



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

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de l'Ontario**

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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 16 May 2000

Mardi 16 mai 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 May 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 mai 2000

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have a point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 96(d).

On December 22, 1999, I asked the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology to provide a full accounting of the mitigation package relating to the "Patten Post" component of the Elliot Lake uranium mine closure. As members of the House would know, the NDP government of Bob Rae broke its solemn commitment to the uranium miners of Elliot Lake and the North Shore, which was to purchase 100% of the uranium from that community. This action resulted in the layoff of 4,000 miners and many others indirectly.

To meet the economic challenge of getting the major industry on the North Shore, the government by order in council required Hydro to do certain things. The obligations have not been discharged. The "Patten Post" hydro project component of the order in council was not built and apparently is not to be built. This action or inaction triggers a compensation package within that agreement.

In December, I asked for a full accounting of this component of the package. The minister has had five months to answer my question. It is a matter, Mr Speaker, of an accountant looking at the books of Ontario Hydro and of the Ministry of Energy, both of which, you would know, have filed their final statements for that year.

It is unacceptable to have an answer not provided to a member of this Legislature, under the standing order, within five months. Mr Speaker, I would ask you to instruct the government, to instruct the Minister of Energy, to reply to this. The fact that he says he will reply on June 22 of this year just means I will have no opportunity to ask him a question about it because, as you know, we won't be back until this fall. Mr Speaker, I need your help.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just very quickly, I didn't catch whether that was a written question under our standing orders. It was a written part of it? I didn't know if it was an oral question.

Mr Brown: No.

The Speaker: I thank the member. What we are going to do is check and confirm the facts as he told us. As the member knows, under section 97, "The minister shall

answer such written questions within 24 sitting days." We will check when the question was asked and obviously see if it was followed through. I thank the member for raising the point of order.

Mr Brown: May I point out, Mr Speaker, the ministry on the last day provided an answer which said they would not respond to this question until June 22. I would submit to you they have this information. It's not difficult. That puts me in the position of not being able to ask the minister a reasonable question based on the information that they were to provide.

The Speaker: That's very helpful additional information. I thank the member for the point of order. I will reserve.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PELEE ISLAND FERRY SERVICE

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): The residents and businesses on Pelee Island, the most southerly point of Canada, are a hardy group. Throughout the winter, from December till March, the only connection they have with the mainland, and access to it, is through an air service. From that point on, the Pelee Island ferry service is their lifeline.

What started out as a minor inconvenience has turned out to be an economic disaster. It is now 19 days that the Pelee Island ferry service has been interrupted by a labour dispute. A couple of years ago, when I chaired a committee that looked into the operation of the Pelee Island ferry with the objective of having the municipalities run the ferry service, the Minister of Transportation of the day, Mr Clement, said that the province would continue to be responsible for the operation of that service.

It has now been interrupted and, as I said, an economic disaster is looming. The Minister of Transportation, through a government agency, the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, has the responsibility to get this ferry back in operation. I plead for the Minister of Transportation to take leadership on this issue and do so.

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I take great pleasure to acknowledge the presence of some very special visitors in the gallery today. They are David

Barber, president, and Keith Powell, executive director of the Ontario Association for Living; June Chiu, president, Agnes Samler, executive director, and Cay Shedden of the Toronto Association for Community Living—Cay is also a constituent of mine and a great friend; Nancy Wallace-Gero, executive director of the Essex County Association for Community Living; Marty Graf, executive director of the Tillsonburg and District Association for Community Living; and Sandy Keshen, executive director of REENA. They are also joined by Donna Britten, and Jesse Flis, a former member of Parliament.

In honour of our visitors, I want to advise members of the government's latest efforts to support people with developmental disabilities in this province. My colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services provided an additional \$50 million this year in resources to provide services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. This \$50 million includes \$30 million in new supports and services.

Again I want to recognize the wonderful people who have assisted us with this program in the gallery today.

1340

MANITOULIN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Mr Speaker, I rise to ask yourself and all members of this Legislature to join me in saluting Mr Rob Cassibo, who is a teacher and the head of the science department at Manitoulin Secondary School. Mr Cassibo is a tireless, enthusiastic volunteer who has inspired students both inside and outside the classroom to science education.

This year, Manitoulin Secondary School will be representing Ontario and Canada at the International Science Olympiad at Spokane, Washington, on May 19. In recent days, the students of MSS teams won big at the Provincial Science Olympiad. Two teams of 10 students each from a very small high school in northern Ontario, on Manitoulin Island, won gold and won bronze. They will be going on this adventure almost as we speak. The students have worked very hard.

I'd just like to quote Mr Cassibo when he was asked if there was some problem getting the students to work hard. He explained that there was no problem at all in finding kids who are willing to stay at school until 11:00 on Friday night and then be back for 11 o'clock on Saturday morning and work for another 10 hours. "All we have to do is unlock the door and the kids will show up," said Mr Cassibo.

I salute Mr Cassibo and those students at MSS.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): About 20 months ago, police constable William Hancox was murdered while on surveillance detail at a shopping plaza in Scarborough. The two women who were convicted of this cruel and cowardly act were sentenced to 18 and 16

years respectively at a medium-security correctional facility. Since that time, it has been learned that these two lovers have been living together in jail. What a slap in the face to all victims of crime. Mrs Hancox has lost her partner; her children have lost a father. The killers, however, were allowed to stay together in a nice bungalow, the correctional facility for women in Quebec nicknamed Club Fed. How can a criminal be rehabilitated when they're in the lap of luxury?

When the federal government talks about reforming its prisons, it talks about removing razor wire and guards' firearms, having community kitchens and giving inmates keys to their cells, basically making prisons more comfortable for criminals.

I understand that the two have now been separated, thanks partly to Minister Sampson embarrassing the federal corrections into making changes. That is why I'm proud to be part of a government that understands that prison reform is not about making jails more comfortable but about reducing the return-to-crime rate. Our government is committed to ensuring that criminals pay for the crimes they have committed.

I wish that certain federal government members would realize that there are serious problems in the federal corrections system and quit fearmongering the citizens of Ontario, who are having their system reviewed by a minister who is seeking a corrections system that stresses public safety, security and efficiency, and one that produces results.

VOLUNTEER CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today pertains to this government's lack of support for children's aid society volunteers. One of the lifelines of our society has been the willingness of volunteers to come forward and assist those in need. For many years now, volunteers have worked with our children's aid societies by driving children to appointments, visits or hospitals. They serve as a pillar of support during what are very trying times for these children. To help defray the cost of gasoline and wear and tear on their cars, the agencies have been able to provide them with a small mileage allowance. This recognizes that volunteers should not be out of pocket while assisting this government in serving the needs of their children.

This small financial support is now at risk. The Minister of Community and Social Services implemented a new funding formula for children's aid societies which reduces the funding for volunteer car mileage to zero, zip or nil. These people give of their time day after day to support our most vulnerable citizens. At the very time when greedy oil companies have substantially increased their prices, this government puts volunteerism at risk.

I call upon the minister to revisit this decision. Surely the cost of the Premier's new airplane is not being subsidized by the volunteers of this province. We owe it to our children to ensure that help for them is available.

CULTURAL CLUBS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Ethnic cultural service clubs are a part of the heart and soul of each and every one of our ridings and communities, but they've come under attack by this government by virtue of their reclassification in terms of taxation as commercial, in contrast to the historical residential status they've had. The regulation hasn't changed. The regulation still indicates that land owned and occupied by a non-profit service organization shall be classified as residential and taxed accordingly.

However, this government's interpretive memo specifically excludes cultural clubs, notwithstanding that they're non-profit. That means that organizations like the Canadian Polish Society, Club Roma, both in St Catharines, the Slovak Hall, the Croatian National Home, Club Sociale—the list could go on and on—are at risk of being literally euthanized by this government because of the huge 200% and 300% property tax increases imposed on them.

It's not enough for the minister to tell communities that communities should, piecemeal, provide tax rebates. It's important that this government understand that with a mere stroke of the pen—no regulatory amendments, merely revising and correcting its interpretive memo—it can permit these halls to survive. It's time for this government to do precisely that.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Last month I had the privilege of attending the official opening of Kate S. Durdan Public School. Last week, Mr Ted Salci, a local community leader, attended the official opening of Loretto Catholic School on my behalf. The common thread between these two schools is that both boards share the same building and facilities. At a time when many changes are being made to the Ontario education system, it is impressive to see a partnership like this in action.

As I walked down the halls and met with students and staff at the Durdan opening, I could recognize and sense their admiration and fondness for their new home. I would like to commend the hard work and co-operation of both Loretto principal Sherry Shuttler and Durdan principal Sandra Stevenson and their teachers. This partnership is the first of its kind in the Niagara region, and I am proud to speak of it today in the House.

Both halves of the new facility were named after outstanding women. Loretto was named after the Loretto Sisters, an order of sisters in Niagara Falls that taught Catholic girls at the Loretto Academy. Durdan is named after Ontario's first principal, Kate Sarah Durdan of Maple Street School in Niagara Falls.

Once again, congratulations to all of those who participated in the creation of the new building. I am confident that continued success will prevail from this partnership and that the students of both Durdan and

Loretto will leave positive marks on their new schools which will last for years to come.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today in Sudbury health officials are meeting with northern hospital representatives in the hopes of avoiding a health care crisis in our area. We can avoid the crisis if the Minister of Health stops the rhetoric and starts listening to the solutions.

The answer is not the new contract negotiated with the doctors. In fact, the new agreement does nothing for the geographical maldistribution problems we have in northern Ontario. If anything, it makes the problems worse. The region of northern Ontario is 400 doctors short. We have a critical need for 250 specialists in all disciplines. We have a shortage of roughly 150 family physicians. In Sudbury alone we are short 50 to 60 doctors, which means 18,000 people do not have access to a family physician and now will have to go to southern Ontario for specialist care.

The solution in the short term is relatively easy. It is found in the document called From Crisis to Stability. This northern solution will work.

My question to the Minister of Health is, will the minister commit today not only to sending her staff but also to sending the necessary money to implement our northern solution? Minister, you have caused the crisis. Our northern doctors have provided the stability. Northerners want to move from your crisis to our stability. Will the minister listen to the northern doctors and provide the necessary resources to achieve stability? Northerners await your answer.

POLICE WEEK

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): To help mark Police Week in Ontario, I'd like to inform my colleagues about the safety fair I attended recently at the Lions Community Centre in the village of Thorndale. Organized by the West Nissouri Policing Committee and the OPP, the safety fair helped to increase awareness and recognition of local policing and fire services. It was also an opportunity for local residents to get first-hand information about the different types of crime that are occurring and to learn more about crime prevention initiatives. Local residents also had a chance to witness OPP Breathalyzer tests and demonstrations by the West Nissouri volunteer fire department.

There were a number of groups that helped to make the safety fair a great success, including Neighbourhood Watch, victims services, and the farm safety association. I'd like to applaud the efforts of Ray Chowen, chair of the West Nissouri Policing Committee, for his leadership. I'd also like to recognize the Thorndale Lions and Optimist clubs, Oxford Mutual, Blanchard Mutual and Middlesex Mutual, all of whom helped support the safety fair.

The safety fair demonstrated the value of bringing citizens, the police and firefighters together to help convey the importance of being proactive when it comes to crime prevention and community safety. Please join me in recognizing the West Nissouri Policing Committee for their efforts in promoting safer streets and safer communities.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Today in the Speaker's gallery we have Mr François Beaulne, who is the member of the National Assembly for Marguerite-D'youville. Would the members join in welcoming our friend from Quebec.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

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): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour 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 1352 to 1357.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Palladini, Al
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Eves, Ernie L.	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Flaherty, Jim	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wood, Bob

Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John	
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Lankin, Frances
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Smitherman, George
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 49; the nays are 34.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday, May 1, 2000, the bill is ordered for third reading.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Before we begin, in the Speaker's gallery today we have the present regional chair of Ottawa-Carleton, the former MPP Bob Chiarelli, and the members of the Ottawa delegation, including, I believe, the mayor of Gloucester, Claudette Cain. Would all the members join in welcoming our former member.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CERTIFIED GENERAL ACCOUNTANTS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO ACT, 2000

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

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

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

Pursuant to standing order 84, the bill is referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

MINISTERIAL TRAVEL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2000 LOI DE 2000 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE RENDRE COMPTE DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel / Projet de loi 77, Loi concernant l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels.

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

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The member for a short statement.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I’m happy to see that 23 ministers are in the chamber today. I’m sure they all support this. This bill requires members of the executive council of Ontario to submit to the Legislative Assembly or the Clerk of the assembly information relating to any travel by the member on government business to areas outside the province. The information must be submitted within 60 days of the member’s return from outside the province.

The information that shall be submitted is a written summary of the purpose of the travel and of any accomplishments resulting from the travel, including a listing of the benefits and terms of tangible investments and employment opportunities that the travel will bring to Ontario, and a detailed statement of all expenses incurred by the member as well as by any staff accompanying the member. In fact, it is a code of conduct for cabinet ministers. If enacted, it would avoid the scandals which are presently found in the ORC.

TILBURY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL ACT (WILLIAM J. MILLER TRUST), 2000

Mr Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr18, An Act respecting the Tilbury Area Public School and the William J. Miller Trust.

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

Pursuant to standing order 86(a), this bill is referred to the Commissioners of Estate Bills.

Motions?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: When you’re into motions, I have a unanimous consent I’d like to request of members of the government and the House. That is that we proceed with the second and third reading of Bill 16, An Act respecting the price of gasoline.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I’m afraid I heard some noes.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POLICE WEEK SEMAINE DE LA POLICE

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Solicitor General): Today I am honoured to mark the celebration of Police Week 2000. I invite all members of the House to join with me in recognizing the contribution of our police

officers and police services in this province. Police Week is an opportunity for us to say that we care about the men and the women who continue to risk their lives every day to make Ontario one of the safest places to live, work, and raise your family.

We recently honoured our fallen officers by creating the Ontario Police Memorial here at Queen’s Park. I’m happy to say that many of us in this chamber were present at that ceremony. As the Premier and I sat there and looked back at the crowd, we were able to see the faces of the families, wives and children who have lost their loved ones who had served in the service of this province, sometimes 15 or 20 years ago. But as I looked back and saw these families crying and weeping to see that their loved ones had finally been honoured, I knew that this memorial was a very worthwhile thing for all of us to have supported. The people who were there had personal memories of all the brave officers who are listed on the memorial. These are our heroes. These are the people who gave their lives in the line of duty.

Recognizing Police Week is yet another way of saying we will remember, but Police Week will also honour today’s heroes, the police officers who put their lives at risk every day to protect all of us. Police Week is a time to stop and think about the people who make our lives safe. It’s a time to think about the men and women who make it safe for us to drive home to our families every night. It’s a time to think about the men and women who protect our seniors—our parents—from scam artists. It’s a time to think about the men and women who keep our children safe from sexual predators. Police Week sends a clear message of appreciation to police officers across this province. They need to know that we all care. Colleagues, I know you all care.

This year, Police Week runs from May 14 to May 20. I urge all Ontarians to take advantage of the many special police events and open houses in their own communities. Go out and visit your local police service. Go and meet and talk to the men and women who help make this province safe. This is an opportunity for the public to understand how they can work with the police community, truly work together and truly make this province safe. This is our chance to show that both the people and the government of Ontario appreciate what the Ontario Provincial Police and all the local police services across this province are doing to make our streets and communities safer places to live, work and raise our families.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Yesterday when the member for Brant, our critic for the Solicitor General, introduced Police Week in the Legislature, he said the following: “To the women and men of our police service, we say thank you. Thank you for the job you do day in and day out. You are appreciated and respected.

“To the families, loved ones and friends of our police officers, we say thank you. Thank you for sharing these noble women and men with us. Thank you for your patience and understanding about the career path they followed.

“To the community partners that help our police service and make their jobs just a little easier to do, we say thank you.”

Certainly I am happy to support the Solicitor General, the government, the third party and my own caucus in acknowledging the excellent work our police officers do across the province of Ontario and the country of Canada.

1410

One of the greatest honours and privileges I had as a municipal councillor in Sudbury was to serve as a police services board member. I remember only too well hiring these young, excited officers, these young men and women who were going to serve and protect. I also regret to say that I remember with much sadness the pain of acknowledging the death of Constable Joe MacDonald and Sergeant Rick McDonald from Sudbury, who were killed in the line of duty.

I support this government's initiative in following the federal government's lead in a police memorial, and I acknowledge that the people in my city and region, the city and region of Sudbury, are setting up a memorial for our fallen officers within the region of Sudbury. It is going to be called the Wall of Memories, and it will acknowledge and place in time the fine history of the eight officers who were killed in the city of Sudbury.

But there is much more work to do on all sides of the House, and I plead with the Solicitor General and this government to ensure that there are adequate numbers of police officers across Ontario: in rural areas, in northern Ontario and certainly in southern, eastern and western Ontario.

I plead with the Solicitor General to listen to the northern police services, which are asking for a northern academy of policing to be situated at the Trillium centre in the region of Sudbury. I would suggest to you that our positive responses to those types of initiatives will indeed show that everyone in this House is certainly in favour of policing and supporting our police officers.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) : Aujourd'hui, c'est un honneur pour moi et mes collègues de l'Assemblée de souligner la Semaine de la police de l'an 2000. J'invite tous les députés à s'unir pour reconnaître la contribution de nos agents de la police et des services policiers de cette province.

La Semaine de la police nous donne une autre occasion de démontrer que nous nous sentons concernés par les hommes et femmes qui continuent de risquer leur vie chaque jour pour faire de l'Ontario l'un des endroits les plus sûrs pour vivre, travailler et élever une famille.

La reconnaissance de la Semaine de la police est une autre façon de dire que nous n'oublierons jamais le travail de nos agents de la paix. Cependant, la Semaine de la police rend honneur aux héros d'aujourd'hui—les agents de police qui chaque jour risquent leur vie pour nous protéger.

La Semaine de la police exprimera clairement l'appréciation des agents de police partout dans la

province. Ils ont besoin de savoir que les gens se sentent concernés.

Voici une chance de démontrer que la population de l'Ontario apprécie ce que les services policiers et la Police provinciale de l'Ontario font pour rendre nos rues, nos collectivités et la province dans son entier un endroit où il fait bon vivre.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I am honoured to be able to mark the celebration of Police Week. I want to invite citizens in local communities across Ontario to attend community events and open houses to mark the celebration of Police Week.

This gives us an opportunity to say thank you to those women and men who work very hard and make sacrifices to contribute to the safety of our community, the security of our community and the safety and security of all of us. It's also an opportunity to create greater understanding of the work our police services do on our behalf.

So I invite not only members of the Legislature, but citizens from across Ontario to take part in the open houses and the community events to mark this important Police Week.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): In my own riding and on behalf of the NDP caucus here at Queen's park, I'm pleased to join with the Solicitor General and all the members of this Legislature as we celebrate together, as people in positions of leadership and, yes, responsibility, the role that police officers, women and men—I tell you, in Niagara we're policed by the RCMP, by the Ontario Provincial Police, by the Niagara Regional Police Service and by the Niagara Parks Police. I know so many of these people and I've known so many who are now retired or who have, yes, left us under circumstances that the Solicitor General refers to and that the memorial here just across the road from Queen's Park commemorates.

These same women and men who serve us and serve our communities are also the same people who are involved in Big Brothers and Big Sisters and in minor hockey and in fundraising events and activities in their communities. They're the police officers who come to our aid when we're in crisis or under attack. They're the police officers who secure the safety of our communities, of our streets and of our neighbourhoods. They're also our neighbours and our friends and our colleagues in any number of activities throughout the community.

I put this to the Solicitor General—and I join with him today in a very non-partisan way—we have incredibly high expectations of our police in this province and across this country, and we, as representatives here at the provincial Legislature and as leaders in our communities, have a responsibility to ensure that our police officers have the tools and resources to do the job that we call upon them to do on a daily basis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Is policing expensive? Of course it's expensive, because we in Ontario enjoy the best trained police officers this province has ever witnessed. We enjoy and are privileged to have not only the best trained but the

most committed and most professional police officers. We also have police officers working in a milieu where the demands and the challenges for police and policing have never been higher.

Please, Solicitor General, let's join together as well in ensuring that our police forces are adequately resourced in terms of staffing. I understand what the government has announced over the course of the last three and four years. But please, I put to you that police forces across this province still remain understaffed and therefore incapable of doing the job that those police services, those police officers want to do for their communities, for the families in those communities and for the neighbourhoods of those communities.

Let's make sure that our police officers have the physical tools. Again, does that cost money? I understand that. Our job is to explain to people in our communities that as taxpayers they can have whatever level of policing they want. But if they want the highest level of policing, and if we're going to give our cops the tools to do their job safely and effectively, and if we're going to build even safer communities, we've got to be prepared, as taxpayers, as members of those communities, to invest in our police services, to invest in our communities, to assist those police officers in doing the job that I am convinced, that I know, they very much want to do.

I look forward to visiting my local police station. Of course, with option four down in Niagara, it costs me 60 bucks a pop. You understand that, don't you, Solicitor General? But at the same time, I encourage all of our community members to co-operate and participate in policing activities during this coming week.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, in the Speaker's gallery today I am pleased to welcome Mr Jesse Flis, the former member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park, who is here with members of the Association for Community Living.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday marked the beginning of Community Living Week. Today the Ontario Association for Community Living held a press conference outlining issues important to them. I realize that this is short notice, but in view of the fact that there are many people here from the Association for Community Living, I would ask for unanimous consent for an all-party statement to acknowledge their hard work and commitment and to outline the concerns that those people brought forward today.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

I take it the member will lead off and all three parties will go in order.

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): I appreciate this opportunity, as I'm sure the many people

who came down today appreciate it. I understand that it was short notice, and I appreciate everybody agreeing to this today.

As I said, the Ontario Association for Community Living held a press conference this morning. I'm going to outline a few of the things they talked about this morning at that press conference.

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They called for a non-partisan commitment toward the community living vision that people with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to live in a state of dignity and share in all elements of living in the community. I cannot tell you how important this is to people.

They also mentioned that the provincial government's recent announcement of \$50 million in additional funding addresses some key issues where there are gaps in support, and they are very appreciative of that \$50 million. Of course, to none of our surprise, they say much more needs to be done to support the developmentally disabled. Thousands of families have raised children with developmental disabilities without much, if any, government funding. Now they are worried their adult children will have few options when their parents can no longer provide for them.

Three parents spoke eloquently about the situation they face and the help they need from government to afford the kinds of support their adult children will need as their parents age. There are more than 1,200 people currently housed in institutions, all of whom are able to live in the community and should have the opportunity. We need government support to do this.

Service agencies are struggling to deal with increasing demand for services to absorb new administrative costs and to attract and keep quality front-line workers. As I outlined in my member's statement yesterday, wages are 25% lower than they are for workers in similar sectors. These wages absolutely have to increase in order to keep the good staff they have now, as well as maintain affordable training costs, because training costs are very high, with the staff turnover, and we have to put a stop to that. One parent said this crisis will last for 20 years, as baby-boom adult children living with developmental disabilities experience the aging of their parents.

Today's parents are the first generation of parents to patriate their developmentally disabled children into the community and keep their children at home. This is a generation that has seldom asked the government for anything, and now they need our help. One parent said, "I would like to know what happens to my daughter if something happens to me." I believe she expressed the sentiments of all the parents who are with us today and of those who aren't.

Funding for these basic needs should not be dependent on the goodwill of the government of the day. They called this morning—and I echo the recommendation—that a single allocation of money is not the answer. They recommended, and I recommend, creation of a permanent planning body that will look ahead into the needs of the developmentally disabled.

In closing, I certainly do not stand today to turn this into a partisan issue. I think we would all agree that the workers who work with the developmentally delayed and their parents have done a tremendous job, mostly on their own, the workers with low pay. We're reaching a crisis now, because as the parents age, they're worried about their children. I think we should all try to work together to fulfill the recommendations that were put forward today. On behalf of my caucus, I would like to say thank you very much for all the wonderful work you have done and for coming down today to share your thoughts with us.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I, like my colleague from Broadview-Greenwood, would like to take the opportunity to welcome our guests from the Ontario Association for Community Living: the clients, the people who dedicate their lives to serving their clients and the parents and volunteers who make an outstanding contribution to making community living work in Ontario.

Those of us on this side of the House perhaps see a smaller role for government, that on occasion government perhaps overreaches and tries to do too much. But providing services for people with developmental disabilities is indeed an important responsibility for government to take an active role in, and an important priority for this government, this minister and this caucus.

This government increased support in this area by \$35 million last year, when my predecessor, the Honourable Janet Ecker, announced new funding, and this was followed up by new additional funding of \$50 million beyond that \$35 million, which was announced last week and which will be added to the base budget of the developmental services envelope served by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

These supports will go to meet a host of challenges, some of them enumerated by my colleague from Broadview-Greenwood. There is obviously a tremendous need for residential supports, to support an aging group of men and women, in some cases 75 or 80 years old, who have provided supports to their children, and later adult children, throughout their entire lives, and who want the ability to go to sleep at night with peace of mind, knowing that when they are no longer able to care for their loved ones, support services will be there for them. I do not believe that is too much to ask, and the announcement we made last week will allow even more services and residential supports to be available for these individuals who have made a tremendous contribution to our province and indeed to the lives of all their family members.

Part of the announcement last week provides additional support for day programming for 21-year-olds leaving our school system. Transition planning is obviously something that is incredibly important. But there have to be more opportunities for young people as they leave the school system, and this government has certainly accepted that call for action. It's something

where we certainly can do more and will do more with the announcement.

The member opposite mentioned the people who work with people with developmental disabilities on a daily basis. Throughout my travels around Ontario, whether it's visiting the St Catharines Association for Community Living, visiting the Sudbury Association for Community Living, looking at organizations in my own hometown in Ottawa-Carleton, whether it be the Ottawa-Carleton Life Skills or the Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities—everywhere I have gone, I have been tremendously impressed with the dedication and the amount of energy that this committed group of men and women bring to their task every day. These aren't people who have a job, these are people who have a vocation, and I certainly share the strong support that has been mentioned for them. Part of the announcement last week provided some additional money to deal with the wage pressures, and I'm the first to acknowledge that is a big challenge within the broader public sector.

We are also providing new funds to help meet the challenge of the fire code. There are a number of changes being proposed and that are ongoing, and this poses a tremendous burden to the developmental services sector and community living. There will be new monies to help address that challenge, and that is something we'll be moving quite expeditiously.

In addition, the announcement provided more funding for the special services at home program. This program is undoubtedly one of the most popular in government, certainly the most popular within my ministry. Visiting St Catharines, as I did last summer, I had the opportunity to sit down with one board member of the St Catharines Association for Community Living who told me about the incredible difference that a little bit of special services at home funding has made in the life of her daughter. She went on and told me about the difference it had made, and I was really quite taken aback to realize that such a small investment could provide such a considerable benefit, not just for that individual but indeed for their whole family, and that's something I was able to take away.

Finally, I'd like reiterate this government's, and I think the three or four previous governments', strong commitment to community living. Community living has been an outstanding success over the last 25 years. If you look at the number of policy changes that have gone on between this government and the previous two governments, the fact that ongoing support for community living has existed speaks volumes when all three political parties and all three governments can indicate, not just by our promises and by our rhetoric but indeed by our actions, that we have advanced community living. That's something that I would on this occasion, at this opportunity, like to indicate our strong commitment to continuing, to provide more opportunities for community living in the province of Ontario.

I'm pleased to say that my colleague the member for Scarborough Centre, Mrs Mushinski, will host an

opportunity for all members to meet with representatives and individuals from the Ontario Association of Community Living after question period. That's certainly an opportunity I'll take advantage of.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I was pleased to play a small part in that non-partisan access today to the issue brought to us by the Association for Community Living and to the people who are part of that concept of community living for the people among us who may need to be recognized, as one of the parents put it today, as differently abled. They brought to us a challenge that not only should be non-partisan but which we should be able to firmly grasp. We're being told of something that most of us have not had to know about. A generation, the first generation, of parents who have kept children who are differently abled, with special challenges, at home for quite a long time, for a good part of their adult life—such as two of the children we met today, 40 and 46 years old—are saying to us: “We've done what we can. It's time for these children to leave home. We have looked after them. We have done that with love and respect.” I think we need to pause a bit on that. We are part of a generation that was somehow able to encourage those parents to do that, but they're now saying they've put in that contribution, that inestimable amount of love and support, seeking and believing that we would be there—the rest of us, and us in our elected roles here today in particular, in specific—when they needed us.

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They have saved us, in the deferred costs of what in past generations would have been institutional spending on these children, untold millions of dollars. But they are hitting a certain wall of strain which does not show as weariness with their responsibility but rather as the reality of the age of these parents and the implication that they need to be taken up by the rest of us. They want—and I think it's a reasonable request to my colleagues in the House, and I'm sure that everyone here that reflects can agree—to age free from the anxiety, the worry of what's going to happen to their children. Today that has been presented to us. I'm hoping we can embrace that in the spirit in which it is brought.

Essentially, we have heard of an understanding that is starting to develop in this House around this responsibility, our responsibility. This is not just some special social service that's required. This is the other end of an obligation that has been put off. My leader has raised aspects of this question in the House before, as have the member for Windsor-St Clair and the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London, and I know all my colleagues in various parties of this House share this concern.

What we had brought to us today is not just that sense of responsibility but also something of an answer. Today we heard from the parents and the representatives that they would like us to respond to their needs in the form of a permanent planning body that would actually deal with the 1% of children born who are going to need some lifelong support, and that we, on behalf of the rest of

society, pick up the rest of that challenge. In recognition of the effort that was made today, the very dignified, quiet and maybe even understated way we heard from them in their media presentation and that I'm sure we'll hear in the reception sponsored by the member opposite—we've heard from them that this needs to start. It needs to start with us. We need to recognize what Jean Vanier says about the people among us whom we sometimes will characterize as the weakest. It's the only way we as a community can be strong: by stopping long enough to listen and learn from them. I acknowledge and applaud the Association for Community Living for bringing that message to us today. I know my colleagues and I will be listening.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Last week the confidence of millions and millions of Canadians was shaken when it comes to the future of medicare in Canada. Notwithstanding the overwhelming opposition of the people of his province, Ralph Klein rammed through Bill 11. I have had the opportunity since to speak to many Ontarians who are expressing some real concerns about the future of medicare in our province. They are seeking your assurances today, Premier. Will you stand up and guarantee that you will not follow Alberta's lead? Will you tell us that no private for-profit hospitals will be permitted to open in Ontario under your watch?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think we've been very clear that our goal and our commitment are to strengthen the public hospital system. We have several billions of dollars on the table to do that. It's unfortunate that 10 years of neglect under the Liberals and the NDP have forced this kind of catch-up in the public health care system, but certainly every nickel we have put into the expansion of emergency rooms, of hospitals, has been in the public system. Quite appropriately those hospital boards, the volunteers of the public hospital system, have indicated the strength of our commitment and their thanks that finally, after 10 years of being neglected, they found a government willing to build the public hospital system again.

Mr McGuinty: I am sure you will note that I put to the Premier a very direct and straightforward question. It's a question that is weighing heavily on the minds of Ontarians, and he did not answer it.

Premier, if you look at the record here, what you are presently contemplating in Ontario is delisting another \$50 million of medically insured services. That's a total of \$100 million so far under your watch that you have removed from under the umbrella of medicare and told Ontarians that it's up to them now to pay out of their pockets. I'll give you another opportunity, Premier: Will

you be following Alberta's lead? They've managed to exploit some kind of a loophole. What Ontarians want to know now is, will you be following Alberta's lead, and can you please assure us that no private for-profit hospitals will be permitted to open in Ontario under your watch?

Hon Mr Harris: I think our commitment has been very clear. You have seen in our response to any questions of this nature no interest in bringing forward any permissive legislation. In fact, all of our efforts have been to support the public hospital system.

I might add that I'm a little confused by your question. I have Elinor Caplan, a former Minister of Health under the Liberal government, saying this in 1993: "We're seeing the NDP force the private sector out of the delivery of health care, all in the guise of health reform." She says, "I want to say to the minister"—the NDP minister—"that I believe there's a very important role for the private sector to play in the delivery of health and social services."

Then I have a quote from Gerard Kennedy, who was advocating the delisting of health services. He says, "We want to make sure that we take some of the non-essential stuff out of the health care system."

That seems to be the Liberal Party position.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, it's obvious you are not going to grace us with an answer to the very straightforward, very simple and very direct question. You can quote others at length, but I'd like to be able to quote you when Ontarians ask me where you stand on this important issue.

I'll tell you why I am particularly concerned, Premier: because of something you have already done. In 1996 your government changed an Ontario law that protected Ontario's health care system from those who would profit from our sick. That's Bill 26. You removed a clause in Ontario law that said, "Preference should be given to health facilities that are operated on a not-for-profit basis." You've already opened the door. We already have on our books in Ontario the equivalent of Bill 11 as a result of your actions. Now we want to know whether you're going to walk through that door, whether you're going to follow Ralph Klein's lead, or can you provide us with an assurance today, here and now, that on your watch you will never permit for-profit hospitals to set up shop in Ontario?

Hon Mr Harris: As I indicated, I've answered the question very directly on two occasions and I've answered it to the people of Ontario. I think the Leader of the Opposition, if he wishes to hear the answer, would understand why I might not trust him to explain to the people of Ontario my view on health care. I think I am quite capable of doing that myself. I did so in 1995 and I did so again in 1999. I will be very proud to lead this party and do so in 2003 or 2004 and again later on towards the end of the decade.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Harris: But I might say I am a little bit surprised both in the yelling and screaming and

interjecting and in the question to hear a party whose health care critic and former minister, and now former health critic—I think he's the critic for education now—Gerard Kennedy says "delist services." He says: "There is a role for the private sector. There has been for"—

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

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ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question also is for the Premier, but we'll take it from your non-response that you are in fact intending to follow Ralph Klein's lead. That's all that means to us.

Premier, we have uncovered yet another Tory land scam. This sorry saga continues to unfold day in and day out. Here are the latest details of the latest deal.

In 1993 the real estate market was relatively inexpensive and there was a property at Jane and Steeles that was sold to a developer for \$2.15 million. There was proper tender and appraisal. Three years later, in 1996, the American economy started to heat up, which meant our economy started to heat up, and the exact same property was sold for just \$1.3 million. Let me make that clear: In 1993 the property sold for \$2.15 million. That deal fell through. The government had it still in its hands in 1996 and sold it in a more expansive economy for \$1.3 million. In 1996 the property should have been worth more, not less. Can you tell us why it was in the interests of taxpayers that a government property that was worth \$2.15 million in 1993 was sold for \$1.3 million in 1996?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The minister will answer.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we have called the police in to investigate certain allegations that were uncovered that may or may not be criminal or fraudulent in nature. That's the role of the OPP. We've also called in an independent audit team to review past sales and that's what they're doing.

Quite frankly, I was shocked when your colleague the member for Eglinton-Lawrence outlined your policy on the Michael Coren show. He said, "We're not forwarding information to the authorities." Why are you not forwarding information to the authorities?

Mr McGuinty: Minister, maybe you can at least try to give me a straight answer on this issue. This scandal, by the way, doesn't stop with the price. The buyer of this property was one George Damiani. This is another special deal for another special friend of the Tory government in Ontario. This is the same guy for whom you helped turn a cemetery into a gold mine which is going to enable him to score a \$25-million profit when all has been said and done. But in this particular deal you gave your Tory friend the land for barely half what it cost when the market was at its lowest three years before. It originally sold for \$1.3 million. That deal fell apart. You got the property back again. You sold it in 1993 for less

than that. This is another special deal for a favourite friend of the Tory cabinet. Once again, taxpayers' money is going up in smoke. Minister, how can you justify this as being in the interests of Ontario taxpayers?

Hon Mr Hodgson: Mr Speaker, as you know and the members of this House have become accustomed to hearing, quite often the Liberals' research isn't accurate. If it didn't close, it didn't sell. Nevertheless, frankly, why don't you turn this information over to the authorities? You know that we have called the police in. We have independent auditors and they will get to the bottom of it.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, there are two things in common between the first cemetery deal and this second cemetery deal: (1) your Tory friend is making a killing at taxpayers' expense and (2) you're involved in both of these deals. In the 1996 deal, the deal that I'm talking about today, a conservation authority prepared this deal. In 1996, you, Chris Hodgson, were the Minister of Natural Resources. This deal could not have gone forward without your approval, according to the conservation act. Now, this could be a coincidence, I guess, it could be an accident, if it happened just the once. But twice the same buyer, the same obscene profits. That makes it a habit, Minister. It's not just a coincidence. It's not simply an accident. It has now become a habit. Once, an accident; twice, a habit.

Minister, I'm asking you, why is it that you continue to maintain that you are always acting in the interests of taxpayers when day in and day out we stand here in the Legislature and demonstrate the exact opposite?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition that if he has what he believes to be evidence of something that's not in the interests of taxpayers, he turn that over to the proper authorities. That's why we have the police involved. That's why we have independent auditors. I would encourage him to do that.

MEMBERS' COMPENSATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Earlier today you were asked by members of the media if you believed that increasing the salaries of MPPs was a good idea, and you indicated yes. My question is this: At a time when hospitals in Ontario have a \$1.8-billion deficit and your government seems to have no plan to deal with that, at a time when you're delisting \$100 million in health care services, privatizing them; at a time when health care workers across the province have been told by your government that they should expect nothing more than a 2% increase, many of whom have not had an increase in six years; in that context, Premier, can you honestly tell me and can you honestly tell the people of the province that raising MPPs' salaries ought to be a priority?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think I was responding to the legislation that required, once the books were balanced, which, I might add, is the first time for a real balanced budget—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Harris:—that the Speaker was compelled to call in an independent agency to review the MPPs' salaries.

We may be a little late in this—and I apologize—and the Speaker may have been a little late, but he didn't have all the facts and the information, because when the budget was delivered, in fact, we found out the budget had been balanced two years in a row, the first time in over 60 years. So I can't fault the Speaker. First of all, I would never do that anyway, but you cannot fault the Speaker or the Legislative Assembly, for as soon as they were aware of the balanced budget they were automatically compelled to trigger the review. I believe that is what is happening, and that's what I responded to.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you may wish to tell people that everything is in balance and in fine order, but we've had three independent reports now which indicate that child poverty is at a higher rate in Ontario than ever before, that child poverty is growing faster in Ontario than ever before. We know that there are school boards in Ontario that are faced with a situation of having to lay off teachers and special education assistants this year. We know that Ontario now has the worst environmental record in North America, except for Texas. Are none of these things a priority? In this context, how can it be a priority to raise MPPs' salaries when all of these very pressing issues in our communities—the health care system, the education system—don't seem to warrant attention by your government?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. Member take his seat. Order. I can't hear the question being asked, and I need to hear it. I apologize to the leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: Again I simply want to ask the Premier: When all these other issues don't seem to be a priority for your government, how can it be a priority to raise the salaries of MPPs?

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Hon Mr Harris: As the member would recall, when we took office, inheriting an \$11-billion deficit and a substantial deficit in funding for children's programs, for education, for hospitals, we indicated that our first priority was a 5% cut in pay. We indicated further that there would be no increase in any MPP pay until the books were fully balanced. You also know that we took our time balancing the books because we had a jobs deficit that we inherited from you and we considered billions of dollars into health care, children's programs and education more important or at least equally as important as balancing the books. We considered jobs equally as important as balancing the books.

Our record on our priorities over five years in government has been very clear. And yes, today I did respond to the automatic trigger that the Speaker enlist the services of a consultant to review MPP salaries. They have not been raised for nine years, and we did take a 5% cut under your government and a 5% cut under our government. So I think our priorities are clear. It has been health care—

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

Mr Hampton: Premier, you can try to disguise it however you wish. We have people who work with the Association for Community Living here today, whose salaries are 25% below where any neutral observer, any neutral arbitrator believes they should be. Your Minister of Labour yesterday said that he believes it is appropriate and proper that the minimum wage be frozen in this province for five and a half years, as it has now been. It's now well below the minimum wage of our major trading partner, the United States.

Premier, how can it be a priority to increase the salaries of members of the Legislature when we have workers in the education field who have not had an increase in a significant period of time, when we have health care workers who are leaving the province and leaving the profession because they can be paid more elsewhere and are certainly deserving of a raise? How can this be a priority over all of those pressing health care, education and community services which have not received a raise—

The Speaker: Order. The member's time is up. Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: I think today we are third in our minimum wage, very close though to Quebec, right beside us, at \$6.90. We did indicate that we thought we should wait and let others play catch-up to get to our highest rates in the province.

But I'm a little surprised at the member's question, because I recall very clearly, right after the election of 1995, I had given you my priorities. They were health care, education, children, jobs. You called me right after the election. Your priority to me wasn't children, wasn't health care, was not the Association for Community Living, was not jobs. Your first priority was: How can I get party status so I can get more money?

2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My next question is also for the Premier. The reason the party status is important is so that I can ask you these questions on behalf of the public out there who want to know the answers. We note with interest that you have appointed the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance to be the minister for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Toronto.

My question concerns the investments listed in the Fung report. Mr Fung lists a long assortment of roads, transit, cleanup of the port lands, construction of housing, which would be required to put on the Olympics. Then he lists a multi-billion-dollar price tag for these things.

We know that you're going to be running ads promoting the Olympics, but we haven't seen a financial plan from you yet on how you're going to pay for the Olympics. Our concern is that after the Olympics are over, the hard-working taxpayers would be stuck with paying for those costs.

I want to put forward a proposal today. We propose that you create an Olympic lottery to ensure that there is money available to pay for the cost of this infrastructure—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Stop the clock.

Sorry for the interruption. The leader of the third party may continue.

Mr Hampton: Premier, since you haven't put forward a financing plan for the Olympics, we propose at the very least that you put forward an Olympic lottery so that the taxpayers of Ontario will know there is some initiative to raise the capital funding that's necessary and they can have some assurance that they won't be stuck with picking up the costs after the Olympics are over. Will you do that, Premier?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The leader has indicated that the reason he wanted party status wasn't for his own salary, which he kept, or his limousine, which he kept, and the other perks that went along with it; it was so he would have research to be able to ask these questions. I have to tell you, your research department is wasting the \$2 million we're giving them through party status if this is the best you can do with questions to us today.

I would like to say, in response to the Fung report, that we are in negotiations, with Fung of course, with the city of Toronto, with the federal government, to come up with a joint response for the infrastructure. As well, on the Olympic funding, I'm a little surprised you are suggesting we cannibalize our existing lottery money, which goes to support the Association for Community Living, health care and children in the province.

Mr Hampton: Premier, all we've heard from your government so far when you've been asked about funding to cover the cost of the Olympics is a mention of more toll roads or perhaps a casino. I'm putting forward the idea of a lottery because if, as we're told, there is broad public support out there for the Olympics, then for sure there should be broad public support of this kind of funding mechanism, a funding mechanism that people can take part in voluntarily and that we estimate, from looking at the other lotteries, could raise over \$1 billion.

The problem is this: All of these things have to be built well in advance of the Olympics and they have to be paid for. If you do not have a financing plan now for the cost of these things, the fear is that taxpayers will be stuck picking up the cost. I'm going to send you over, for example, some of the design work that people have done. If you're not prepared to support an Olympic lottery, will you tell people what exactly you have in mind as a financing plan for the Olympics so that hard-working taxpayers aren't stuck picking up the costs?

Hon Mr Harris: Mr Speaker, I don't know if I can refer the question to the member from St Catharines. I see the member has passed over some tickets. I had somebody give me a gift like this once that they'd already scratched before they gave them out. There are

people who give gifts like that when they give out lottery tickets.

There are two very exciting projects on the horizon that I would think all members of the Legislature would be supportive of, including those outside of Toronto. One is the over 30 years of studies on Toronto's waterfront neglect, never seeming to get the federal, provincial and municipal governments all together at any one time. I'm very proud to be part of a third partnership where all three of us are working together finally, once and for all—maybe it's because we're a party that cares about Toronto, our capital city, I don't know—where we can finally do something for Toronto's waterfront, for traffic, for transit, for roads. We are looking at that proposal with the federal and municipal governments—

The Speaker: Order. Unfortunately, the Premier's time is up.

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ONTARIO REALTY CORP

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. I want to return to another ORC deal, another land scandal. In 1996 you sold the Bark Lake Leadership Centre to your fishing pals, Bob and Wayne Izumi, for just \$2.85 million; plus, you gave them a sweetheart mortgage, the likes of which I have never ever heard of. Not only did you not have them pay a cent down, you gave them \$20,000. They bought the land for \$2.85 million and you gave them a mortgage back for \$2.87 million. You paid them \$20,000 to take the land off your hands. I'm not sure what kind of a lure the Izumi brothers were using that day, but one thing for sure, you took it hook, line and sinker. They reeled him in, Speaker, they landed him in the boat and, for all I know, they've got him mounted over their fireplace. Maybe that explains where he has been six days a week.

Premier, why is this deal in the interests of Ontario taxpayers?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the minister can respond.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we've called in the police. We've also got independent auditors reviewing it. Quite frankly, I was shocked and I'm sure the people of Ontario were shocked when your colleague let your strategy out of the bag. He said, "We're not forwarding information to the authorities."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I can't hear the answer. Stop the clock. I need to hear the answer, please, if the members would indulge.

Hon Mr Hodgson: When the member for Eglinton-Lawrence was asked why the Liberal Party did not have confidence in the OPP to investigate, the member made the comment that OPP investigations are done behind the scenes. This side of the House does not believe in kangaroo courts. You're using whatever scraps of in-

formation you can without turning over the information to the proper authorities, which is the proper thing to do. I'd just ask that if you have this kind of information, you turn it over to the authorities.

Mr McGuinty: Is this the very best they can do over there? We've got these rotten deals being uncovered throughout the province of Ontario, and they tell us that the matter is under investigation, they had nothing to do with it and they're now trying to tell us over here that somehow we're keeping evidence from the police. You're the government. You authorized all of these deals. It has nothing to do with us; it has everything to do with you.

Let's take a look at the specifics of this most delicious deal one more time. You sell the land for \$2.85 million, but you give a mortgage back for \$2.87 million—unheard of. You, minister, when asked to comment on this deal—and you failed to mention this in your answer a moment ago—said, "The deal stinks." You said that. You said it was a terrible deal. You said this deal should never have gone ahead. You're the guy in charge, and you said it stinks. Industry experts say this deal stinks as well.

Minister, this deal stinks. You said that. You said it stank. You said that. If it stinks so much, why—

The Speaker: The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I appreciate the question. As the leader of the Liberal Party knows, as warden of Haliburton county and as an opposition MPP, I was concerned about the local job impact of the NDP government's decision to close the Bark Lake facility. It was the NDP decision which I opposed. My words were poorly chosen, and I did not mean to call into question our government's decision. I apologize to the reporters for my poor choice of words.

For the last five years that our government has been in office, we have tried to ensure that the taxpayers' interests are well served. We've acted on those interests. In fact, the purpose of the audit that we've asked for—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member take his seat. I can't hear the answer. Member for Windsor West, this is her last warning as well. I can't hear when she continues to shout across at the minister. I can't have this. Just so she's clear, this is her last warning.

Hon Mr Hodgson: We've said many times that we look forward to the auditor's findings. That way we get to the bottom of it with all the evidence. Quite frankly, this party has brought forward accusations week after week that even the Globe and Mail has gone to great lengths to show—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member take his seat. The member for Hamilton East, that is his last warning as well. New question.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): My question today is for the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. In a recent gathering with local business

people in my riding, the conversation obviously turned to the great initiatives in our most recent budget, delivered by the Minister of Finance. In particular, the topics that came to mind were initiatives our government is taking to prevent brain drain and to make sure Ontario is competitive in the global marketplace. We all agreed that one thing that is very important to Ontario's success in the future is to ensure that we have researchers and top-notch research facilities. In fact, we were paid a wonderful compliment by a very important member of my constituency, the Honourable Bill Winegard, who said, "I see a lot of programs, Minister, but Ontario has got it just right."

We have programs like the research and development challenge fund and the Premier's Research Excellence Award. What these do is help researchers by recognizing their accomplishments and directly assisting them in making the transition from scientific discoveries to commercial enterprises and opportunities for economic growth.

The budget indicated that the Ontario Innovation Trust fund is going to be tripled. I'd like to get your advice on how that Innovation Trust fund will work with both the research and development challenge fund and the Premier's Research Excellence Award.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Thank you to my colleague from Guelph-Wellington for the very important question.

The Ontario Innovation Trust, the Ontario research and development challenge fund, the Premier's Research Excellence Award and the skills development fund of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade all combine to bring a very powerful boost to the research and development capacity of this province, and it's part of the government's jobs agenda.

In fact, of the 138 projects and almost \$200 million spent on new facilities and new equipment and rehabilitating our labs and research institutions under the Ontario Innovation Trust fund to date, about 138 projects have been funded, and they have created 828 new jobs for young scientists in this province, jobs that didn't exist a year ago. We're very proud of the fund.

That's complemented by the Ontario research and development challenge fund. It's a \$500-million fund, the largest of its kind for any provincial government in Canada, and its job is to help us reverse the brain drain and attract back those Canadians who for reasons over the years, a lot to do with lack of adequate public funding, have found themselves in the United States. We've attracted dozens of those researchers back and we're very proud of the research capacity—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mrs Elliott: I've seen first-hand the remarkable results of the investments in the Ontario Innovation Trust. My riding of Guelph-Wellington, and particularly with the University of Guelph, is known as an agricultural and food technology centre. In March we received in my riding an investment of \$12.5 million,

which will fund nine various programs, everything from food quality and safety to animal health. What's really interesting is that we now have a new building being built on the university campus that will make the University of Guelph a forerunner in space science, both in air and in plant-growing technology in space. These are very exciting things for my riding and for the province as a whole.

I wonder what the Ontario Innovation Trust will be doing in other ridings all across Ontario that stand to benefit from this kind of exceptional program.

Hon Mr Wilson: On a per capita basis, the province takes a back seat to no other government, including the federal government, with respect to the investment we're making in research and development in the province.

The Ontario Innovation Trust and the examples the honourable member just gave are exactly the type of thing we're trying to do. As the Premier reminds us, as a cabinet and a caucus, we're trying to recession-proof ourselves. Those economies that come up with the next medical discoveries in pharmaceutical drugs and the next treatments and indeed the cure for cancer, as have been challenged by us through the budget from the finance minister for prostate and breast cancer, those that come up with the next palm pilots or blackberries, those that come up with the next computer language or the Windows 98 platform, the successor to that, Windows 2000 and beyond—and we have that capability around Guelph and Waterloo and in Canada's scientific triangle—those that come up with the next biotechnology products, will be the economies that will do the very best as we see, which inevitably will occur, somewhat of a downturn in the North American economy and in the world, hopefully in many years' time, but we have to prepare for that.

The finance minister, through his foresight, is preparing our young researchers to reverse the brain drain and to make sure that we are the economy that comes up with those discoveries.

1510

HYDRO RATES

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Finance and it concerns economic forecasting for the next six to 18 months. I read with much interest your recently presented budget with the attached budget papers. My question to you today concerns hydro rates. Few things are as important to the economic and social well-being of Ontarians as hydro rates. The Minister of Finance has over at treasury a lot of very able people who forecast inflation and a variety of other key factors that make up the economy going forward.

To the Minister of Finance, I want to ask a very direct question: What can you tell us is your expectation going forward for the next 18 months, but particularly for the calendar year 2001? What are your forecasters at treasury telling you that we can expect in residential, commercial

and industrial electricity rates here in the province of Ontario?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I think the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology can answer.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): I appreciate the question, because it gives me an opportunity to remind our municipal partners that they have a very significant role to play with respect to the future of hydro rates in this province. I want to say very clearly that everything the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Energy and this government have control of with respect to rates, whether it be the transmission charge or the debt repayment charge, which is currently built into hydro bills and people have been paying it for years—you'll see an announcement soon that the Minister of Finance is very sensitive to keeping rates down, and he's going to do the best he can to keep that debt, that charge, as low as possible, in fact probably lower than what consumers are paying today. So that's one component.

The next component is debt. We've paid off \$3 billion of Hydro's old debt, a record repayment plan in this province over the last three years. At the same time, since June 1995, we've had a freeze on the average rate of electricity. So our companies, the crown corporations, have become more efficient, they're paying off more debt, and given that 40% of the hydro bill today is debt service charges and has been for a number of years, we're passing on those debt service charge savings dollar for dollar—

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

Mr Conway: My question is to the Minister of Finance, because it was to the Minister of Finance six weeks ago that the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario wrote to observe that on the basis of their best forecasts and what they were being told, not from some municipal utility but from Ontario Power Generation, whose sole shareholder is Her Majesty's Ontario government—the Association of Major Power Consumers have told me that they told the minister of Finance for Ontario about six or eight weeks ago that it was their unhappy expectation that they could expect electricity rates for the industrial sector in Ontario in the year 2001 to be going up somewhere between 15% and 20%. There were no municipal utilities involved in that.

To the Minister of Finance, my supplementary question is this: What are you saying to the Association of Major Power Consumers? Are their power rates going to be going up by 10%, 15% and 20% in the year 2001? If that is not the case, let's make it easy. In the year 2001, by how much will the residential, commercial and industrial power rates be going down for Ontario consumers?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member dismisses the role of municipalities. I've talked about the things the government is doing to make sure hydro rates are as low as possible in this province; 15% to 20% of the bill is

municipalities and the association points that out, I say to the honourable member. We are asking our municipal partners not to go for a cash cow grab here, to pad your municipal budgets in a municipal election year, but to do what's right for consumers and do your part, for that 15% to 20% of the bill, to keep rates down, just like we're doing in our crown corporations and in the leadership from the Minister of Finance in all the levers we have to bring prices down in this province.

With respect to the association itself, you will note that it is that association of independent power producers and industries that is encouraging the government to move as quickly as possible with deregulation and introducing competition into the generation side, because they expect that over the long run there will be lower prices available, and for the first time in the history of this province those large industrials will be able to shop around for power. In the meantime, the government is working with the association to come up with a transition strategy so that they'll have a smooth—

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

TRAVEL INDUSTRY COMPENSATION FUND

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. With summer just around the corner, more and more Ontarians are planning their annual family vacation. In the past, this type of planning has always included a local travel agent. Ontario's travel agents are some of the most qualified in the world. However, many of these small businesses are struggling to remain competitive in the new electronic world. Minister, would you explain to this House what some of the problems facing our travel agents are and what this government is doing to help them?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): There is no denying that recent events in the travel industry, such as airline commission cuts and the increase in direct ticket sales via the Internet, have resulted in heightened competition for travel dollars and shrinking profit margins for many Ontario travel agents.

Earlier this month our government announced a reduction in the annual insurance premiums paid by registered travel retailers and wholesalers into the Ontario travel industry compensation fund. This reduction will amount to important savings each year for the average travel agent in Ontario. Most Ontario travel agencies are small, family-owned businesses and, given the current economic realities, a compensation fund premium reduction is welcome news for these small business people.

Mrs Munro: This is great news for Ontario's registered travel agents. Any reduction in operating costs for Ontario's small businesses is good news. Minister, you mentioned the Ontario travel industry compensation fund as the source of these reductions. Could you explain to this House exactly what the compensation fund is, and

how travellers in Ontario will remain protected if we are reducing the size of it?

Hon Mr Runciman: The purpose of this fund is to reimburse consumers for travel services paid to a registered travel agent when the services are not provided. Since June 1997 the fund has risen from \$4.5 million to over \$15 million. It is thanks to the effective management of the Travel Industry Council of Ontario that this fund has grown, and it allows us to pass on savings directly to travel agents while still maintaining a high level of financial protection for the travelling public of Ontario. Following the premium reduction, Ontario consumers will continue to enjoy the benefits afforded to them by the existence of a well-managed, sustainable compensation fund.

GRANDVIEW TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier. Today I'm going to try to appeal to your better angel. Last Tuesday in this House you stood and did the right thing for hepatitis C victims, and I stood and applauded your efforts. You said something quite important in your announcement to the House, and I'm going to quote you: "To dismiss their needs based on legal technicalities and arbitrary cut-offs, to treat this as a courtroom exercise rather than an issue of compassion, is an abdication of our moral responsibility as governments." It's a high standard and one I believe in, and I want you to please consider applying it to the 320 women who are survivors of the Grandview abuse. They need additional help.

The arrangement that was negotiated is now falling short. Our experience is that some of these women didn't get to counselling in time; some of them require ongoing support for counselling. We ask you one simple thing: Will you give consideration to having the government extend the deadline for access to counselling services for those women who really need it? Will you do that?

1520

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the Attorney General has some information.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The member will recall that it was her government, in 1994 I believe, that negotiated with the Grandview survivors and arrived at the terms of the agreement that was reached with the Grandview survivors. I understand the concern being expressed with respect to continuing counselling. I also understand that the administration of the Grandview agreement included the provision that therapists working with survivors would refer them to support services within the community at the conclusion of the counselling program, and I trust that is being done. If it is the member's information that it's not being done, I'd like to know about it so we can follow up on that.

Ms Lankin: That is not the issue, Minister. I hope you will try to understand that we are asking you to rectify a

situation that now has come to all our attention. I haven't received an answer to the open letter I sent you, but the answer your ministry staff person put forward saying there was enough notice and the deadline is over is not good enough. These women's lives have been scarred permanently. Some of them are in counselling relationships where trust has been established. Without the financial support they cannot afford to continue that counselling. Some of them are in communities where there aren't alternative support services. They are getting a lifeline, and I mean literally a lifeline, preventing suicide. Redirecting them somewhere else is not going to meet their needs. Some of the women didn't find out about this provision in time because they are living on the margins of society. They haven't been able to access it. I don't care when this deal was signed. I'm saying that in today's real world it is not compassionate. It is an abdication of the moral responsibility of government, and I'm using your Premier's words. I'm just asking you, please, Minister, will you undertake to reconsider the possibility of extending the deadline for these counselling services to those survivors of Grandview who need it?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I appreciate the comments by the member, the genuine concern that the member has that appropriate counselling be available to survivors of Grandview, who certainly endured great tragedies. There is supposed to be provision, as I say, in the agreement to make sure that counselling takes place. It may well be that some assistance is needed to facilitate that. Certainly the women can access any of the mental health services funded by the Ministry of Health that are appropriate to their needs, such as crisis support, psychiatrists and institutional-based services. If there are particular instances in which that is not happening and the counselling is not happening, then I wish the member would tell me about the specific circumstances. We'll look into it and try to ensure those services are provided.

HOUSING POLICY

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Sometime this session you're expected to introduce legislation to finalize your downloading of housing on to municipalities. Every day I receive the same letters and faxes you do from housing providers, from tenants, from municipalities, calling for province-wide public hearings into your pending legislation. My question to you today is simple: Will you commit, will you give me your solemn undertaking, to extensive province-wide hearings on this legislation? Will you commit that this legislation will not be forced through this House, through the debate process at the end of the session, and that all members will have an opportunity to participate in a full, thoughtful consultation process over the summer?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I hope the honourable member understands this point as a parliamentarian: That is not for me to commit. That is up to the House leader; it's up to this

chamber; it's up to all three parties to be involved in that. What I will commit to is this: I will represent to this House that there has been extensive consultation in the months leading up to the point we are at right now. There will continue to be consultation. There is a municipal reference group. There is consultation, both formal and informal, with providers, as well as local housing authorities, as well as municipalities, as well as others who are interested in this file, and that consultation will continue. You have my vow on that count.

Mr Caplan: The minister's answer's a cop-out. He could decide that that would be the case. In fact, I'm not really sure he understands or even cares about the matter I'm raising, because I am aware of the secret meetings you've been having with certain selected stakeholders. You see, many of these groups are the same ones that are, I guess, under a misconception that you are going to have a full hearing process over the summertime.

They believe there should be province-wide, meaningful consultation. There are 86,000 units of housing affecting over 200,000 Ontarians. That's what's involved here. Meeting with a few stakeholders in secret meetings in Toronto just doesn't cut it. Minister, these folks work on the front lines. They live in these housing units. They know and understand what your changes are going mean. They know it's going to be a complete disaster. Surely that's worth a few days of your time and this Legislative Assembly's and the committee's time, to make sure we can at least hear from these people. What are you afraid of, Minister? I want to give you another chance. Will you give me your solemn undertaking that we will have full and extensive public consultations across this province over the summer?

Hon Mr Clement: The answer to the question is that there will continue to be public consultation. There has been public consultation. The honourable member tries to draw a picture here of secret meetings. The honourable member would be the first one to complain if we were not consulting. There's nothing secret about it if you know about it. I can assure you they're not secret. He would be the first one to complain if we did not have these consultations. We are having these consultations. We've had them in the past, we have in the present and we will have them in the future. We are working with the providers, with the housing authorities, with the municipalities and with the citizens of Ontario to ensure that this process, which is designed to give municipalities say for pay—I hope the honourable member is not opposed to say for pay—is seamless, fair, logical and worthy of the government of Ontario. That is my solemn vow. If the honourable member wants to be helpful, perhaps he can get on the bandwagon too and ensure that this takes place responsibly and effectively.

CONNECTING-LINK PROGRAM

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Your ministry's connecting-link program is an important initiative that

cost-shares funding of construction work on municipal roads connecting two sections of municipal highway. Clearly there is a provincial role to play in the upkeep of these roads, even though they are not owned by the province.

Can you tell the House what the province intends to invest in the connecting-link program for the 2000 construction season and how municipalities across Ontario will benefit from this program?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): I am delighted to respond to my colleague the member for Peterborough. We will be investing \$16 million in the program in this budget year. This summer's program will include 50 new projects in 41 municipalities, as well as 17 carry-over projects from last year in 16 municipalities. For cities or towns, MTO subsidizes 75% of the project. For smaller municipalities, MTO subsidizes 90% or 100% of project costs. The connecting-link program contributes to a strong and reliable transportation network.

Mr Stewart: I am pleased to hear about your ministry's efforts to work co-operatively with municipalities to fund important local projects. Can you elaborate on how the connecting-link program will benefit constituents in my riding, particularly the townships of Havelock, Belmont and Methuen.

Hon Mr Turnbull: The program will include funding for resurfacing the 1.6-kilometre section of Highway 7 through the townships of Havelock, Belmont and Methuen. This will be valued at \$250,000. These are other examples of the continuing partnership we have with municipalities. We're working together to improve Ontario's infrastructure.

1530

HIGH-TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): My question is for the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. Earlier today the Ottawa partnership met with our caucus, and I know they met with you and other members of the government. They told a good story about the diversification of the Ottawa economy, but they also told a cautionary tale about impending labour shortages.

Last week I had a meeting with senior officials in your ministry, as you would be well aware. They offered no solid answers with respect to this. When I asked the question, should we expect labour shortages to occur? they said that was within the realm of possibility. The announcements your government has made so far would seem to fall short.

We know that programs like ATOP and capital investments are designed to address this problem. But it would seem that Ontario's ranking of 59th out of 60 in North America in terms of investment in post-secondary education places Ontario at a distinct competitive disadvantage. What assurances can the minister provide to us today that there will not be labour shortages in Ontario's high-tech economy?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): It's an excellent question from the honourable member, and something that is on the minds of all the people who run our high-tech companies in this province, not just those from Ottawa. We have worked very carefully and closely with the sector over the three years I have been minister, for example, and Al Palladini has worked very closely with them with his skills development fund.

Initiatives, like in the last budget, to try to retain employees we have, like the tax-free allowance for the first \$100,000 in stock options—the honourable member mentioned ATOP, the access to opportunities program, in which 22,000 new university and college spaces in computer programming and computer-related courses have been opened up by this government over the last two years. That is the largest expansion of the post-secondary educational sector in the history of this province since it was invented. It's a dramatic increase and it will provide, in three or four years' time, those employees we need today.

This is an acute problem across North America. In fact, you'll find that we recruit on a worldwide basis to bring in those skilled employees. We would like to hear any suggestions the honourable members across the way have, because we want to make sure that we have the workers—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Smitherman: I have one suggestion for the minister. Rather than standing on his feet in the House and telling us what has been done so far, I'd like him to address and provide the assurances that the government over there gets it and that they're prepared to deal with the problem.

The president of Mitel said this morning that this is an issue that limits growth. His mandate from worldwide headquarters is very clear: He is to exceed growth, and if it cannot be done in this jurisdiction, his job is to find a place where that can be achieved. So all of the announcements that have been made so far fail to deal with the challenge that is out there.

Make no mistake, barriers to growth will not be tolerated. New jobs will be found outside of Ontario. Competitor jurisdictions are making these investments. We have spoken in this House about the distinctions between Ontario and our competitive jurisdictions; that is, that Ontario is committing far fewer dollars on a per capita basis than almost all competitive jurisdictions in North America—all but one. The suggestion to the minister is, get some dollars into the post-secondary system and produce these employees for those jobs that are about to go wanting.

I ask the minister once again to give me the assurances which the senior bureaucrats from his ministry could not, and that is that the Ontario government is prepared to provide the necessary labourers for high-tech jobs in the Ontario economy.

Hon Mr Wilson: All of our programs are designed exactly to do that, in an unprecedented way. I spoke earlier today about the Premier's research excellence awards, in which 191 researchers have received \$150,000 from the government and the private sector—the largest awards in Canada. That's to make sure our best and brightest stay here. That's 191 researchers. Each one of those researchers will use that money to attract four or five other research fellows or post-doctoral students, for a total of about 700 to 800 more jobs. Those people are the fundamental people we need to train the high-tech workers of the future.

Again, there are unprecedented amounts of money going into solving this very problem, and we're starting to have success. We're reversing the brain drain. Even though the federal government—his federal cousins—and the Prime Minister continue to say there isn't a brain drain, there is one. We're doing everything we can, through unprecedented research dollars, through skills development, through ATOP—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is for the Minister of Correctional Services. Minister, a coalition of churches has raised the issue of human dignity, wondering if superjails like the ones announced by your ministry will meet the objective of reducing recidivism. They say that the superjails your ministry has announced will not provide the programs necessary to address many of the social problems the inmates deal with. Can you please explain to the House if these accusations are true?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): The member seemed to get in under the wire there. I certainly appreciate his question.

Of course it's not true. The Church Council on Justice and Corrections is concerned about effective programming in institutions; so am I. I think we need to have effective programming in institutions that deal with recidivism in this province, and that's what we'll do.

PETITIONS

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many questions concerning the events preceding, during and after the fatal shooting of Dudley George on September 6, 1995, at Ipperwash Provincial Park, where over 200 armed officers were sent to control 25 unarmed men and women, have not been answered; and

“Whereas the influence and communications of Lambton MPP Marcel Beaubien with the government

have been verified through transcripts presented in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the trust portfolio of native affairs held by Attorney General Charles Harnick is compromised by this continued refusal for a full public inquiry into the events at Ipperwash; and

“Whereas the promised return of Camp Ipperwash to the Stoney Point Nation by the federal Ministry of Defence and the serious negotiation of land claims by both provincial and federal governments could have avoided a conflict;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that a full public inquiry be held into the events surrounding the fatal shooting of Dudley George on September 6, 1995, to eliminate all misconceptions held by and about the government, the OPP and the Stoney Point people.”

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):

I'm very pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature in support.

CULTURAL CLUBS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas cultural clubs make an outstanding contribution to our province by sharing their customs, traditions, language and arts;

“Whereas our cultural clubs are generous in their benevolent contribution to the people of their communities;

“Whereas dramatic and unjustified increases in assessment for our cultural halls have created an extreme hardship for their membership;

“Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to reinstate the previous assessment treatment for such facilities and abandon the assessment change that is so detrimental to our cultural organizations.”

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians with a developmental disability are in growing danger of inadequate support because compensation to staff of not-for-profit agencies is, based on recent survey, on average, 20% to 25% less than compensation for others doing the same work in provincial institutions or similar work in other settings; and

“Whereas there are hundreds of senior parents in Ontario who saved the Ontario government millions of dollars by keeping their child with a developmental disability at home, and who are still caring for their adult child; and

“Whereas there is no place for most of these adults with a developmental disability to go when the parents are no longer able to provide care; and

“Whereas these parents live with constant anxiety and despair; and

“Whereas these adult children will end up in Ontario nursing homes and hospitals if there is no appropriate place to provide care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“To significantly increase compensation for workers in not-for-profit agencies so that it is comparable to the compensation of government-funded workers in identical or similar occupations; and

“To provide the resources necessary to give appropriate support to Ontarians with a developmental disability who at present have no place to go when their parents are no longer able to care for them.”

In addition to the petitions I tabled yesterday, there are another 125 signatures from residents of my riding. I affix my signature as well.

1540

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further petitions?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): A couple of points, if I may. The member for Scarborough Centre today extended greetings to members of the Association for Community Living. In many respects this petition is dealing with that topic. I'm presenting the petition on behalf of the member for Scarborough Southwest, who, as you know, as a member of cabinet is unable to present these petitions.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians with a developmental disability are in growing danger of inadequate support because compensation to staff of not-for-profit agencies is, based on recent survey, on average, 20% to 25% less than compensation for others doing the same work in provincial institutions or similar work in other settings; and

“Whereas there are hundreds of senior parents in Ontario who saved the Ontario government millions of

dollars by keeping their child with a developmental disability at home, and who are still caring for their adult child; and

“Whereas there is no place for most of these adults with a developmental disability to go when the parents are no longer able to provide care; and

“Whereas these parents live with constant anxiety and despair; and

“Whereas these adult children will end up in Ontario nursing homes and hospitals if there is no appropriate place to provide care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“To significantly increase the compensation for workers in not-for-profit agencies so that it is comparable to the compensation of government-funded workers in identical or similar occupations; and

“To provide the resources necessary to give appropriate support to Ontarians with a developmental disability who at present have no place to go when their parents are no longer able to care for them.”

I'm pleased to present this petition.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Kinsmen/J.S. MacDonald school is slated for closure,

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

“To direct the Upper Canada District School Board to remove the notice of closure for the Kinsmen/J.S. MacDonald special school facility.

“Since 1963 the special education facility has adequately served the needs of those students requiring special education programs and services throughout Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh.

“Presently, the Kinsmen school meets the needs of 45 children ranging from minor learning disabilities, behavioural to more complex multi-challenges.”

I've also signed the petition.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I have a petition on prayer, almost identical to the one read by the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and a number of other members from the government side of the House.

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

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

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

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

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

I sign this petition.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I have a petition which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the town of Napanee and the townships of Adolphustown, South Fredericksburgh, North Fredericksburgh and Richmond were amalgamated into the town of Greater Napanee by order of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated January 1, 1997;

“Whereas the order was made pursuant to a restructuring proposal which had the required degree of support of the municipalities affected;

“Whereas the restructured proposal provided that initially each councillor would get one vote, but after December 2000 councillors from wards with more than 2,500 electors (Napanee, North Fredericksburgh and Richmond) would get an extra vote, which provision was included in section 4.3(b)(2) of the order;

“Whereas council has applied to the Legislative Assembly to amend the order by repealing section 4.3(b)(2) to prevent councillors from wards with more than 2,500 electors from gaining an extra vote;

“We, the undersigned residents of the town of greater Napanee, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not delete section 4.3(b)(2) of the order of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated January 1, 1997.”

I'd like to submit this petition on their behalf.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents in Durham, just to name a few: Doreen Sweetland and Susan Larsh, who are very involved in the community.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario exempted Highway 407 east from a public hearing and then passed the Highway 407 Act to further exempt the proposed highway extension from important provincial environmental laws, such as the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act and the fill regulations of the Conservation Authorities Act; and

“Whereas heavy equipment is now being used to clear the eastern path of the highway, without any environmental guidelines, control or monitoring;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as a matter of extreme urgency, to put in place such environmental monitoring procedures and controls as are necessary to prevent extreme degradation such as a bulldozer working in stream beds, and numerous other environmentally destructive acts that have been witnessed since the 407 east extension was permitted to go ahead."

I'm pleased to present this petition.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I too have a petition similar to the one presented by the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the town of Napanee and the townships of Adolphustown town, South Fredericksburg, North Fredericksburg and Richmond were amalgamated into the town of greater Napanee by order of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated January 1, 1997; and

"Whereas the order was made pursuant to a restructuring proposal which had the required degree of support from municipalities affected; and

"Whereas the restructuring proposal provided that initially each councillor would get one vote, but after December 2000 councillors from the wards with more than 2,500 electors (Napanee, North Fredericksburg and Richmond) would get an extra vote, which provision was included in section 4.3(b)(2) of the order;

"Whereas council has applied to the Legislative Assembly to amend the order by repealing section 4.3(b)(2) to prevent councillors from wards with more than 2,500 electors from gaining an extra vote;

"We, the undersigned residents of the town of greater Napanee, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not delete section 4.3(b)(2) from the order of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated January 1, 1997."

It's signed by a number of residents. I agree with it and I've signed it as well for the beautiful town of Napanee.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I have a petition entitled "Save Our High Schools."

"Whereas several area high schools have been threatened with closure;

"Whereas the Grand Erie District School Board, the Brant/Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board and Fanshawe College all have proposals to construct new school buildings in Simcoe; and

"Whereas many viable options and solutions have been proposed, publicly discussed, but not enacted;

"We, the undersigned, beseech the province of Ontario to take extraordinary steps to conduct an administrative audit and mediate a solution among the Grand Erie District School Board, the Brant/Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board, Fanshawe College and other key stakeholders to provide a student-based approach, utilizing existing school board and possibly municipal infrastructure."

I agree with an approach such as this and hereby affix my signature to this petition.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have more petitions 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 name of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Care 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 their communities."

These constituents are from Thessalon and various places along the north shore of Lake Huron.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TAXPAYER DIVIDEND ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE VERSEMENT
D'UN DIVIDENDE AUX CONTRIBUABLES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 11, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 72, An Act to pay a dividend to Ontario taxpayers, cut taxes, create jobs and implement the Budget / Projet de loi 72, Loi visant à

verser un dividende aux contribuables de l'Ontario, à réduire les impôts, à créer des emplois et à mettre en oeuvre le budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House of May 15, I'm now required to put the question.

On May 9, 2000, Mr Young moved second reading of Bill 72.

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.

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

The division bells rang from 1552 to 1557.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael D.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank
Clement, Tony	Marland, Margaret
Coburn, Brian	Martiniuk, Gerry
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn
Eves, Ernie L.	Newman, Dan
Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Gill, Raminder	Runciman, Robert W.

Sampson, Rob
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances
Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Boyer, Claudette	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley
Brown, Michael A.	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bryant, Michael	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Caplan, David	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 49; the nays are 30.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House of May 15, 2000, the bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR

LA RESPONSABILITÉ PARENTALE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 19, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 55, An Act to make

parents responsible for wrongful acts intentionally committed by their children / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à rendre les pères et mères responsables des actes fautifs commis intentionnellement par leurs enfants.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House of April 25, I am now required to put the question.

On April 13, Mr Martiniuk moved second reading of Bill 55.

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.

This will be a precisely five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1601 to 1606.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Sampson, Rob
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Snobelen, John
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael D.	Spina, Joseph
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Sterling, Norman W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Stewart, R. Gary
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Stockwell, Chris
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Eves, Ernie L.	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John	Young, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Gill, Raminder	Runciman, Robert W.	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Brown, Michael A.	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 49; the nays are 32.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House of April 25, the bill is ordered for third reading.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR

LA RESPONSABILITÉ PARENTALE

Mr Flaherty moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to make parents responsible for wrongful acts intentionally committed by their children / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à rendre les pères et mères responsables des actes fautifs commis intentionnellement par leurs enfants.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes Mr Flaherty, the Attorney General.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I will be sharing my time with the members for Cambridge, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, and Durham.

This bill was debated extensively for over eight hours in this House. No amendments were made to the bill. This government is committed to safer communities and the rights of victims. The Parental Responsibility Act supports both of these goals.

The Parental Responsibility Act proposes to make it easier for people whose property has been stolen, intentionally damaged or destroyed by a minor to recover a maximum of \$6,000 from the parents through the Small Claims Court. The proposed legislation builds on the current law by making it easier for victims to obtain compensation by placing a greater onus of proof on parents.

The proposed Parental Responsibility Act would also help improve community safety by reinforcing the time-honoured values of respect and responsibility. We are sensitive to the challenges parents face and believe that most parents are conscientious in supervising their children and raising them to be law-abiding citizens.

If passed, the Parental Responsibility Act will do a number of things. First of all, it would apply to property owners, renters and lessees. Monies recovered would include related expenses incurred by the victim, such as lost wages or profits or car rental costs arising from the property damage or loss.

The bill would allow victims access to Young Offenders Act dispositions to help victims prove their case.

The bill would hold a parent liable unless the parent can prove that the loss or damage caused was not intentional or that he or she exercised reasonable supervision and that he or she made reasonable efforts to prevent the damage.

The bill would permit victims to collect compensation from either or both parents if both are found to be liable.

The bill would make it easier for victims to collect damages by permitting the payments to be made in instalments by fixed dates in cases where the full payment cannot be made immediately.

As a result, the proposed law would be a pragmatic and useful tool for victims. The current legislation can often make it difficult for victims seeking justice. It puts too much onus of proving the case on the victim.

We have heard from community safety organizations, police and retailers that new legislation is needed. Our government has also heard from people during public forums held by the Ontario Crime Control Commission across the province, more than 70 public forums in total.

The people of Ontario in these forums told the Crime Control Commission, of which I was initially a member, that they are concerned about property crime, and they want parents to take a stronger role in shaping the behaviour of their children. People do not want to live in communities where their homes and apartments are broken into and personal belongings are stolen, destroyed or damaged; where local park equipment is damaged; where their cars are stolen, windows smashed and the finishes scratched; and where retailers lose many thousands of dollars every day to customer theft. That is what is happening in Ontario, and much of this crime is caused by minors. In fact in 1998, 47% of all cases in youth court were related to property crime. This bill recognizes that many parents do take responsibility for their children. This bill is directed at those who do not. Providing an additional incentive to parents to supervise their children and take steps to prevent their children from causing damage reinforces the values of respect and responsibility and helps improve community safety. That is why we have taken a leadership role to improve the existing law. We have heard calls by the opposition for us to do more to help prevent youth crime—this, despite the fact that a lot of the laws governing young offenders are set by the federal Liberal government. They are out of the province's control. That includes the ineffective Young Offenders Act, which has recently been repackaged by the federal Liberal government as the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which is basically the Young Offenders Act with a new cover.

We need to set the record straight around those concerns and contradictions. We need to get to the heart of the matter. Fundamentally, the proposed Parental Responsibility Act is about the need to raise a generation of young people who are responsible and who have respect for themselves, their families, their communities and for the laws that govern all of us. It's about restoring the values of respect and responsibility, values that underpin an orderly society.

There is no question that the bill would change the status quo and enhance victims' rights. While there is a law on the books that holds parents accountable for their children's behaviour, the law does not work for all victims. Specifically, the current law places too much onus on victims and makes it difficult to prove their case and get compensation in the courts. Our government believes that it is unfair that those who have been victimized must bear most of the burden. The Parental Responsibility Act proposes to make it easier for victims in Small Claims Court by reducing the onus of proof on the victim.

We have heard from the members opposite that more must be done to stop youth crime. We agree and we are doing it. The Parental Responsibility Act is just one of a series of initiatives by this government to deal with youth crime. Other initiatives include our recent budget commitment to triple, from six to 18, the number of youth justice committees across Ontario. These committees allow community members to determine the best way for

non-violent youth offenders to make amends for their crimes. They involve intervention by community members in the actual lives of young people. This is not slap-on-the-wrist justice. This is actual intervention, finding out what's going on in that young person's life and making a difference, with this purpose: that that young person not come back into the youth criminal justice system or, worse, come back into the adult criminal justice system.

1620

Also, we have the initiative of Project Turnaround, which is a strict-discipline-facility approach to dealing with serious repeat young offenders, which is already showing a reduced rate of recidivism among the most serious violent repeat young offenders—already signs of success with respect to Project Turnaround. Also, we have the initiative of putting up to 1,000 new front-line police officers on the streets.

The Ontario government has also released a code of conduct for students in our schools to help make our schools safer, and we intend to introduce legislation to support its implementation. Bill 55 would be one more step, and a fundamental step. It would reinforce the values of respect and responsibility and help kids get on—and keep on—the right track.

Bill 55 does enhance victims' rights. It would make it easier for victims to get compensation in Small Claims Court for the deliberate theft, destruction or damage of their property caused by other people's children. If passed, this bill will help victims of property crime by minors by putting more onus of proving the case on the parents, where it should be, and not on the victim.

This bill recognizes that most parents do take responsibility for their children and recognizes the efforts of parents. The bill acknowledges the role of parents in teaching their children the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in an orderly society.

I want to stress that parents would not be held to an unfair standard by this bill. Parents who exercise reasonable supervision of their children and take steps to prevent their children from causing damage would not be liable under this act.

The Parental Responsibility Act is consistent with community values. It seeks to reinforce the principles of respect for the law and responsibility. It seeks to improve community safety. It seeks to help victims of deliberate youth property crime get compensation more easily. Passage of this bill would help achieve these goals.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): Mr Speaker, I understand that the parties have agreed, due to the overhang of the time from question period, to divide the remaining time up till 6 pm this evening equally between the three caucuses. I would therefore ask for unanimous consent for all three parties to divide the remaining time equally among the caucuses, which would mean approximately one-half hour each.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed? It is agreed.

Mr Martiniuk: We are dealing today with third reading of the Parental Responsibility Act. I can recall, as

co-chair of the Ontario Crime Control Commission, visiting Manitoba, and I do believe that was in the winter, early February or March 1998, some months before we put forth our first report on youth crime. We were in Manitoba to look at a couple of things; one was their very interesting youth justice committee system, of which they had over 80, and this was a system of volunteers dealing with first-time, non-violent young offenders. Basically, the philosophy grew out of the native circles, which were used for the same purposes.

I can also recall being in Niagara region as a guest of my seatmate Bart Maves, the member for Niagara Falls. I can recall, when we were in Niagara region with Bart at a crime control forum, having a person introduce again the whole concept of a Parental Responsibility Act, an act that would highlight the fact that many in our society feel that parents should be more accountable. When I say that, I must say, as I preface anything in dealing with parents and youth, that the vast majority of the parents and youth are responsible, but there are those few, unfortunately. The Parental Responsibility Act not only highlights that parents should be accountable for the criminal acts of their children, but also will ensure that those parents who do not feel accountable would be made legally accountable.

I should say that my friend the member for Niagara Falls, Mr Maves, was involved not only in the crime control forum way back in 1997, but was instrumental in the recent tourism safety conference in the Niagara area, where once again the good people of the Niagara area dealt with crime as it relates to tourism and vice versa, and they are concerned and doing good work on behalf of the province, in conjunction of course with the world-renowned Niagara Regional Police. On that day, the Solicitor General came down to that conference because it is an important conference, as tourism is one of the primary industries of that region.

Dealing with the Parental Responsibility Act, this bill was debated extensively for over eight hours in this House and no amendments were made to the bill. The government is committed to safer communities and the rights of victims. The Parental Responsibility Act supports both of these goals. The Parental Responsibility Act proposes to make it easier for people whose property has been stolen, intentionally damaged or destroyed by a minor to recover a maximum of \$6,000 from the parents through Small Claims Court. That is not to say that the youth would not be responsible—of course he or she is responsible—but this goes one step further and makes the parent vicariously liable for criminal acts of the youth and the damage that ensues.

The proposed legislation builds on the current law by making it easier for victims to obtain compensation by placing greater onus of proof on parents. The proposed Parental Responsibility Act would also help improve community safety by reinforcing the time-honoured values of respect and responsibility.

We are sensitive to the challenges parents face. I believe most parents are conscientious in supervising their children and raising them to be law-abiding citizens.

If passed, the Parental Responsibility Act would apply to property owners, renters and lessees. Monies recovered would include costs incurred by the victim, such as lost wages or profits and car rental costs arising from property damage or loss. It would permit and allow victims access to the Young Offenders Act disposition to help victims prove their case. It would hold a parent liable, unless the parent can prove the loss or damage caused was not intentional, or he or she exercised reasonable supervision, and he or she made reasonable efforts to prevent the damage. This act would permit victims to collect compensation from either or both of the parents, if both were found liable. This act would make it easier for victims to collect damages by permitting the payments to be made in instalments by fixed dates in those cases where full payment could not be made immediately.

As a result, the proposed law would be a pragmatic and useful tool for victims.

The current legislation can often make it difficult for victims seeking justice. It puts too much onus on proving the case of the victim. We have heard from community safety organizations, police and realtors that new legislation is needed. Our government has also heard from people during public forums held by the Ontario Crime Control Commission across the province. They told the commission that they are concerned with property crime and that they want parents to take a stronger role in shaping the behaviour of their children.

1630

People do not want to live in communities where their homes and apartments are broken into and personal belongings are stolen, destroyed or damaged, where local park equipment is damaged, or where their cars are stolen, windows smashed and the finish scratched. Those who run retail stores in our province lose many thousands of dollars every day to customer theft. This is what's happening in Ontario, and much of this crime is caused by minors. In 1998, 47% of all cases in youth court was related to property crime.

This bill recognizes that many parents do take responsibility for the behaviour of their children. This bill is directed to those who refuse to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children. It provides an additional incentive to parents to supervise their children and take steps to prevent their children from causing damage. It reinforces the values of respect and responsibility that we all hold dear and helps to improve community safety. That is why we have taken a leadership role in improving the existing law.

There is no question that Bill 55 would change the status quo and enhance victims' rights. While there is a law on the books that holds parents accountable for their children's behaviour, the law does not work for all victims. Specifically, the current law places too much onus on victims and makes it difficult for victims to prove their case and get compensation in the courts. Our government believes it is unfair that those who have been victimized must bear most of the burden. The Parental

Responsibility Act proposes to make it easier for victims in Small Claims Court by reducing the onus of proof on the victim.

Comparing a case using the current law and one using the law we are proposing clearly illustrates why victims need Bill 55. Under the current law, parents have a duty of care to supervise their child and they may be liable if they are negligent in carrying out this duty. The victim would then have to navigate through the law of negligence—not an easy feat without the assistance of a lawyer. Once they did file a claim, they would find they are responsible for proving much of the case.

Under current law, victims must prove that the defendant is the parent of the child, that they suffered damages, that the damage was related to the conduct of the parents, that there is a duty recognized in law to control a child's activity in accordance with a standard expected of a reasonable and prudent person, and that the child caused the damage and the damage was reasonably foreseeable by the parents.

Overall the victim must establish that the parents did not meet the expected standard of reasonable and prudent persons. If the victim cannot establish these facts, then the case does not proceed. Only when a victim can satisfy the court that the parents didn't meet the required standard does the onus of proof then shift to the parents.

To avoid liability, parents must prove that they exercised reasonable supervision and control over their child's behaviour. The question is, if you have suffered property damage, if you are the victim, why should it be so difficult to recover your losses? That is precisely what Bill 55 aims to fix. What we propose is that we want to make it easier for victims to get justice by reducing the onus of proof on them.

Under the proposed Parental Responsibility Act, the process would be simpler because a victim would only have to prove that the defendant, number one, is the parent of the child, that the child caused the property damage, and the amount of damage—that simple, a three-step process. It would be easier for a victim to obtain and use a finding of guilt under the Young Offenders Act. This would assist the victim in proving his or her case.

The burden would then shift to the parents to establish why they should not be found liable. The parents could either prove that the youth acted unintentionally or that they exercised reasonable supervision over the child and made all reasonable efforts to prevent the child from causing the damage.

Bill 55 would provide a most useful and pragmatic tool. By reducing the onus of proof on the victim, victims would be able to pursue their case in Small Claims Court more easily.

It is the intent of this government to assist the victim in all ways. When we have an instance where damages have been suffered, the question is, shall the guilty party bear the damages or shall the victim? We have expedited and made it easier for the victim to obtain compensation so that the burden of the act falls upon the young

offender and his or her parents in certain circumstances. It is a good act and I ask the House to support it.

We now have two other speakers from our caucus.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate on this bill. Certainly the member for Cambridge succinctly set out the rationale for the Parental Responsibility Act, 2000. I think there is a more fundamental point here. It's important that people have an understanding of our laws. There's been a lot of noise here from the members of the opposition saying: "We already have it here. There are nuisance laws. There are trespass laws."

But if you talk to most people, and lawyers too, there isn't a firm understanding of the rights of people who have their property damaged—that's what this law is about; it permeates our society—with respect to dealing with accountability and responsibility of our young people and their parents' role with respect to property damage. From an educational point of view and a transparency point of view, the purpose of this is to educate the public with respect to what their rights are, to provide a procedure through the Small Claims Court and to set up a statutory right enforcing your rights with respect to property damage up to a maximum.

Its focus is to make it easier for people whose property has been stolen, intentionally damaged or destroyed by a minor to recover a maximum of \$6,000 from the parents through the Small Claims Court procedure. It builds on the current law by making it easier for victims to obtain compensation by placing greater onus of proof on the parents rather than the victim. That's where the unbalance of the current law has been most reflected. The onus has been put on the victim who is not only the victim in terms of the property damage, but also the victim in terms of not being able to fully utilize the legal process in the way that it was intended to be used.

The proposed Parental Responsibility Act would also help improve community safety by reinforcing the time-honoured values of respect and responsibility. We're sensitive to the challenges parents face and believe that most parents are conscientious in supervising their children and raising them to be law-abiding citizens. All of us who are parents understand the challenge with respect to raising a child in this society. It's no small challenge, but it's a great challenge to all who are parents who want to raise our children properly.

1640

If passed, the Parental Responsibility Act would apply to property owners, renters and lessees. Monies recovered would include costs incurred by the victim such as lost wages or profits and car rental costs arising from the property damage or loss. It would also allow victims access to the Young Offenders Act disposition to help victims prove their case. It would hold the parent liable unless the parent can prove: (1) The loss or damage caused was not intentional; (2) he or she exercised reasonable supervision; and (3) he or she made reasonable efforts to prevent the damage. It would also

permit victims to collect compensation from either or both the parents if both are found liable.

It would make it easier for victims to collect damages by permitting the payments to be made in instalments by a fixed date in cases where the full payment cannot be made immediately. As a result, the proposed law would be a pragmatic and useful tool for victims.

Now that doesn't solve the entire problem with respect to property damage. I've certainly heard from insurance adjusters with respect to situations where our young people are used by professionals in the B and E industry—break and enter—to break and enter into homes for their own purposes. And the property damage and the loss is far in excess of \$6,000. That's something that the insurance industry and obviously our criminal justice system have to wrestle with, with respect to this particular type of conduct where our young people are being manipulated, are being used in this fashion.

But in terms of taking a proper first step, in taking a step that is designed to make victims aware of their rights, to make parents aware of their responsibilities so they can communicate that to their children and set down the parameters of what that conduct should be, I really believe that is an important first step that has to be taken. And, as everybody knows, you don't need a lawyer to use the small claims procedure. It's an equity type of process. The procedures are very simple. They're already outlined through manuals that are provided by the ministry officials and take you through the steps of how to use it. But I think the difficulty anyone would experience, if they've never been in a court of law before, is to understand that onus provision, in terms of their having to prove their case, and the hurdles they would have to face with respect to proving their loss and proving the actions of that individual, and, after they've done that, the individual not having the judgment really being credit or proof. They've had their day in court, but they don't get any real justice. And that's what this aims to change.

As the minister indicated, the current legislation can often make it difficult for victims seeking justice. It puts too much onus of proving the case on the victim. We've heard from community safety organizations, police and retailers that new legislation is needed. We also heard through the Ontario Crime Control Commission with respect to how to deal with young offenders.

I was privy to a crime control session last week with the member from London, Frank Mazzilli, who attended my riding. We listened to participants with respect to what we have to do in my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford to deal with criminal activity. There was a tremendous focus on our young people at this commission meeting and the role that education plays in criminal activity. The consensus that I gleaned from that meeting was that a lack of education can certainly have a direct relationship to criminal actions and a criminal lifestyle. That's something we have to deal with, and that's why I'm very pleased that we're looking, in our budget, at early intervention with respect to our young

people from junior kindergarten to grade 3, with respect to reading programs and reducing the class size, because early intervention to make sure that the standards and the foundation for a strong education are there can let us build on that to make sure the people we're trying to reach, the young people, are properly educated and don't turn to a situation where the Parental Responsibility Act could be utilized in the fashion envisaged under this bill.

I'm very pleased to speak on this bill, and I turn my time over now to the member from Durham, who I know is most anxious to speak to the public.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to join my colleagues the member from Cambridge and the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, who has just spoken. I might say that I do respect his legal training and his understanding of the technical nature of this bill, but I think if I look back when the minister, the Honourable Jim Flaherty—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum here?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Would the clerk please check for a quorum.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Mr Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: Mr Speaker, a quorum is now present.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Durham.

Mr O'Toole: I'm flattered to have several ministers show up to hear me speak this afternoon. It shows their interest in this whole issue of parent responsibility. The Honourable Jim Flaherty introduced this in April, and we have had extensive consultations. In my community we had a public meeting dealing with this issue, in a general sense, with the Crime Control Commission, and I know that we all, many of us as parents or family members, want the very best for our children.

What they're often looking for is some solidarity around them, some sort of framework where they can relate between respect for one another and responsibility. But I'd like to focus on the positive part; we've had the technical debate here this afternoon. I have spoken on this in second reading, and in a general sense maybe I didn't get some of my points made, so I'm going to reflect.

As a parent of five, I have a very optimistic view of young people. Quite often the few spoil it for the majority. I look around the House today and see the young pages sitting by the Speaker. I know in the last session I had two pages from my riding, and I want to pay some respect to the time they spent here and also to the pages who are here today.

Applause.

Mr O'Toole: Yes. Most young people are to be commended for dealing with a world that is perhaps more complex and sophisticated than when those of my generation were growing up. But they are looking for clear direction, and they are looking for the recognition that there are consequences for actions. I think we can

look at consequences as positive reinforcements and reminders. I think of things like recognizing excellence in students and recognizing leadership as important.

1650

The other night I was at the presentation of citizenship awards by the Blue Heron division of the Pathfinders in my riding of Durham, where about 35 young women were recognized for the work they had done to get their citizenship award badge. We had the citizenship judge, myself and the federal member there to show respect for those achievements. I think the recognition young people deserve is positive recognition. But quite often today in our society, the way it works is that the only thing that gets any recognition is the negative, the misbehaviour, the offender, and they are about 3% of the population.

I think that for far too long we've been too liberal—I'm not using that in a political sense—and sort of overlooking the responsibility and the rights issue. We have rights, but with those rights go responsibilities. That's for parents and also for young people. All this bill is saying is that parents have a responsibility to do the best they can to raise their children, and I as a parent of five completely endorse that concept.

There will be speakers, specifically the critic in the opposition party, who will try to tangle this all up with a whole bunch of gobbledegook about, "There's enough in the law today." The proof is that nothing is happening. In many cases, young people are looking for your leadership this afternoon to say there are consequences for actions, and let's remember to focus on the positive.

I also draw to mind in my few remaining moments a young fellow in my riding who I'm working with to make sure, along with other community members, he gets recognized. Andrew Murphy, a young teenager in Newcastle, on the evening of his father's death—

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: —listen to this for a moment, member for St Catharines—helped to save the family in a neighbouring house when he spotted a fire in their garage. This selfless action of a young teenager is an example to each of us that the vast majority of young people need to be recognized for their positive actions in our community and in this House.

Also, the Venturers, a group of Boy Scouts comprised of 15- to 17-year-olds in Port Perry in my riding, are working with the Durham regional police and fire services to understand the order in society and the respect—and no more importantly than during Police Week, showing respect for the police. We don't need to take a dim or negative view of law and order. That's how civil society exists. It's only as strong as the laws that protect it. This law is trying to support parents who need to be reminded today that their children's behaviour has a lot to do with the expectations and goals they set for those young people.

I've mentioned a couple of young people in my riding, I've mentioned the Pathfinders, I've also mentioned Andrew Murphy and I've actually mentioned a few other people in my riding who have made a contribution. I just

want to mention for the record that Alison Brohman was a page here. She's from Kitchener-Waterloo. The Minister of Health would probably know her personally. She was a page and spent some time here during the last session. The page from my riding, of course, was Jordyn Clark. Her family was here the last day, and they were so proud of her that we spent some time.

I'm sure the opposition and third parties will spend more of their time criticizing this bill. The Parental Responsibility Act, Bill 55, is about consequences for actions and being able to pay restitution of some sort. Malicious damage is not acceptable to me. If somebody wants to say the current laws are sufficient, then why is it almost rampant in some areas of the province? Some part of that is a result of the current laws not working.

I'll be waiting this afternoon to hear the Liberal response to the act to make parents responsible for wrong acts intentionally committed by children. The key words here are "intentionally committed." With that, my remarks are concluded.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'll be sharing my time with the member for St Paul's, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

I'm going to speak on this very briefly this afternoon and indicate that I never thought I'd see the day in this House when I'd be speaking to a bill where I thought the government was being too easy on people, but I am. What this bill does, according to the legal people in this House, is weaken the provision. It's a boondoggle not only for insurance companies that can now sue parents, but also a boondoggle for defence lawyers, in that it makes it easier for defence lawyers to do their job on behalf of the people you are aiming at.

I want to say first of all, despite the protestations on the other side that most young people are good but we're after the bad ones, that you have a new victim. You have a new target out there; you have a new scapegoat. It used to be the people on welfare, the lower end of the echelon, people who perhaps were newcomers to the country or something. You always found somebody to scapegoat. The new scapegoats are young people, and some of them are beginning to realize that you now aim at young people. I know you say that most young people are good, but really you're trying to stir up concern in the minds of senior citizens in this province that there is this wild group, a large group of young people out there looking to commit crimes against senior citizens and others. Of course, that simply isn't the case. There are some who require very strong reprimands and very strong action by the courts and by the judicial system, and I think all people want to see that happen. But this bill in fact makes it easier. That is my problem with this bill.

I guess it's another case of political grandstanding. What we're now seeing in the justice system is not well-thought-out legislation that will work, but rather something that looks good. I think it's incumbent on governments to really think carefully about legislation

and make sure it's actually going to work and ultimately be good for society as a whole.

The government could be of great assistance to the Niagara Centre for Youth Care, which deals with very troubled youth in our part of the province and could use a lot of funding to deal with these people, or deal with the education system, with child care and so on, getting at the problems very early on in life, so we don't have people who end up juvenile delinquents, as they used to be called.

This bill is yet another reannouncement. I remember Charles Harnick announced it back in 1996. The government did not proceed at that time. It's a blueprint for defence lawyers acting for parents, which is no help at all for the victims. Even defence lawyers like Clayton Ruby call the bill redundant.

Why are the Tories focusing on petty crimes that can be resolved in Small Claims Court, we may ask, when people are concerned about the gun epidemic in the province and the in-your-face crimes like home invasions and violent assaults? Young offenders need to take personal responsibility for their crimes. What you are doing as a government is nothing to ensure that youths would be held accountable for their own actions.

We in the Liberal Party tried to introduce amendments that would ensure accountability as well as amendments helping victims and promoting parental responsibility. We were not permitted to do so, because once again you slammed the door shut on debate and further placing of amendments. We wanted to have amendments which would help victims by broadening the scope of the bill for victims so that they can go to any court to seek a remedy for any amount, not just Small Claims, as under your bill, and also for personal injury and death, not just property crimes, as under your bill.

We had amendments that would help victims by removing the blueprint for the defence council, under your bill, which gives parents new excuses for getting out of their responsibilities. We leave it to the court to determine whether responsibility was actually exercised.

We have amendments which would help victims by exempting them from having to cover court filing fees and promoting parental responsibility by giving courts the discretion to order the parents found liable by the court to complete a parental training counselling program at the cost of the provincial government, as is the case in many US states. We wanted an amendment promoting individual responsibility for young offenders by giving courts the discretion to order that the kids repay their parents for damages, however the court sees fit.

So what you have here is a bill that actually weakens the present provisions, and you have not accepted any of our amendments. For those reasons I think this is not worthy of support.

1700

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I am happy to rise this afternoon on behalf of the official opposition. I remind the member for Durham, who was critical of our fulfilling our parliamentary role of providing opposi-

tion—surely he would not begrudge us that role—that we would be happy to support the bill if it was doing anything about parental responsibility. In fact, it's not. This bill is just a farce, simply pushing the hot button on youth crime, revving up the talk shows across the province and, as it turned out in this case, across the country, but making no substantive contribution.

The Ontario Liberals believe in parental responsibility. We also believe in individual responsibility and societal responsibility. If a positive, constructive bill had been put forward, then we would have supported that bill. But it wasn't, and we cannot support these public relations shams that are disguised as bills.

The Honourable Attorney General said in his speech that no amendments were put forward. I will give the minister the benefit of the doubt, because of course he would not have intended to mislead this House or mislead the province in any way. He should have known that his government slammed the door on any opportunity to provide any amendments, amendments which we had to read into the Hansard during second reading debate but which never came before this House, amendments which would have provided some teeth to this bill, amendments that would have made this bill effective. Instead, the bill, in a nutshell, has diluted the existing legal rights and remedies provided under legislation and jurisprudence that preceded this government at the same time as, frankly, misleading people into thinking that there is legislation under this government which does anything about parental responsibility.

I know that the members opposite would say, "That doesn't mean anything coming from the member for St Paul's." Well, how about Priscilla de Villiers? When the Parental Responsibility Act was proposed by the crime commission, Ms de Villiers, head of CAVEAT, said that this proposal to provide for parental responsibility would be easier said than done. She went on to say, in response to the recommendations provided by the crime commission, that it puts parents in an awkward position.

"If you have a 15-year-old who is out of control and who knows his or her parent is on the hook, I don't know what a parent is supposed to do," she said, as head of CAVEAT.

"Yes," she said, "changes need to be made to the system, but I'm not sure this is the right approach."

I am in solidarity with her with respect to this particular position on this particular bill. She said, "I don't see how it will work." I couldn't agree more with the former head of CAVEAT, but she's not alone in speaking out against this bill as being a sham.

The head of an association of parent support groups in Ontario, Stephanie Wagman, said in an article published in the Hamilton Spectator, April 5, 2000: "Our acting-out children couldn't care less if we (parents) have to pay for their misdeeds. Nowhere in this legislation are the children responsible for their behaviour."

But there's more. In an editorial put out by the Ottawa Citizen on April 10, 2000, they quote a professor of law at the University of Ottawa, David Paciocco, as saying,

"This is just rank politicking, appealing to frustration out there (over youth crime)." I couldn't agree more, "rank politicking" being the description of this bill.

I've read into the record from a number of editorials and a number of sources in second reading, and I'm not going to repeat the speech, unlike the speeches we heard from the government.

Here's what the Brantford Expositor said in its editorial: "Perhaps (parental responsibility) doesn't matter to the Harris government, which appears to be most interested in the appearance of action. It's introducing this bill to 'encourage respect for the law' but the result may be precisely the opposite."

The Hamilton Spectator, on April 5, 2000, said, "The Harris government, which emphasizes crime control, should be putting more priority on crime prevention, especially in reaching out to young people who are most likely to make the wrong choices," in referring to this law as a half measure. So I'm not alone in saying that this bill in fact is making no contribution whatsoever to parental responsibility or to youth crime and that it is misleading.

We heard from the member opposite that the onus has been shifted off the victim under this act. Nothing could be further from the truth. Under section 68 of the Family Law Act, passed under a previous government, it spelled out in black and white that the onus rests on the parents to establish that in fact their child had not behaved unreasonably. Nothing has been changed in the onus, and in fact the Attorney General, to his credit, never said that the onus shifted off of the victim. He never said that in introducing the bill—because it didn't. The onus has never been on the victim. The onus has always been on the parent to establish this. So there's no contribution in this bill at all.

The honourable Attorney General said that this bill is going to be a good bill. Why? Because we're going to follow the precedent in Manitoba. He wished he had never said that and he eventually backtracked on that statement and tried to distinguish this bill from the Manitoba bill. But he didn't say that at the beginning. On October 22, 1999, reported in the North Bay Nugget, he said—these are his words—"“(Parents) will have to demonstrate that they have made an effort to control the activities of their children,” Flaherty said. ‘It seems to have worked in Manitoba.’” If Manitoba is the model for this bill—and it is; the Manitoba bill was copied, pasted and now thrown into the Ontario books—we already know, we already have the case study, it is a total waste of legislative space. Here's the record of the great Manitoba bill that supposedly worked, according to the honourable Attorney General. Since 1996, when this bill was introduced, three claims have been brought per year under the Manitoba act. How many have succeeded? Less than one per year since it was introduced in 1996.

I heard from the honourable members opposite that somehow this was going to change the status quo. Well, some change to the status quo, this bill. Maybe it has changed the talk show circuits for a time, but it will make not a whit of difference to parenting, to crime, to

responsibility, to in-your-face crimes, to vandalism. It won't make any difference at all. The evidence we have is in the province of Manitoba: three per year. Is this bill the flagship of this government? It sure is. That's what they said when the session was introduced. They said that this bill was going to be the flagship of their crime mandate.

1710

Since the suggestion was made, incorrectly, by the Attorney General that no amendments were tabled, I also want to take this opportunity to say again what we would have done, what we would have tabled as amendments. To begin with, we would have tried to help victims by broadening the scope of the bill for victims so that they can go to any court to seek a remedy for any amount—not just Small Claims Court, as per the Manitoba/Ontario bill—and also for personal injury and death, not just for property crimes as per the Tory bill. We would have helped victims by removing the blueprint for defence counsel under the Tory bill which gives parents new excuses for getting out of their responsibilities.

What the Attorney General has done in this bill, in copying the Manitoba bill, to some extent has, I understand, codified the existing defences in the jurisprudence. If in fact that would have been helpful in some way, we would have supported it, but section 68 of the Family Law Act was never litigated. So it's not like there was some cry out among victims to have this jurisprudence clarified by statute. Nobody is going to court, and understandably so. When told by victims of crime that they don't think it makes sense that a kid can get out of responsibility for causing damage to property or otherwise by saying, "I'm a kid," the answer of this government is to say to victims, "Go sue them in Small Claims Court." You always could sue them in Small Claims Court. You also could have resort to statute, and the onus would be on the parents, not the victim. So there's no assistance being provided to victims in this bill whatsoever.

We would have introduced amendments to help victims by exempting them from having to cover court filing fees. I know that the justice critic for the New Democratic Party has mentioned this before, quite rightly, and he probably will mention it again.

We also would have introduced amendments to promote parental responsibility by giving courts the discretion to order parents found liable by the court to complete a parental training and counselling program at the cost of the provincial government, as is undertaken by a number of US states.

The answer from the other side might be: "Oh well, what do these courses mean? These courses are useless." I'll tell you that (1) these courses are a contribution, but (2) these courses that the government might impugn in fact are sitting there in the legislation as defences so that a parent can say in defence of the actions of a wayward child: "I'm not responsible for that because I took a course a couple of years ago. I may not have been supervising my child at the time, but I took a course a couple

of years ago. I may be totally negligent in supervising the children, but I took a course a couple of years ago." This is a breakthrough in the jurisprudence, a breakthrough for defence rights authored by the Progressive Conservative government. How does that make any sense?

Next we would have introduced amendments promoting individual responsibility for young offenders by giving courts the discretion to order that the kids repay their parents for damages however the court sees fit. That would have been a contribution to this bill, and if the government had put that in the bill in the first place, that would have been interesting. The suggestion has been made before, "Why not take away the driver's licences of kids?" Maybe that's a remedy, maybe that's a way to hold them responsible. Maybe we should provide for preventive measures such as investing in mentoring programs like Youth Assisting Youth, a great, successful program headquartered in the riding of St Paul's which has a waiting list of 300 people, 300 kids who want help from other youth and other mentors, but they can't do that because training has to be provided and resources have to be provided. That would have been a contribution to youth crime, but we heard none of that.

I find it amazing that this government would introduce a bill that doesn't have the support of those who are calling out for some action in this particular area. I find it amazing that this government wouldn't listen to Priscilla de Villiers when she said this bill won't work. I listened to her. I agree with her and I would have liked to see what amendments might have been introduced to give the bill some teeth. We have those amendments, we have them right here, but we can't introduce those amendments because, remarkably, this so-called flagship of this government's crime agenda was rammed through on a time allocation motion. One would have thought they would have wanted to debate this bill for an extensive period of time, take it across the province and hear from victims and hear from parents and hear from youth and hear from those who live with these issues day in and day out, and hear from Ms de Villiers, who would have told them, as she said after the Parental Responsibility Act was initially proposed by the crime commission, "Look, this isn't going to work as it stands."

If this government were serious about doing something about parental responsibility, then they would have made those changes, but you didn't. You didn't make those changes because there is no law-and-order mandate of this government in the year 2000. You've lost it. You don't know what it is. You don't know what to do. The Parental Responsibility Act was an idea from Mr Flaherty's predecessor, Charles Harnick. He made a submission to a House of Commons committee on this very point. It's an old idea.

The great contribution of the government thus far, since being elected in June, has been the squeegee bill. Christopher's Law, which was supported by all sides of this House, was the subject of three throne speeches—three. I remember Maurice Duplessis said, "No highway is worth paving that can't get you through four general

elections,” but that should not apply to victims’ rights, it certainly should not have applied to the sex offender registry, but unfortunately that principle seems to apply to every single crime initiative that comes forward from this government.

What’s the government doing about guns? As we’ve already heard before, they’re helping the gun lobby and they’re hurting existing gun control legislation. What are they doing about parental responsibility? Against the advice of Ms de Villiers, against the advice of parents and against the advice of victims, this government decided to introduce legislation that is going to dilute—I repeat, dilute—victims’ rights and distract the public from the fact that this government is doing nothing in the area of law and order, yet slam the door on any notion, any idea that perhaps we could improve this bill to make it worthwhile.

As I now yield this debate to my colleague, I would like a straightforward answer from this government as to what their mandate is when it comes to law and order, because thus far all we’ve heard is either old news, recycled news, reannounced news or misleading news. This bill cannot be supported, not by Ontario Liberals. For all those who take parental responsibility, individual responsibility and our safe streets seriously, we will not buy into this con of a bill. It’s unfortunate that we have to spend as little time as we do debating this bill since the government, in its honourable tyranny and serial despotism, has decided not to hear any amendments on it. The bill’s an abomination and it will not receive our support.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I’m always most impressed with my colleague from St Paul’s. Again, he has outlined and described the position of the members of the Liberal Party in a most effective way. I hope there are some members of the government who are listening and will understand that this act is significantly flawed and that it does require some amendments, and I hope the members of the government will have the strength to vote as they should when the vote is taken.

For my part, I’m going to address my remarks from the perspective of a parent, as a mother and as someone who has been a school board trustee for 15 years. I would like to think that for those 15 years I’ve been an advocate for children and young people.

My husband and I have four children. The member for Durham talked about his five children. I’m very happy to share with the members of the House that we have raised four children. I take very seriously the responsibility of instilling the values of respect and responsibility in our children. It has certainly been our practice in our home to have our children understand that when they act inappropriately, when they cause hurt or harm to others or the property of others, they should indeed be responsible for those actions. We hold our children accountable for their actions. We do not do that by saying to them, “If you damage or hurt someone else or something else, we’ll pay the bill.” Quite the contrary; even within the

community, the riding, in which I live, the people I represent it’s common that families don’t try and bail out their children, but rather they have taught them to account for their own actions.

1720

I have very serious concerns with the message this government is sending to our young people. You are saying in law that if you cause harm to another’s property—not to another individual either. I find it quite interesting that this is intentional damage to property but does not affect personal damage. In my opinion, if you were to harm a person, that’s far more serious than if you were to harm a thing. A person is far more precious. I’m puzzled by that as well. But to suggest that if you harm another, someone else is going to be held accountable, someone else is going to pay for that, I think is sending a very wrong message.

Since I’ve been in this House, this government has introduced three bills that would have an impact on young people in this province. The first one was what we call the squeegee bill. The second one isn’t a bill but an announcement from the government with regard to the code of conduct. It’s not something we’ve debated yet. The government has presented the notion that if we make young people stand up every day and sing the national anthem and say the oath of allegiance, they’re going to be responsible and respectful young people.

Now we have before us the Parental Responsibility Act, where we’re saying to young people in Ontario, “If you do damage, your parents are going to have to pay the bill, up to \$6,000.” That’s not my experience of either holding young people accountable or, really, responsible parenting.

I’m concerned as well about the message this government is sending to young people in our province, because the three items that I’ve talked about really focus on these bad kids we have in Ontario and how, by golly, we have to bring in some laws that are going to straighten them out and make them respectful and responsible young people. I would suggest, from what I’ve been able to observe, that by employing your ideas and your tactics, we will not have more responsible young people; quite the contrary.

I come from a rural community. I was always taught, and witnessed in my community, that respect wasn’t something you could order or mandate; it was something you earned. So for the government to suggest that you can legislate responsibility and you can make young people respectful I think is really quite far from what in fact is the case.

For all of the reasons that my colleagues have so eloquently placed before the floor of this Legislature today, I have to say that I would not be able to support the legislation as it has been presented. I do not believe that it provides the support for families or young people that is required in Ontario at this time.

Mr Kormos: I’ve got but 29 minutes to speak. Once those 29 minutes are over, the debate is over. It wasn’t our choosing. The opposition parties thought there was

enough worthy of debate here that, as you know, we voted against this government's time allocation motion. A time allocation motion is when you shut down debate—shut her down. When you don't like what's being said in the Legislature and, more importantly, you don't like what the response is out there in communities across the province, you shut down the debate and move the focus on to something else.

I've been through many time allocation motions in this House over the course of almost 12 years now. I'll tell you this: I've never voted for one of them. Quite frankly, I believe that it's important that this issue, like so many others that pass through this Legislature, whether from this government or its predecessor government or that government's predecessor government—that's why we're here, to engage, one hopes, in an exchange of views and, in the course of performing the role of opposition, yes, to criticize, with the hope that you can either expose the hoaxes or improve those things that could withstand a little bit of refinement.

In this instance, we're dealing with a hoax. You see, this bill has got nothing—zero, zip—to do with victims' rights—nothing. I feel I'm very much the third wheel here. This is all about the Harris government conducting an Alliance campaign against the federal Liberals with respect to an upcoming federal election, and as far as I'm concerned, my goodness, a pox on both their houses. What we've got here is an effort on the part of the government to import some federal politicking into the provincial Legislature. There are so many other important things to debate.

This has nothing to do with victims' rights. The Victims' Bill of Rights has everything to do with victims' rights, doesn't it? Unfortunately, in May 1999, a year ago, the Victims' Bill of Rights, heralded by this government as the panacea for all that victims have ever needed or desired, was exposed in our courts as being yet another hoax. What did Judge Day say about the Victims' Bill of Rights from this government? The judge said it wasn't worth the paper it's written on. The judge said it was a bill of rights that contained no rights, no remedies, didn't assist victims in any way, shape or form.

We've been waiting for a year, because the Premier, during the course of the election campaign in the spring of 1999 and as a response to that court ruling, promised a real Victims' Bill of Rights. What have we heard from this government? Nothing. What have we seen by way of legislation in terms of a real Victims' Bill of Rights? Nothing. I tell them today, as I've told them before, that they could be assured that a real Victims' Bill of Rights—not the hoax that was exposed a year ago but a real Victims' Bill of Rights that has meaning and substance and provides real rights for victims—would receive co-operative support certainly from this New Democratic Party and, I suspect, as well—I can't speak for them; don't purport to—from the official opposition.

So what have we got here? We've got an attempt to distort the reality of the laws that exist now. I listened carefully during this brief period of third reading debate.

I heard government members talk about how this Parental Responsibility Act was some new creature that was going to enhance the ability of victims to be compensated for their losses as a result of youth crime. The fact remains, as has been noted and is irrefutable by the government, that negligent parents have always been liable for the misdeeds of their children. And it's been the law in this province since 1986, when section 68 was added to the Family Law Act, that the onus is on parents to establish that they were exercising appropriate supervision and control over their children performing these misdeeds, performing these acts of destruction or of mayhem, acts which may in their own right be criminal.

1730

Let's make another thing perfectly clear. We offer no comfort here to people who commit crimes. Again, I think it would be irresponsible for any member of this Legislature to suggest that any elected member here somehow wants to give solace or comfort to people who commit crimes, be they crimes against property or, far more dramatically, crimes of violence against other people. I wouldn't suggest that of members of the official opposition. I wouldn't suggest it of any member of the government. Of course not. What a naive, even stupid, proposition, to suggest that any member of this assembly somehow wants to comfort perpetrators of crime.

As I've said before, we, I think quite naturally, find youth crime to be even more repugnant, to be even more incomprehensible and certainly unacceptable. What are we talking about? We're talking about children committing adult crimes.

I was so pleased earlier today to join, as all members of the Legislature did, with the Solicitor General in his announcement regarding Police Week 2000, a week when we applaud our police officers, when we try to understand more effectively what they do and how important they are to our communities. I was pleased in a very non-partisan way to be able to join with the Solicitor General, especially when he said, with respect to police, how they work and, yes, risk their lives each day to make Ontario one of the safest places to live, work and raise a family. As I joined with the Solicitor General in his broader observations about police and policing, I joined with him in that observation as well.

Let's make no mistake about it: This is one of the safest places to live, work and raise a family. That's not to suggest we have to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to crime that takes place in our community. Although we've seen a modest reduction in the incidence of crime in general and in the incidence of youth crime, as I indicated here last night, to talk about statistics and a reduction in the rate of crime is of little comfort to a victim, isn't it? It's of little solace to the victim of a break and enter to say, "Oh, well, sir or ma'am, you've got to understand there were fewer break and enters this year than there were last year." That doesn't change the traumatic and dramatic and tragic reality for that victim of a break and enter, or—need I say it?—assault or robbery or mugging or attacks with a weapon or murder and other forms of homicide.

I want to say something very clearly. It's where I find the government's position somewhat contradictory. I join with all of these government members and I believe every member of this Legislature, along with the vast majority if not all Ontarians, who say that even young people should be held accountable for what they do. Please, let's make sure we reward young people—the vast majority of young people—for the good things they're doing, for the incredible creativity and imagination and brilliance of young people in this province. Make sure we recognize that. Perhaps we should be recognizing that more often than we do. People have talked about a civil society. Let's also make sure we send the message out there that in a civil society people have to accept responsibility and accountability for their misdeeds as well.

The answer really lies not in this piece of legislation that does nothing more than restate the law. It's obviously a total failure in terms of public relations for this government. This government wouldn't even permit committee hearings around this bill. It didn't want to hear from people across this province who might well have had things to say about so-called parental responsibility. They didn't want to hear from victims who may have had some interesting things to say about the status quo, in view of the fact that opposition members have made reference to the status quo. I would have been eager to hear from them, and I have heard from some of them through my own offices. This government didn't want to hear from the families of delinquent children. I've heard from them as well.

Please, let's understand that there are a whole lot of hard-working, good mothers and fathers out there struggling to cope and support their kids in the most difficult of circumstances, doing all the right things, who because of a whole pile of circumstances, including—look, parents have a lot of competition out there, peer pressure, pop culture, the media. Mr Conway from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke last night made reference to the content of the movies that some of our youngest citizens and residents are exposed to, and the glamorization of crime and violence. This is surely as difficult an age as any to raise children. The influences that parents have to compete with have never been more powerful, have never been more omnipresent and unavoidable. You can't chain your kids up and lock them in the basement. It's unspeakable.

The fact is that there's a huge number of families out there who have been working hard, doing their best, doing all the right things as they know them, who still find a kid who goes very much off track, who still find a kid who ends up in young offender court, who still find a kid from the best of families who ends up, whether it's because of getting involved with drugs—certainly that's a big factor. The drug subculture and the drug traffickers are tough competition for families and family life out there.

These families find themselves reaching out for help. They find themselves, according to Professor Ambert—

and I hope I don't misstate any of the conclusions that she reached in any number of works. She's one of the people I was eager to invite to come to committee hearings, if this government had only permitted them, because she has spent, I believe, almost 20 years now studying the effects of delinquent children on their families, and studying those families. She tells tale after tale as a result of very scientific and legitimate research methodology of how destructive delinquent children are to their own families, how destructive they are to marriages and to siblings, brothers and sisters, and the fact that these families reach out for help. It's the sort of help that this government has been disinclined to provide.

These are families who mortgage their homes for a second or third time to send the kids to a military school or some other private institution. These are families who go to great lengths seeking out psychiatric help and other kinds of psychotherapy for kids who have gone off-track. These are families who, more often than not, regard the police as the first resort. As one mother of a delinquent child said, "My God, I used to be able to think that the police were the people I could count on if my kid were to come home with, let's say, a box full of stolen goods." Is this kind of legislation going to be a disincentive for parents to call the police for fear they should be held accountable?

1740

Quite frankly, I think we should be encouraging and supporting those families with delinquent kids, to help them deal with that before that delinquency matures and grows into full-fledged, adult criminal behaviour. We talked about this a little bit last night on the other hoax that this government initiated, their resolution. I'm going to ask people to take a look at the Hansard coverage of what some of the government members had to say about that resolution. My goodness, I don't think any of them had even read the most basic of background material.

Let me put this to you. I would call upon members of this Legislature, as I know some already have, to spend some time in youth courts. Take a look at the women and men who are sitting as judges and take a look at their incredible caseloads. They're running sausage factories. They're processing case after case and they're doing it notwithstanding the incredibly high level of pressure on them and the incredibly high workload. They're doing it impressively, professionally and with great commitment.

Let's talk about accountability because I believe, and the New Democrats believe, that yes, one of the most important things to impress upon young people who commit crimes is that they are going to be held accountable for their conduct. Look, very few of us grew up with Ozzie and Harriet. It was but a fantasy for most of us as children. Most of us came from less-than-perfect homes. Most of us have never endured the incredible despair that increasing numbers of families have to with increasing poverty, with more and more moms or dads having to work not just two but three jobs because jobs are increasingly lower wage and increasingly minimum wage and increasingly part-time and increasingly tem-

porary. And these are parents trying to feed their families and pay their rent or pay whatever mortgage they can. Again, the competition is pretty stiff out there.

We've witnessed, in community after community, complete abandonment of support for those sorts of activities that used to involve young people and guarantee that they were going to have positive peer pressure and positive leadership from adults. In my community alone—and I'm convinced my community isn't like any other in the province—where user fees have become more and more commonplace, families are finding it more difficult, especially the less-than-wealthy families, to put kids into hockey or basketball or baseball in the summertime. I talk to these families—I go to many of the events where they're with their kids—and they tell me about how they have to ration participation in those activities for their children because of the new costs associated with it. And families looking for professional help for disturbed kids, kids who may well end up becoming serious delinquents, who may well end up becoming serious adult criminals if there isn't effective and meaningful intervention, find the door slammed shut in their face day after day as they try to access psychiatric services for their kids.

Let me get back to the issue of accountability because the courts have available to them all sorts of very creative sentencing options. They do. What are we talking about, telling victims to go to Small Claims Court and pay a \$50 filing fee and another fee to serve papers and another 100 bucks to set the matter down for trial? Please. Don't you understand that as part of the sentencing process the sentencing judge can order restitution? But that sort of thing isn't going to happen when judges are as hurried and rushed as they are. It isn't going to happen when there isn't a meaningful Victims' Bill of Rights and, more important, those resources, those staff in courtrooms, in police offices, in police stations, in police services, to work with and alongside victims to help them prepare the material alone so that the crown attorneys who are prosecuting these cases—yes, and getting convictions—can present that material in an appropriate way to a sentencing judge. There simply aren't enough probation officers, as there should be to, ensure that those types of orders, if judges had the time to make them, are being complied with.

So I'll join this government any day of the week when it comes to making sure that probation offices are properly staffed, to making sure that victim support offices are properly staffed, to making sure that crown attorneys' offices are properly staffed, to making sure that our courtrooms are adequately staffed with support personnel as well as judges, to ensure that victims have a role in the sentencing process and so that judges can use the law available to them, which means that victims don't have to go to Small Claims Court or General Division court or any other court to take their chance by way of a crapshoot in litigation against parents.

Nonsense for the Attorney General to say the amount for filing a Small Claims Court action is trivial. I told you

what it is. Didn't always used to be that range; it's as a result of this government increasing the fees for Small Claims Court. I told you, 50 bucks to file your claim, more money to have it served and 100 bucks to set it down for trial. So you're talking about victims being out at least 150 bucks, more likely closer to 200 bucks, right off the top, without any guarantees of success in a civil action, and even if they get judgment, without any guarantees of getting paid. There are other people here who understand this language more than I do. It's the phenomenon of being, I'm told by lawyers, inexorable. You can't get blood out of a stone.

Why isn't this government talking about facilitating judges imposing restitution and compensation as a part of sentencing orders so that the young offender himself or herself has to accept responsibility and personal accountability for compensating that victim, whoever that happens to be? I'll tell you why the government isn't doing that: because it's so much easier to fan the flames. Their embarrassment, that quite frankly should be shame, about their failure, this government's failure, Premier Mike Harris's failure, the Conservatives' failure to implement and enact a meaningful Victims' Bill of Rights, forces them to go off in all these other directions trying to create little firestorms here and there to distract attention from their real failure to address the rights of victims, the needs of families that are trying as hard as they can to deal with a delinquent kid before it is too late, in dealing with the real issue of law and order and public safety in our communities.

This government talks a big game about law and order. What do they enact? A squeegee kid bill, for Pete's sake. That's their idea of law and order: Go out and bust some squeegee kids. Make our streets safe, bust a squeegee kid, and if you want to go the extra mile, bust a panhandler. That's Mike Harris's version of law and order: Bust some kid, maybe with a few more earrings in his or her ear than you or I might be inclined to wear, and maybe hair not quite silver but more inclined to be green or what have you, who's trying to make a couple—think about it. This government's idea of law and order is grabbing kids who are trying to hustle a couple of bucks in an afternoon by providing a service, kids who quite frankly impress me as being somewhat entrepreneurial. That's their idea of law and order: Bust the squeegee kids. It has nothing to do with victims' rights; it has nothing to do with safer communities; it has nothing to do with nipping youth crime in the bud.

You know the stats: 45% of those young people in young offender court are there for the third time or more. The others, the ones for whom one appearance, for whom an arrest, for whom being apprehended by the police provides sufficient deterrence, we don't have to worry about. Those kids are never going to appear in court again.

This government wants to ignore the real crisis we have out there. You know as well as I do, and the people of Ontario know, that the single most effective deterrent to crime, regardless of the age of the perpetrator, is the

likelihood of detection. That is as axiomatic as any observation, as any conclusion can ever be, yet we have fewer police officers now than we did, per capita, in 1994. You want to start dealing with crime? Give our cops the resources. Give our cops the resources to restore youth bureaus that dealt specifically with—I don't know. Do you want to call it the youth subculture? At least they dealt specifically with young people and knew the young people, knew the schools, knew the elementary schools, knew the high schools and were able to get involved in these things before they grew into more and more serious crime. Give our police officers the resources so that there can be a meaningful police presence on the streets of both Toronto and small-town Ontario communities like Welland and Pelham and Thorold and St Catharines. There are nights when in the city of Welland there are but two police officers on patrol in the whole community. God help us if and when something tragic happens.

This government wants to try to present itself as the friend of the police, the friend of law and order, the friend of safe communities, yet all we've seen from them is a Victims' Bill of Rights that is a betrayal of victims. Notwithstanding the admonitions of Judge Day of Ontario and notwithstanding a year having passed, what does this government do about real victims' rights? Nothing. They present us with this hoax, again a total contradiction, merely restating the laws that exist and, if anything, presenting an image to young people who should be being held accountable for their conduct, "Oh, no, you can blame mom and dad."

Give the courts the resources, give judges the resources so that they can apply the law even as it exists now, so that they can impose restitution and compensation orders on young offenders found guilty, and give our justice system the probation officers who can ensure that

those young people comply with those orders. Then you'll have meaningful restitution. Then you'll have young people who truly understand what it means to have to be accountable for one's own behaviour and I predict right now that you'll reduce the recidivism rate significantly in the process of a mere 12 months. Do this, I say to Mike Harris, and you can reduce repeat offender rates significantly within but 12 months.

Give the families who have kids who are going way off track, who have kids who are entering that quagmire of delinquency, the resources they need to deal with that kid: the psychiatric services for youths, the counselling services. Give them back some of the support services we've had in our educational system, in our elementary and high schools, taken away by this government because of its passion for its tax cuts for the wealthiest, and I can guarantee you you'll reduce the rate of recidivism within 12 months.

I condemn this government for its hoax on the people of Ontario. This bill doesn't warrant support by anybody in this assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The time for debate has been completed.

Mr Flaherty has moved third reading of Bill 55. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The vote will be deferred until tomorrow, during the portion of the standing orders that provide for deferred votes.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1755.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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