

Also, elevating devices are affected by this legislation. The organization that basically has the umbrella power to regulate and create these partnerships with government is the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. It's an innovative way of dealing with the complexity of very minute issues which don't seem to be important at first glance but are critical to handling very life-dependent devices. We're talking essentially about elevators. You can imagine how many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in this province take rides on elevators. This bill deals with standards in how to enhance and maintain safety in elevators in private apartment buildings, in commercial buildings and in public buildings.

We rely on and we almost think it's automatic to have safe elevators. You don't have safe elevators unless you have qualified, trained and licensed people to build the elevators and maintain them and keep them up to standard. This bill deals with a protocol to keep our elevators safe. You can't tell me that isn't important to a lot of Ontarians. That is why this bill is positive. It deals with this very important connection to people's safety.

There's also an area of this bill that deals with upholstered and stuffed articles. Some people say: "What does that mean? That's not important to me or my

family.” We have to realize how allergic people sometimes are to certain by-products that are in our furniture, in our sofas and couches etc. The one you’re sitting on, Mr Speaker, do you know what’s behind the leather you’re sitting on? You don’t. It sounds a bit humorous, but it ensures that the product that’s inside is not going to be hazardous to your health.

In the past they used to stuff some of the furniture, bed mattresses etc with some imported products that were hazardous to people’s health. It’s just an example of how it may be very minute in nature or very insignificant, something we as Ontarians take for granted, but there are people ensuring that this is up to safety standards that don’t endanger the health of Ontarians who sleep on mattresses or sit on couches. It sounds very mundane, but it is a safety issue. This bill deals with that also.

Another area is boilers and pressure vessels. Here we’re talking about heating plants for huge buildings: schools, churches, synagogues. They have to have certain codes of operation, inspection, licensing. This bill sets up a protocol which is very necessary to ensure that the highest standards are met for these devices we all rely on, for heating for instance, and on boats and vessels.

Operating engineers are people who run our heating plants and take care of the mechanical parts of buildings. They have to meet certain standards, according to this bill.

The handling of fuels: As you know, very serious accidents can occur. I can remember that in the city of York at one time we had a very serious explosion up on Weston Road because standards were not high enough at a propane gas station. This bill sets out rules and regulations, protocols for the handling of everything from natural gas to petroleum to propane.

These are some examples of why this bill has been over two years in the making. Some people will tell you that for over 10 years they’ve been trying to get this bill forward and updated. It is very technical, very complex, very mechanical in nature, deals with a lot of engineering aspects that the average member of the public doesn’t deal with.

Being a proponent of this bill, I am very much in support of the approach this bill takes. Our caucus is appreciative of the work done by all the stakeholders. We support this bill because we think it serves a public that requires the highest of safety standards. These are items that may not be in the front row as far as the public is concerned. They’re events and protocols that take place behind the scenes. We need this type of legislation. I think it deserves passage. It is a very positive bill with a lot of good partnerships being established and an innovative way of dealing with the stakeholders, the entrepreneurs and also the experts in these fields, who have put together a whole new series of standards that I think are very positive for Ontarians, who expect and demand safety and sometimes take it for granted. This bill does a lot of work that will ensure many lives are saved and a lot of injuries prevented.

This is preventive medicine. It’s a good investment in the time of the Legislature and a good investment for all of those who have put in the last two years of work on this bill, whether it be ministry staff or whether it be the stakeholders. I think it’s something very worthwhile and I encourage passage of this piece of legislation. It is a good bill that I hope will become law in the very near future.

Thank you very much for your patience, Mr Speaker.

1730

Hon Mrs Marland: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I think it’s very important for the House to recognize that the Attorney General’s family—his wife Christine and their three young boys, three young brothers who are in fact triplets—is visiting in the members’ gallery at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I won’t be long here this afternoon. I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Timmins-James Bay if he makes it back before I finish. He’s probably watching out there somewhere, keeping track of everything that’s going on in here, because that’s his style. He’s a guy who is always engaged. He may not be here but he’s engaged. He’s watching and participating.

Interjection: He’ll be here.

Mr Martin: And he’ll be here; any opportunity to get up and present his point of view, challenge the government in his own inimitable way on the things he feels very strongly and powerfully about.

Interjection: He’s always fair.

Mr Martin: He’s always fair, yes. He’s a fair-minded individual, and I will be sharing my time with him.

I just wanted to say right off the bat that our caucus and I will be supporting this bill, but in saying that I also want to share with the House that we still have some concerns, not necessarily about this bill but about the context within which this bill is happening. Also, I want to raise some things that were actually previously raised in 1996 when we in this House, on the recommendation of the standing committee on administration of justice, passed the original bill, the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act. It set up the Technical Standards and Safety Authority for the province, which hived off a piece of work that used to be done directly by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations in the interests of safety for the people of this province.

First of all, given where we are now with the establishment of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority and echoing the sentiment of the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, the critic for the Liberal Party on consumer and commercial relations, who spoke previous to me, the very good work and the amount of work that has been done since 1996 by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority—Mr Walter met with me on a couple of occasions to provide me with information and offered to set up meetings for me with people who might have some concern about the act we’re dealing with here today and

to be helpful in a myriad of different ways. I want him and the authority to know that I appreciate that. I always appreciate people helping me do my job effectively and helping me understand some of the challenges, the pros and cons of these very important pieces of legislation as they work their way through the system so that I can participate on behalf of the people of Ontario and on behalf of my own constituents, who certainly have a stake in this and need to know and be confident that whatever authority we set up, whatever legislation we put in place, that authority will then oversee and is in fact going to do the job.

It's with that in mind, however, that I raise again an issue that was raised during the discussions on the original bill that set up the authority. That was a concern that, given that this is now going to be at arm's length from government, the overseeing body, the board of directors, so to speak, of the authority is inclusive of all of the stakeholders who are to be affected by this, not just those who have a vested interest because they do the work or the work is being done on their behalf or they stand to benefit because a "thing," as they say in some of this legislation, provides some service for them in delivering the business that they are involved in, but also consumers and those who work in the industry are involved in overseeing and challenging and making decisions and improving and helping to evolve the management of this very important piece of work that the province ultimately, I feel, continues to hold responsibility for and should be held accountable for.

I reference some presentations that were made to the committee at that time by the Consumers' Association of Canada and the Consumers Council of Canada. They were supportive of movement of this sort, anything that would enhance safety where consumers are concerned. But they did raise a very serious concern, and I raise it again. I know that Mr Walter will understand when I say that in passing this legislation, which will consolidate a whole number of different statutes that are on the books now in the province of Ontario in the effort to make them more streamlined, make them more effective, make them such that they are more understandable and ultimately implementable, he continue to include, continue to discuss with, continue to involve, all of the stakeholders involved in this as time evolves. I am standing here today saying that our caucus will support this legislation with the sincere understanding that he will in fact do that. I believe that he was very sincere when he came to visit me in my office and shared with me some of the conversations and discussions that he'd already had and his commitment to doing that.

The other thing that concerns me that I think needs to be put on the record here today is the offhand way that this government continues to hive off that which it has responsibility for delivering. It takes in money from the people of Ontario in order to deliver certain programs and services to the people of Ontario, none of them any more important than protecting the safety of those who call Ontario home. For them to be continually, week after

week in this place, coming up with more and more ways of having less responsibility, of creating arm's-length organizations—I bring to your attention one by way of example: the Ontario Realty Corp, which has found itself in some degree of difficulty. I would hope that Mr Walter and those who are responsible at the Technical Standards and Safety Authority will take a lesson from what's going on there and do everything in their power to continue, as I know they are now, to make sure that everything they do is above-board.

We were convinced that while the overseeing of some of these statutes we're combining here today in this new bill was being done by the very professional, committed staff of the public service in Ontario, represented by OPSEU, we were fairly comfortable that in fact things were being looked after and that when we took an elevator we knew it was going to get us to where we were going, that the incidents of accidents and mishaps were minimal, and that our needs were being overseen in all of that.

I just put that out by way of caution and concern. We continue to be concerned about that, because this government continues down that road and we have here an authority of that nature that has been hived off and put out there to act at arm's length from government to deliver a service that is of utmost importance to all of us who use some of the devices referred to here that the member from Eglinton-Lawrence spoke about just a few minutes ago and that we need to continue to pay attention to.

1740

The other piece of this that concerns me: It's the last piece and then I'll turn it over to my colleague from Timmins-James Bay because he has a concern as well, and it's a very legitimate concern, one the authority needs to take a serious look at. Having heard from the member very clearly, and having had the privilege of having a look at some of the communication that went back and forth, and we'll hear again today as he puts it on the table in this place, I'm confident that they will act in a positive way, respond and make sure it is dealt with. I don't think it's something that will get in the way of us here this afternoon, though, supporting and voting for this piece of legislation as it moves forward, because it's very important, given where we are, that we now give the authority the tools they need to actually get out there and do the job in a professional, effective and safe way.

The other thing that concerns me is the funding—always the funding. This government is very good at giving tax breaks that accrue mostly to those who are most well off. I don't say that in any really critical way. I just say it because it's the way it is; it's the truth. We have in this province what we refer to as a progressive taxation system, which means the more you make, the more taxes you pay. When you hear about tax breaks, it concurrently means the more you make, the more tax break you get, particularly if you speak of that tax break by way of percentages, because as you know, 10% of \$20,000 is a lot less than 10% of \$100,000.

This government continues to give the money we all contribute by way of tax into the centre to pay for such things as the oversight of some of the technical devices we use in our day-to-day lives in this province. There's less and less of that money available now because the government keeps giving it away, keeps giving it back by way of tax breaks, and it's not there. I'm concerned that the authority find a way to convince the government, given the kind of money they need or given the right in the bill of 1996, to let them become self-sustaining. I'm hoping they will.

Again I speak of Mr Walter as a person with great skill and ability. I'm hoping he'll find a way to make sure this authority continues to be funded in a way that gives us all some confidence they will be able to afford the kind of personnel that will be required to go out there and do the inspections, write up the reports and make sure the proper authorities are contacted when that is necessary, so that we can all sleep well at night, knowing that we are safe, that these devices are safe and that when we go and take an elevator, spend a weekend at Canada's Wonderland or buy toys for our children, those things are being overseen by people who are professionals, who are being paid accordingly, who have the time to do their job and that there are enough of them to do the full job that is required.

I'll turn it over now to my colleague from Timmins-James Bay who has a few things to put on the record. Then I believe we're going to be moving to a vote on this and we will be supportive.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) : je vais avoir la chance d'expliquer un peu une difficulté qu'on a eue avec ce projet de loi quand le gouvernement a transféré la responsabilité pour l'établissement des certificats à la TSSA. J'ai été contacté la première fois depuis l'automne passé par un M. André Rhéaume, qui est responsable de certains programmes d'apprentissage qui ont lieu au Collège Boréal de Hearst. Comme vous le savez, la communauté de Hearst, qui est dans mon comté, a non seulement le Collège Boréal, mais aussi le Collège universitaire de Hearst qui est établi là-bas. Comme on le sait à Hearst, 99 % du monde dans cette communauté sont francophones qui demeurent en français, qui travaillent en français et qui font leur vie quotidienne en français dans la région. L'industrie primaire dans le coin est la foresterie : Columbia Forest Products, Tembec, Lecours Lumber, et autres dans les lieux qui sont des entreprises assez grandes dans le sens qu'elles emploient jusqu'à 300, 400 personnes par moulin.

Le langage—c'est le point que je veux faire—de la communauté de cette région est le français. Cela veut dire que c'est non seulement à la maison qu'on parle français mais aussi quand on s'en va à l'école, finalement quand on va au secondaire, quand on fait le collège, l'université, et éventuellement quand on arrive au marché du travail le langage du travail est le français. Un problème qu'on a vu à travers ce projet de loi, c'est que les francophones dans la région de Hearst, comme les autres francophones soit à Sault Ste Marie ou à Toronto

ou n'importe où, à Prescott-Russell ou à Ottawa, quand ils allaient écrire leur examen—

Une voix.

M. Bisson : Ottawa est un petit village droit à côté de Nepean. Il m'a demandé où c'est. On rit un peu des fois à l'Assemblée.

Pour revenir au débat, on a trouvé une solution. J'ai été contacté la première fois par M. André Rhéaume du Collège Boréal, je pense, l'automne passé. Il m'a dit qu'il avait un apprenti qui a pris le programme je crois des « boilermakers », « stationary engineer »—je ne me rappelle pas le terme français au juste. Il avait pris son programme, il avait fait l'apprentissage, il avait fait toutes les études nécessaires au Collège Boréal et il était prêt à écrire son examen.

Le monsieur ne parle pas l'anglais. C'est son choix. On peut demeurer en français en Ontario. On n'a pas besoin d'apprendre l'anglais si on ne veut pas. Quand il était là pour écrire l'examen avec la TSSA, qui est l'agence privée responsable de tenir les examens, ils ont refusé de donner l'examen en français.

On m'a contacté en tant que député local, nous avons contacté la TSSA, on a fait des recherches et on s'est fait dire qu'il n'y a pas l'obligation, à travers ce projet de loi, de donner l'examen en français. À partir de ce point-là avec M. Rhéaume et avec le personnel dans mon bureau de comté, on a commencé à faire des démarches pour savoir comment ça avait changé depuis le temps que le ministère, eux, avaient la responsabilité de donner ces examens et que la TSSA a pris la responsabilité. Qu'est-ce qui est différent ?

Des employés du ministère provincial, qui sont responsables de l'entretien du système de certification, m'ont dit que si un francophone rentrait au bureau pour écrire son examen, lui ou elle avait toujours le droit de faire ça en français. Si l'examen n'était pas disponible, le ministère ferait une de trois choses : premièrement, il donnerait l'occasion d'avoir quelqu'un qui pourrait vous lire les questions en anglais, les traduire en français, et vous pourriez écrire vos réponses ; ou il s'organiserait pour s'assurer d'avoir, pour un examen donné en français, si vous voulez revenir sur un point, la chance dans le ministère d'en faire la traduction. C'est ce qu'on m'a dit à beaucoup de reprises quand j'ai parlé à de différentes personnes qui avaient travaillé pour le ministère des années avant la TSSA.

On a recontacté la TSSA ici à Toronto. Je n'ai pas la lettre avec moi, mais les lettres que j'ai reçues m'ont confirmé qu'eux ne voulaient pas donner le service en français, et qu'ils voyaient qu'ils n'avaient pas l'obligation de le faire.

Un amendement que je voudrais voir au projet de loi, une fois en comité, c'est un amendement qui assure que les francophones allant écrire leur examen vont avoir le droit premièrement d'être capables de l'écrire en français, et si l'examen n'est pas disponible, qu'on aide à en écrire un, mais pas une traduction. Ce n'est pas la même affaire, ça, comme on le sait bien. C'est tout un autre débat. Un examen en français ou, le moindre des moins,

que quelqu'un s'assiera là pour lire la question en anglais et en fera la traduction pour que la personne puisse écrire l'examen pour avoir la certification. C'est une demande que je fais.

As well, we have found through this particular experience that Ontario is a multicultural society. Not everybody within the province has English skills to the degree that they're able to go in and write an exam in English. Many new Canadians who are tradespeople from different parts of the world, as there are members of this assembly who have come from different parts of the world, got their certification in their home country. When they come to Ontario by way of immigration and want to be able to go out and write the exam, they have been barred from doing so by the TSSA. There was a provision, when the Ministry of Skills Development used to run the certification programs for things like pressure vessel people, stationary engineers 1 through 5, people who did pressure welding, all those types of certifications. If you wanted to write your exam and your English was maybe OK but not good enough to read and write, but you were stronger in Italian because that was your mother tongue, you were able to ask that somebody come in and translate the questions so that you properly understood the question so that you could write the exam and write the answers in a way that reflected your understanding of the question. So it didn't matter if you were Italian; it didn't matter what language you were speaking coming in; you had the right to request an interpreter to at least interpret the English exam in your own tongue so that you were able to write the exam and get your Ontario certification. That is what the provincial government used to provide. Now with the TSSA, as is my understanding from the research that we did, you are no longer able to do that. I think that's a disservice.

There's a whole issue, especially here in the Toronto area and, I would argue, in the Ottawa region, as well as Windsor, Hamilton, many southern Ontario communities, where the reality is that we are a multicultural society that has people from all over the world who emigrate here, and they have skills when they come here. I don't think we should be barring new Canadians entry into some of the skilled professions on the basis of them not being able to understand the written questions being asked when they go to write their trade certification. So one of the other issues we have to take a look at is not only the services for French-speaking individuals who live in Ontario but also for others who are trying to write their trade certifications who are able to read and speak

English OK but not well enough, quite frankly, to understand the questions in a way that would allow them to get a passing grade. I look forward to this bill going to committee so that we're able to raise those two particular issues and hopefully find ways of forcing the TSSA to do the right thing and provide that type of training.

The last point I'm going to make, and only for 30 seconds, is I don't like the idea of what the government has done here with the TSSA. I would much rather have seen those services stay within the confines of the provincial government. I believe the provincial government has a responsibility to provide services to its citizens. I believe sincerely that government can do that better than the private sector and what I have demonstrated just now by way of this debate is an example of just how often the private sector doesn't get it right when it comes to providing many services that are better given by the public sector. I would much rather have seen this stay within the public purview.

With that, I would like thank you for this opportunity to raise those points.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? Further debate? Mr O'Toole has an opportunity to rebut.

Hon Mrs Marland: Did you think I was doing a two-minute rebuttal?

The Deputy Speaker: No, I thought you were just standing up to take another picture.

Mr O'Toole has moved second reading of Bill 42. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The motion is carried.

The bill will be referred for third reading.

Hon Mrs Marland: I would ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: So be it.

Hon Mrs Marland: Is there a call for orders of the day? I was going to move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: No, there isn't. I'm going to adjourn. It being almost 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Interjection: No, 6:45.

The Deputy Speaker: Oh, I'm sorry, 6:45 tonight. I won't be here, but 6:45 tonight for the rest of you guys.

The House adjourned at 1755.

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