



**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 8 June 2000**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Jeudi 8 juin 2000**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 8 June 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 8 juin 2000

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS**

CITY OF OTTAWA  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2000  
LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA CITÉ D'OTTAWA

Mrs Boyer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to amend the City of Ottawa Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la cité d'Ottawa.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member for Ottawa-Vanier.

**M<sup>me</sup> Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier):** C'est vraiment avec fierté et enthousiasme que je m'adresse à l'Assemblée législative pour entamer la discussion sur mon projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la cité d'Ottawa, qui vise à s'assurer que le gouvernement provincial reconnaisse la dualité linguistique de la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa, que ce gouvernement reconnaisse l'existence de groupes linguistiques à travers le Canada et que la région de la capitale nationale reflète ce fait.

I rise to speak on my private member's bill, which advocates official bilingualism in our nation's capital.

En tant que première femme franco-ontarienne à siéger à l'Assemblée législative de la province de l'Ontario, je me suis fait un devoir d'appuyer tout effort qui assurera la reconnaissance des droits linguistiques de la communauté francophone.

I speak here today with the ever-increasing conviction that the restructuring of Ottawa should never take place without including wholeheartedly the recognition that the French-language fact has a pivotal role to play in the daily operations of our national capital.

Mais avant de poursuivre, laissez-moi vous expliquer la raison pour laquelle je reviens à la charge avec ce projet de loi. En décembre dernier, lors de l'adoption du projet de loi sur la restructuration de la ville d'Ottawa, j'ai été extrêmement désappointée, extrêmement frustrée du fait que le premier ministre de l'Ontario, Mike Harris, et son gouvernement ont manqué à leur devoir de Canadiens et de Canadiennes en laissant tomber la

recommandation du conseiller Shortliffe portant sur le statut bilingue officiel de la ville.

Tout comme la commissaire aux langues officielles, M<sup>me</sup> Dyane Adam, j'estime que l'étude détaillée préparée par le conseiller spécial, M. Shortliffe, à la suite d'un processus de consultation très intensif, constituait une toile de fond appropriée à la nouvelle structure urbaine, y compris les aspects linguistiques, qui rejoignait à la fois les considérations d'efficacité et d'économie.

Je tiens à répéter que M. Harris a manqué une chance inouïe, une occasion inouïe, de ne pas aller de l'avant avec cette recommandation que la ville d'Ottawa soit déclarée officiellement bilingue, et ce par voie de législation provinciale. Quel affront aux francophones. Il avait vraiment une occasion en or de démontrer aux francophones de l'Ontario qu'il croyait en leur cause et qu'il nous voyait comme des citoyens et citoyennes à part entière. C'est une question d'égalité et de respect. Quel manque de jugement. Quelle lâcheté de remettre cette décision au comité de transition présidé par M. Bennett.

Si la recommandation de M. Shortliffe avait été insérée dans la loi, nous n'aurions pas ce débat aujourd'hui. Ce gouvernement aurait dû se prononcer sur la question. Il faut absolument adopter une loi établissant clairement le statut bilingue officiel de la nouvelle mégacité.

My bill calls for the requirement of full bilingualism in the written, oral and electronic communications executed by the municipal government in our national capital. My bill also calls for the provision of bilingual services in both English and French from any office of any municipal agency.

De plus, mon projet de loi demande que le conseil municipal désigne une personne comme ombudsman des services bilingues et dirige vers cette même personne les membres du public qui ont besoin d'aide relativement à toute plainte liée à leurs droits ou aux obligations de la cité visant au présent article.

Bien sûr, allez-vous me dire, ces mêmes points ont été abordés par le conseil de transition, qui a rendu sa décision le 8 mai dernier, lorsqu'il a annoncé sa politique linguistique, encore suite à une consultation publique très intensive avec les citoyens et les citoyennes de la ville d'Ottawa. Par contre, souvenons-nous que c'est une recommandation—ce n'est pas une loi—au conseil de la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa qu'il se devra de débattre et d'adopter lorsqu'il entrera en fonction le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2001.

Bravo. On dit que c'est un commencement. D'accord. C'est un commencement. Mais encore dois-je répéter que ce n'est qu'une recommandation, ce n'est pas insérée

dans la loi, et c'est déplorable. Nous devons à tout prix légiférer cette recommandation pour qu'elle réponde enfin aux attentes des contribuables, qu'ils soient français ou anglais, de se faire servir automatiquement et promptement dans leur propre langue sans devoir le demander. Est-ce qu'on tente de répéter le même débat que celui de l'hôpital Montfort? Est-ce le même débat qui commence, qu'on nous promet et qu'on dit plus tard qu'on aura autre chose? On y a goûté avec l'hôpital Montfort, croyez-moi.

Il faut absolument, et je me répète, que la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa soit déclarée officiellement bilingue par voie de législation.

Lorsque nous parlons d'Ottawa, nous pensons aux institutions nationales et à tout ce que ces institutions représentent. Ottawa est un endroit dont tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes, n'importe leur langue maternelle, peuvent être fiers. La ville d'Ottawa n'est pas une municipalité comme les autres. Son statut de capitale nationale le tient à part de toutes les autres villes de l'Ontario. Ce que les membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre refusent de voir, c'est que les deux communautés linguistiques ont droit à la dignité provenant de cette reconnaissance de dualité linguistique de notre cher pays.

I must remind you very clearly that it is not only francophones who are asking this government to recognize the French language by declaring it official in Ottawa. Let me tell you that a large majority of Ottawa citizens of both official language groups support the Shortliffe recommendation that Ottawa be declared officially bilingual. It is absolutely reprehensible that the government of Ontario has decided to ignore what is seen by many as the single most important recommendation made by the Shortliffe committee looking into the restructuring of the city of Ottawa.

M. Shortliffe a même recommandé que le gouvernement de l'Ontario légifère de façon à désigner la ville d'Ottawa officiellement bilingue, en français et en anglais. Comment le gouvernement provincial a-t-il répliqué à cette recommandation? En ne faisant rien et en essayant de se cacher derrière cette controverse. On nous a dit, au mois de décembre, « Ne craignez pas. Le comité de transition va pousser le nouveau conseil de ville d'Ottawa à mettre ce statut bilingue lors de leur nouveau conseil. »

Ce n'est pas ce qu'on veut. Ce n'est pas une recommandation. On veut que ce soit légiféré une fois pour toutes.

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At the end of the day, the issue remains a simple one: A nation's capital must reflect the reality of that nation's existence. Given its status as its nation's capital, the city of Ottawa must reflect the bilingual nature of this town, a nature where anglophones and francophones are equally respected and recognized, and equally entitled to the dignity that goes with such recognition. This government has the power to make it happen.

On se doit d'avoir un gouvernement qui reconnaisse ce fait. Ce dont est important de se souvenir, et ce qui est

au centre de cette crise, c'est que la capitale nationale doit refléter le caractère du Canada. Ce caractère en est un où les deux communautés linguistiques doivent se rapprocher, doivent travailler ensemble.

I am asking you for your support to reconsider the official bilingual status of the city of Ottawa. On se doit de reconsidérer et de repenser à légiférer cette recommandation de M. Shortliffe et de rendre finalement la capitale du Canada, la ville d'Ottawa, officiellement bilingue, de reconnaître la dualité linguistique de ses citoyens et citoyennes.

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président. Thank you.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) :** J'aimerais premièrement dire à M<sup>me</sup> Boyer, la députée d'Ottawa-Vanier, que je n'étais pas supposé d'être ici tout le matin. D'habitude, le jeudi, c'est le jour qu'on retourne à nos comtés dans le grand Nord. Mon comté va de Timmins à la baie d'Hudson. On a beaucoup d'ouvrage à ce point-là, mais j'ai pensé très important de venir ici aujourd'hui pour donner mon appui à M<sup>me</sup> Boyer.

Ce que M<sup>me</sup> Boyer essaie de faire, je pense, va dans la bonne direction. C'est-tu vraiment la manière de s'organiser avec ce qui est arrivé à la ville, la municipalité d'Ottawa? Non. Je pense que le gouvernement aurait pu reconnaître, quand ils ont créé la loi qui a fusionné les municipalités, que toute loi municipale qui est en place, comme les désignations de la ville de Vanier ou d'autres qui disent que les services en français vont être offerts, va être respectée. Franchement, c'est ça que le gouvernement provincial aurait dû faire. Donc, je veux premièrement dire à M<sup>me</sup> Boyer que j'appuie le concept de son projet de loi et je vais le supporter, mais je pense qu'on aurait pu faire ça un peu différemment.

Ma vision est que, premièrement, la province elle-même doit être déclarée officiellement bilingue. Nous dans l'Assemblée législative avons le pouvoir, si on décide de le faire, de déclarer la province elle-même officiellement bilingue. En tant qu'Assemblée législative, on a ce droit. C'est nous qui gérons tous les services de la province qui viennent de la province elle-même. Ça veut dire tous les services des ministères de l'Assemblée législative et les services que donne notre gouvernement. On est bien situés, comme députés provinciaux, pour prendre cette décision, et je veux dire premièrement, comme on a dit toujours au NPD, qu'il est important que la province, une fois pour toutes, se déclare elle-même officiellement bilingue.

On a essayé de différentes manières. On a essayé, premièrement, sous le gouvernement de M. Peterson, l'approche de la Loi 8. Je pense que c'était une bonne idée; je pense qu'elle allait dans la bonne direction. La loi a dit que, là où on avait assez de francophones dans nos régions, la province était pour donner des services en français.

Notre gouvernement, le gouvernement de M. Rae, a pris l'approche de mettre en place des services avant de déclarer la province officiellement bilingue, qu'on allait mettre en place des services comme les centres de santé

communautaires, les garderies, le collège, et j'en passe— beaucoup de services pour les francophones.

Mais ce qu'on a vu, c'est que, quand un gouvernement comme celui de M. Harris est élu, il peut défaire tous ces services. On a vu la Loi 8 vraiment érodée par ce gouvernement provincial. On voit, quand on fait le délestage à toutes les municipalités, comme on voit dans la loi qui crée la nouvelle ville, la supermegacity d'Ottawa, que le gouvernement provincial peut beaucoup défaire les atouts et avancés que nous avons faits comme francophones en ce qui a trait aux services pour notre communauté, dans les municipalités comme dans la province.

C'est pour cette raison que je suis devenu convaincu, comme le restant de notre caucus après 1995, qu'il était important de déclarer la province elle-même officiellement bilingue une fois pour toutes, pour nous assurer que tous nos services sont protégés par la loi et que la seule manière pour un gouvernement de défaire ces services serait de revenir à l'Assemblée et se prononcer contre les services en français en donnant une loi qui ôte le statut officiellement bilingue. C'est quelque chose, je pense, qu'aucun gouvernement, même celui de M. Harris, voudrait faire.

Je veut dire, comme député néo-démocrate et porte-parole des affaires francophones, que moi-même, notre leader, Howard Hampton, et notre parti provincial, par motion à notre convention, nous sommes prononcés sur la question que la province doit être déclarée officiellement bilingue.

La question devient, est-ce que nous, la province, avons le droit de déclarer officiellement bilingue une municipalité ? Je comprends ce que M<sup>me</sup> Boyer essaie de faire. Elle est forcée, par les outils qu'elle a comme députée, d'essayer de trouver une manière de protéger les services pour les francophones et pour la communauté en général d'Ottawa. Elle se trouve avec pas beaucoup d'outils avec tous les changements que M. Harris a fait, et elle utilise sa capacité de mettre en place une loi de membre privé pour faire avancer le débat et essayer de protéger les services dans sa communauté. Pour ça, je l'appuie. Si j'étais dans sa situation, j'essayerais de faire le tout possible pour ma communauté pour protéger les services en français. C'est pour cette raison que je vais appuyer son projet de loi, mais je dis, je ne pense pas qu'il est à nous, comme province, de déclarer des villes officiellement bilingues. C'est aux conseils municipaux, soit à Ottawa ou à Timmins ou à Sudbury ou n'importe où. Ce sont les conseils qui ont besoin de déterminer si c'est quelque chose qu'ils veulent faire.

Dès que nous nous rendons, comme province, dans ce débat pour déclarer des villes officiellement bilingues, on commence à faire un peu ce que fait M. Harris avec tout le délestage qu'il a fait aux municipalités. C'est un « downloading » ou un délestage de services aux municipalités jusqu'à un certain point. Mais je veux dire que je comprends son point. Je comprends pourquoi elle le fait. C'est pour cette raison que je vais appuyer son projet de loi, mais je veux dire, franchement, qu'on doit essayer de trouver une autre manière.

Ce qu'on aurait pu faire dans la loi, et si la loi passe à la deuxième lecture, c'est regarder à mettre un amendement pas mal proche de l'amendement que mon caucus NPD a mis en place sous la loi qui a créé la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa. Je peux dire qu'on n'a jamais eu l'occasion d'avoir ce débat parce que le gouvernement, par motion de clôture, a fermé le débat sur la ville d'Ottawa. M<sup>me</sup> Boyer ainsi que moi, comme députés francophones de la province et comme personnes intéressées, n'avons jamais eu l'occasion de mettre en place nos amendements à la loi. C'est pour cette raison, je pense, que M<sup>me</sup> Boyer est ici aujourd'hui avec son projet de loi.

Ce qu'on doit faire, quant à moi, c'est insérer dans cette loi quelque chose qui dit, soit dans la ville de Sudbury ou la ville d'Ottawa, « Où qu'une municipalité offrait des services en français par voie de statut municipal »—en d'autres mots, la ville de Vanier comme, je pense, cinq ou six autres dans la ville d'Ottawa, comme dans la région—« on respecte ces statuts dans la nouvelle ville », et le conseil doit après ça se pencher sur la question d'étendre ces services à toutes les municipalités, y inclus les municipalités qui n'étaient pas officiellement bilingues.

En d'autres mots, tous les services que les francophones avaient avant la fusionnement seraient protégés par la loi provinciale, quelque chose qu'on est très capables de faire. Si on crée cette municipalité, la province peut dire, « On va au moins assurer que les services pour les francophones qui sont en place avant le fusionnement seront protégés, et que la municipalité doit offrir ces services aux francophones et doit se pencher sur la question d'étendre les services pour les francophones aux autres communautés. » On ne perd rien.

Venir et dire qu'on va créer une municipalité officiellement bilingue à travers l'Assemblée législative—comme j'ai dit, j'appuie son projet de loi parce que je comprends ce qu'elle essaie de faire comme francophone. Elle essaie de trouver une manière de protéger les droits de sa communauté, mais je pense qu'on aurait pu le faire un peu différemment.

Je veux aussi dire, lorsque j'ai la chance dans ce débat, que ce gouvernement n'a pas été exactement, comme on dit hors d'ici, « franco-friendly ». Le gouvernement de Mike Harris, dès le début, depuis 1995, comme nous le savons tous, temps après temps a délesté ces responsabilités quand ça vient aux services pour les francophones de la province. On a vu à travers toutes les fermetures des services dans la province, à travers les ministères, beaucoup diminuer les bureaux qui étaient là pour ceux qui travaillent au ministère dans l'Office des Affaires francophones. Cela veut dire que l'on n'a pas la capacité dans les ministères de s'assurer que les services en français sont bien donnés. On sait que, à travers la Loi 8, on doit avoir certaines personnes dans chaque ministère pour être capable de s'assurer que les services sont donnés, et s'il y a plainte, qu'on peut aller quelque part. Le gouvernement a coupé ça à proche à rien, donc il n'y a quasiment personne dans les ministères pour s'assurer que les services sont donnés en français.

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Deuxièmement, on voit pour ces raisons, quand le gouvernement communique avec le public, même avec des organismes francophones à travers les ministères, par exemple le ministère de l'Éducation ou le ministère de la Santé, que les francophones reçoivent des lettres en anglais dans la majorité des situations. Des groupes comme par exemple les conseils scolaires francophones reçoivent de la part du ministère de l'Éducation un document en anglais quand ils savent que c'est un conseil francophone, qui enseigne le français dans leurs écoles. Ce n'est pas mal insultant, en tant que francophone, quand votre gouvernement provincial ne peut même pas reconnaître dans une lettre que vous êtes francophone et que vous travaillez à l'intérieur d'un organisme francophone.

On voit, deuxièmement, le délestage à travers lequel le gouvernement a commencé à ôter toutes les obligations inscrites dans la Loi 8 envers les services provinciaux, à les transférer aux municipalités. On voit par exemple que le gouvernement a transféré beaucoup de responsabilités, comme dans le bien-être social et dans les services de santé et beaucoup d'autres services, qui ont déjà été donné par la province, à travers les ministères, dans ces régions-là où les services ont été transférés, qui étaient protégées sous la Loi 8 et ne sont plus protégées. Il se trouve que ces municipalités n'ont pas besoin de donner les services en français parce que, une fois que l'on a ôté les services aux ministères et qu'on les a donnés aux municipalités, ces services tombent hors de la loi des services en français. C'est pour cette raison que j'ai proposé, dans le dernier parlement, ma propre Loi 8, qui a dit que tout service qui était protégé sous la Loi 8, une fois transféré aux municipalités, soit respecté sous la Loi 8, que la Loi 8 applique.

Dans le temps le ministre des Affaires francophones, M. Noble Villeneuve, m'a dit dans le débat, comme M. Harris et tous les autres à toute occasion : « Ne vous inquiétez pas, les francophones. Vous allez voir qu'une fois qu'on aura signé les transferts avec les ententes aux municipalités, on va s'assurer qu'il y ait inclus dans ces ententes une section qui dit que les services en français doivent être respectés. » Je voudrais vous dire, Monsieur le Président, qu'ils ont menti, parce que ce n'est pas la situation. On se trouve aujourd'hui avec une situation où les—

**The Acting Speaker:** You need to withdraw your one reference.

**M. Bisson :** Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président. Ça montre au moins que vous écoutez le débat et que vous avez compris que je dois retirer le mot menti ». Mais je veux dire, Monsieur le Président, que ce qu'on voit, c'est que le gouvernement qui nous a rassuré en 1996, n'a pas respecté les services en français en signant les ententes avec les municipalités. Ils ne l'ont pas fait. Les ententes dans beaucoup d'instances n'ont pas été négociées et les services n'ont pas été insérés dans les ententes elles-mêmes, et là où il y en a, les municipalités ne les respectent pas dans certaines situations et la

province ne fait rien. C'est exactement ce que nous avons dit et ce n'est pas arrivé.

Dans le temps le Parti libéral nous a appuyés dans mon projet de loi. La même affaire est arrivée que l'on avait prédit, que les services, une fois transférés aux municipalités, souvent ne sont plus donnés en français. Là, nous, les francophones, avons besoin de commencer la lutte encore une fois en allant rechercher les services qu'on avait mis entre 30 et 40 ans à mettre en place.

C'est pour cette raison que je suis prêt, même s'il y a des problèmes avec le projet de loi proposé par M<sup>me</sup> Boyer, à l'appuyer parce que je comprends ce qu'elle veut faire en tant que francophone. La question devient que, quand on est en train de combattre un gouvernement aussi gros que celui de M. Mike Harris, qui n'écoute jamais personne parce qu'il sait tout, parce qu'il pense qu'il est le Grand Manitou de l'Ontario, on prend les outils qu'on a comme députés pour combattre les attaques sur nos communautés. Dans cette situation, M<sup>me</sup> Boyer essaye de protéger les services en français pour la communauté de Vanier-Ottawa.

Je pense que cela pourrait se faire de façon différente. J'ai un peu peur que, si la province va commencer à déclarer que des municipalités soient officiellement bilingues, c'est un peu hors de notre responsabilité à l'Assemblée législative. Mais si on peut au moins voir le projet de loi aller directement au comité, on pourrait peut-être faire les changements nécessaires. C'est pour cette raison que je demande aux députés de l'Assemblée opposés, parce que je sais que c'est sur ce point-là qu'ils vont s'opposer, qu'ils permettent au moins le passage du projet de loi à la deuxième lecture, qu'on nous assure que le projet de loi ira en comité. Là on pourra au moins avoir le débat pour exprimer ses inquiétudes ; le parti du gouvernement aura une chance d'en parler, comme nous on a des inquiétudes de notre bord, pour trouver une manière de protéger les services pour les francophones de la région de Vanier et de la région de Sudbury et d'autres municipalités qui vont être fusionnées.

Pour cette raison je voudrais que le gouvernement appuie cette motion. Je sais qu'ils vont voter contre. J'ai parlé à M<sup>me</sup> Boyer hier et elle ne s'attend pas à ce que le gouvernement supporte son projet de loi. Mais je peux dire qu'il est important et que la moindre responsabilité que vous avez, comme gouvernement, est de permettre à ce débat de continuer pour nous assurer qu'on trouvera des manières de protéger les services pour les francophones. Si vous ne lui permettez pas de passer, je pense que là vous serez en train de vous prononcer contre les services en français comme vous l'avez fait les dernières six années. Je demande pour cette raison au gouvernement d'accepter ce projet de loi même s'il a besoin d'être modifié, de lui permettre de passer à la deuxième lecture pour retourner au comité, afin de trouver une manière de s'assurer d'une protection des francophones.

On n'aurait pas eu besoin de proposer cette loi si le gouvernement avait fait ce que nous avons suggéré ici au NPD, et je pense que même le Parti libéral avait suggéré la même affaire : des amendements au projet de loi qui a

créé la municipalité d'Ottawa. On aurait dû mettre là-dedans ce qu'on a suggéré, des amendements disant que n'importe quelle municipalité qui a des services en français en place avant le fusionnement, ces services vont être garantis sous la loi, et que c'est aux conseils municipaux après cela de faire l'expansion des services s'ils croient que les services répondent aux besoins des citoyens de leur communauté.

On n'a pas eu la chance, comme j'ai dit plus tôt, parce que le gouvernement a fait clôturer la loi. En ce faisant, tous les amendements que l'opposition avait à proposer auraient pu amener des solutions au projet de loi qui, dans mon opinion, était mal fait. On aurait au moins trouvé une solution pour les citoyens des municipalités qui se trouvent fusionnées à la suite de ce nouveau projet de loi.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** I am very pleased to have an opportunity to address the bill put forward by the member for Ottawa-Vanier and to deal with this issue yet again in this Legislature. I think it is important, not just of provincial significance but of national significance, that we have an opportunity to address this particular situation.

It is a very important matter, and having been born, grown up and lived my entire life in the nation's capital, I appreciate the significance and what it means to people of all linguistic backgrounds to have a capital that is truly bilingual. I can tell you that I have lived in a truly bilingual capital my entire 59 years. It's true that the capital in which I lived was not officially bilingual, and it is also true that there have been situations that have had to be improved from time to time, that will continue to exist and will continue to be improved upon as we develop the national capital area.

Ottawa has always provided bilingual services as a municipality. I was fortunate enough to be a member of one of the early regional councils, commencing in 1970, when we dealt with the question of bilingualism in the regional municipality, which had been set up a year or two earlier. To look back at a little history on that, I sat with the present member for Ottawa-Vanier's predecessor of happy memory, Mr Grandmaître, who was then the mayor of Eastview. He changed the name to Vanier, much to the chagrin of his late mother, I might add. If it was most upsetting to anyone, it was most upsetting to her. The mayor of Ottawa at that time was a man by the name of Pierre Benoît, whose mother tongue was French. Eugène Bellemare, who sits as the federal Liberal member for Gloucester-Carleton at the present time, was my seatmate at regional council and was on that committee, as was Reeve MacQuarrie of Gloucester and Reeve Haydon, later the mayor of Nepean and later the regional chairman.

**1030**

The policy that was hammered out on behalf of the people of Ottawa-Carleton at that time was a policy of bilingualism that far exceeded official bilingualism. It was flexible. It allowed for services to be provided where they were needed in excess of the English services in

areas such as Vanier and in the eastern part of the region. It did not cause unnecessary duplication where the services were not demanded and were not required.

It's very interesting to think back to why we embarked on that campaign and why we became engrossed in that debate, because a few years earlier, in 1969, the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr Trudeau, with the Premier of this province, Mr Robarts, and the Premier of the province of Quebec, Jean-Jacques Bertrand, had made a very significant change in the tripartite agreement executed by all three governments.

At that time, the capital of Canada was deemed to have been expanded to cross the river and include portions of the province of Quebec: Hull, Gatineau and Aylmer. A commitment to bilingualism had been entered into by the three leaders on behalf of the people they represented. As a result of that, the Trudeau government commenced a building campaign on the Hull side which saw 35,000 civil servants transferred from downtown Ottawa; buildings, jobs and the centre of the city of Ottawa transferred to the province of Quebec. This was the new capital. This was the commitment to bilingualism.

Well, let me explain to you the situation in Hull, Quebec today. You cannot get service at Hull city hall in the English language. Have you heard about the language police from Quebec City in places like Shawville recently? Have you read the headlines, the court cases, as minority rights are trampled?

I come to this Legislature today and I hear comments about insults to francophones. Where is your commitment to minority rights in the province of Quebec? Are you aware of the legislation that Quebec City has imposed? Do you not understand that the national capital, by that tripartite agreement, included portions of the province of Quebec? Is this the capital city that you wish to impose this form of bilingualism upon? Where is the commitment? Where is the understanding?

The people who rose up and commented as the bill was passed for the amalgamation of the municipalities—and I think back to federal minister Dion's comments, federal minister Copps's comments, the Prime Minister's comments at that time, which were reflected by the member for Timmins-James Bay this morning. Once again, when the language police marched through to Shawville in recent months, there was not a word from those people—not one word.

We have a national capital area. We had the transfer of those jobs. We have a commitment from the people of Ottawa-Carleton, a commitment they have lived up to and that the governments of the city of Ottawa and the other constituent municipalities of the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton have lived up to and will continue to live up to, and will be dictated by the new council which comes into power on the first day of January of next year and will make that decision, as is only appropriate in a democratic situation.

Please, no more rhetoric with regard to insults to francophones, not when we're experiencing what we're

experiencing in the other half of the national capital, on the north side of the Ottawa River.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) :** C'est un plaisir pour moi. Je dois féliciter ma collègue la députée d'Ottawa-Vanier pour le dépôt du projet de loi 79, loi modifiant la loi de 1999 sur les services bilingues de notre nouvelle ville, la ville d'Ottawa.

L'Assemblée dans son entier doit appuyer ce projet de loi sans hésitation, cette loi qui assurera les services dans les deux langues, assurera la continuité du développement économique non seulement dans la région de la capitale nationale mais aussi dans notre province, qui bénéficie de 54 % de notre produit brut à l'exportation.

Dans la région d'Ottawa-Carleton actuellement, nous comptons plus de 120 000 de citoyens francophones ; dans la province, plus de 500 000 francophones, sans compter les francophiles ; dans le pays en son entier, plus de neuf millions de francophones. La population mondiale compte plus de 500 millions de francophones sur ce globe. Lors du dernier sondage qui a été mis en place par le Ottawa Citizen, nous avons trouvé que 82 % de la population qui a répondu au sondage était en faveur du bilinguisme à Ottawa.

Nous savons aussi que, sur notre globe terrestre, nous comptons plus de 54 pays qui fonctionnent ou qui font affaires en français. Tous les ambassadeurs de ces 54 pays doivent parler le français, surtout lorsqu'on vient au Canada et surtout lorsqu'on va dans les pays de l'Europe et de l'Afrique.

Pourquoi devons-nous présenter ce projet de loi ? C'est qu'actuellement, il y a toujours un grand danger avec notre gouvernement qui est en place. Nous savons que le rapport du commissaire Glen Shortliffe avait bel et bien recommandé, dans sa recommandation 4, que la ville soit reconnue bilingue, mais le premier ministre de cette province, M. Harris, a décidé autrement. Cela a fait couler beaucoup d'encre, mais n'eût été cette position, nous ne serions pas dans la position aujourd'hui de débattre un projet de loi que les gens de ce pays regardent dans son entier, ceux qui ont accès au poste de télévision sur lequel nous transmettons les débats de cette assemblée. Je suis sûr que beaucoup de ces personnes surveillent le débat. Mais encore là, j'ai reçu une lettre tout récemment, qui est datée du 17 mai. Je veux lire le deuxième paragraphe :

« À sa réunion du lundi 8 mai, le Conseil de transition a adopté une politique linguistique qui lui permettra de s'acquitter de ses responsabilités tout au long de son mandat et qui servira de recommandation », je dis bien de recommandation, « au Conseil municipal de la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa.

« Le Conseil a choisi d'adopter la politique de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton qui est en application depuis plusieurs années. Cette politique assure que les résidents et résidentes peu importe où ils habitent reçoivent des services en anglais et en français sur tout le territoire de la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa. »

Pourquoi devons-nous commencer à débattre encore une fois le sujet linguistique pour surtout la région de la capitale nationale ? Lorsque je regarde ce gouvernement, lorsqu'il a transféré une quantité de services aux municipalités dans le délestage, nous n'avons voulu en aucun temps mettre en place des lois ou des sections dans les projets de loi qui assureraient la continuité des services bilingues dans les 23 régions désignées bilingues sous la Loi 8, la loi de Bernard Grandmaître, qui on appelle le père de la Loi 8. C'était certainement lui qui a mis cette loi sur pied pour la protection de nos francophones.

Je regarde la Loi 108, qui était le transfert des responsabilités des contraventions aux municipalités. En aucun temps le ministre du temps a-t-il voulu admettre dans cette Chambre que les services en français seraient garantis. On le mentionnait à la Chambre, mais en aucun temps n'avons-nous voulu l'inclure dans le projet de loi.

Je me rappelle, après cette décision du ministre du temps des Affaires francophones, que nous avons fait plusieurs appels. Un rapport est sorti comme quoi plusieurs—je dis bien plusieurs—des municipalités à l'intérieur des 23 régions désignées bilingues ne continueraient pas à donner les services dans les deux langues, dû au manque de financement. Nous, les Libéraux, durant notre campagne dans la dernière élection du mois de juin de 1999, avons garanti que nous redonnerions 50 \$ mille à chacune des municipalités afin de nous assurer qu'on pouvait continuer de donner des services dans les deux langues.

#### 1040

Je regarde ici un discours livré par M. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, qui est le secrétaire-général de l'Organisation internationale de la francophonie, le 3 mai dernier. On disait que la francophonie, c'est aujourd'hui 55 États et gouvernements qui ont rejoint en toute indépendance et en toute liberté notre communauté—plus loin on disait aussi qu'entre 1990 et 1998, le nombre de francophones réels a augmenté de 7,7 % et le nombre de francophones occasionnels de 11,8 % une province où nous avons la capitale nationale, et ce gouvernement ne lui a pas voulu reconnaître l'importance du bilinguisme. Je crois qu'il est aujourd'hui impensable que le gouvernement va voter contre cette loi.

J'ai remarqué que le député d'Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean a mentionné que depuis plusieurs années il faisait partie du gouvernement municipal d'Ottawa-Carleton, mais j'ai une chose qui m'a frappé hier soir dans son discours, lorsqu'on débattait le projet de loi surnommé Brian Smith. Il a bel et bien dit que la discrimination n'existe pas chez les francophones, puisque dans son temps, quand il jouait à la balle pour Le Hull volant, l'équipe de balle était formée surtout par des francophones, dont deux anglophones, lui-même et M. Brian Smith. Et qui avait été nommé capitaine d'une équipe composée à 90 % de francophones ? C'était un anglophone unilingue. Donc, nous avons beaucoup de respect pour les francophones qui ont reconnu l'importance de travailler ensemble et de participer dans des activités sportives dans



les deux langues, le français et l'anglais. Il n'y existait pas de discrimination.

Aujourd'hui, si nous n'acceptons pas cette recommandation ou ce projet de loi-là, je commence à être un peu épeuré de cette position-là. J'ai fait parvenir une lettre à M. Claude Bennett, qui est le président du comité de transition, le 16 février dernier, lui demandant de reconsidérer la position du gouvernement lors du comité de transition. Il m'a répondu le 1<sup>er</sup> mars que le tout serait laissé au comité de transition, et puis dans la lettre du 17 mai que j'ai mentionnée tout à l'heure on veut bel et bien reconnaître l'importance d'une ville bilingue. Je crois qu'aujourd'hui nous avons la chance de prendre position, ici-même à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, et reconnaître l'importance de ces services.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I am very pleased to join in the debate with respect to the request of the member for Ottawa-Vanier to amend the City of Ottawa Act through Bill 79. The request and the purpose of the bill—as I understand it from a letter from my colleague of June 5, 2000—is to ensure that municipal services in the city of Ottawa are provided in both English and French after January 1, 2001.

Perhaps the debate can be crystallized as two issues: First, what do the people of Ottawa want and how is that to be ascertained? Second, what is the best method to accomplish that objective, which is, in principle, the delivery of local services, and should that be done through a municipality in terms of the implementation?

In dealing with this issue we must be cognizant of the fact that the province has not designated any municipality in Ontario as bilingual. Instead, municipalities are given the authority to use the provisions of the Municipal Act or the French Language Services Act, where applicable, to provide French language services in the municipality. French language services authorized by municipal bylaws in the area covered by the new city of Ottawa which exist on December 31, 2000, will continue to be provided by the new city unit until its repeal or amendment of the bylaws. The council of the new city will consider the recommendations of the transition board in developing its own bylaw and policy on this issue.

Just to give some background on this issue, the province has always maintained that municipalities have authority to pass bylaws to provide municipal services to the public in French. The Ottawa transition board established a working group to recommend a language services policy to the board by May 8, 2000. This working group undertook a public input process and review of reports, studies and other publications on the issue. The board has recommended that the council of the new city of Ottawa adopt a language services policy that recognizes the bilingual character of Ottawa, as the nation's capital, and of its residents. To accomplish this, the board is recommending that the new city council continue the current language services policy of the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, which delivers more than 80% of municipal services under the current two-tier municipal structure. This policy recognizes English and French

as the two languages of service delivery. It will be up to the council of the new city, when it takes office in January 2001, as to whether it adopts the transition board's recommendations.

I would like to refer to the Ottawa Citizen of May 10, 2000. In the article it says: "... Ottawa area francophone politicians yesterday lined up behind the proposed bilingual policy of the new city of Ottawa.

"The region's francophone mayors as well as the Liberal House leader Don Boudria"—that's from the federal government—"one of the fiercest backers of a bilingual Ottawa, all praised the policy recommended Monday by the transition board. They say it recognizes the bilingual character of the new city and should be supported.

"Under the policy, English and French would be recognized as the official languages of the new city. Bilingual services would be provided, but in some cases it would be provided if the numbers warrant it. The policy also says that bilingualism should not be a barrier to hiring the city's senior bureaucrats. Unilingual officials, however, would be given the chance to learn French. But 'front-line' officials, those who deal daily with residents, would be bilingual."

That's certainly an endorsement of the local politicians in Ottawa, and the well-respected federal member, Don Boudria, with respect to how to best deliver services—municipal services, I may add.

The transition board's process, I understand, resulted in 5,090 submissions, 81% of which expressed support for bilingual services in the new city. Under the current municipal structure, services are provided in both languages by the region and the cities of Cumberland, Gloucester, Ottawa and Vanier. In the other seven local municipalities, services are provided in English only.

Under the French Language Services Act, 1986, the new city of Ottawa will have the power to require the city administration to provide services in English and French. We're talking about the delivery of local services and we're talking about how it should be delivered in English and French.

The French Language Services Act and the Municipal Act give municipalities the authority to provide a full range of service and to conduct their day-to-day business in both languages; for example, passing bylaws and resolutions, adopting official plans, conducting council meetings, keeping minutes of council and committee meetings.

The fundamental issue with respect to what's the best way of delivering this service, which is in issue here, seems to have support locally with respect to the transition board's recommendations about how this is to be delivered. When one cites the principle of how to deliver local services, the principle is simple: That should be done by the municipality.

#### 1050

But there's also another issue here in terms of whether there's been sufficient input from the citizens of the new city with respect to whether they want this. This week there was passage of a law which will allow municipal-

ities to hold binding referendums on municipal issues. Speaking of Bill 62, direct democracy through local referendums: "One advantage of the new law is that it establishes that a referendum must be solely within a municipality's jurisdiction—meaning no more time-wasters such as whether to declare a city nuke- or gun-free. These referendums will also be binding—meaning politicians will have to get serious about what they ask for because they might just get it." That's out of a Toronto Sun editorial dealing with referendums.

The law is very clear in terms of direct democracy about how we deal with this issue, whether there's public support for it, and if there is, how you implement it. It would seem that the new city of Ottawa has already dealt with this through a transition board, set out recommendations and seems to have local political support. From a fundamental principle of how we deal with and deliver local services, that's a municipal responsibility.

Quite frankly, it would appear that the municipality has the situation well in hand. I would not support what the member is proposing based on what the local politicians seem to want.

**M. Richard Patten (Ottawa-Centre) :** C'est avec plaisir que je me joins à ce débat sur le projet de loi présenté par ma collègue d'Ottawa-Vanier. Nous, dans la région d'Ottawa—à l'origine c'est l'Outaouais—sommes fiers de cet esprit communautaire, et c'est pourquoi je suis heureux d'appuyer le projet de loi de ma collègue aujourd'hui.

As some of you may know, I was part of the government that originally brought in Bill 8, which rightfully sought to introduce provincial bilingual services where necessary in Ontario. It was introduced by M<sup>me</sup> Boyer's predecessor in Ottawa-Vanier, Ben Grandmaître, over 10 years ago. I had the honour of serving in cabinet with Ben at that particular time, and I know many of you in this House will recall him fondly. If he were here, I know he would be in support of this bill that is before us today.

It is the spirit of those principles, however, that we fought for back in those years, and I think they are still relevant today. The fact of bilingualism in Ottawa is irrefutable. The Ottawa area is a bilingual area. That is why the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, as it is currently constructed and constituted, is right now officially bilingual. Many of the members from Toronto or southwestern Ontario may not be aware of the bilingual nature of the Ottawa area. I want to assure them that this is a fundamental characteristic of our area.

Ottawa has another aspect that of course has already been mentioned in this debate: It's the capital city of our country, an officially bilingual nation, and of course this will not change. Ottawa may be the national capital, but it is also the second-largest city in Ontario, one of the fastest growing in the country and the fourth largest in Canada. Economically, it has emerged as the powerhouse in the high-tech sector in Canada, and its growth dynamics will be incredible over the next decade.

The current government may think this means that the Ottawa area can take care of itself. In fact, that is why they have not moved, they say, on this particular topic, but it does have the opportunity and has the legislative authority to legislate if it chooses to do so. Now, the government did not do this. The government had the opportunity to take care of this issue last fall. At that time, they appointed a very astute individual, Mr Glen Shortliffe, the former Clerk of the Privy Council, who delivered a report on municipal restructuring in the Ottawa-Carleton area. When he delivered his report last November, he made a number of simple, straightforward recommendations, most of which were accepted by the government. On the topic of languages, he recommended that "the city of Ottawa will be legislatively designated a bilingual city, with services to be provided in both official languages where warranted."

This is the size of his report. All the government had to do at that time was accept the recommendation made by the expert they had appointed to make this report. By not simply accepting that clear and well-informed recommendation, the government has now opened up a whole ugly can of worms that usually follows a language debate. It would have simply recognized the reality of the region as it is now. Instead, what we're going to have is that people in the region will be unnecessarily divided against each other. People fighting for English-language services from other parts of the province will be caravanning into Ottawa to make their views known. The APEC group, the ones that burned the Quebec flag, if you remember, will be part of this whole debate. People will lose jobs and one thing and another. We could have avoided all of that. So in the next election we will have a great deal of acrimony. This could have been avoided. I've experienced these things, both in Quebec and in Ontario, many times; they're not pretty sights. But this time the argument could have been avoided.

So I'm saying that the government still has an opportunity. Yes, the transition team has made recommendations. Frankly, those recommendations were the basis of the existing policy that is there now. They didn't want to take the particular decision because they were appealing to two of their own ministers in the area to try and provide some support for them. I say that isn't thinking about the whole representation. They're happy to take the tax money from our particular area. They're certainly not shy in imposing and being strong in terms of legislation that has impact on municipalities; I don't have to go into that. So this government is not shy about using its powers. But on this particular one, it could have graciously supported a report that was the basis of a study, that was the basis of what the people had communicated to that particular group, so I say they still have a chance to act. It is important to the nation, to the province and to Ottawa that the city is bilingual. This government can show some leadership and provide that designation. Why is it that the great high-tech firm from France chose to locate in the Ottawa area, if not as an entrée to doing business in Canada and North America?

J'espère sincèrement que ce projet de loi de député aidera le gouvernement à faire preuve de leadership qu'attend la population de l'Ontario qu'il représente. Il n'est pas question ici de chercher quelqu'un à blâmer. Il est plutôt question de faire preuve de leadership dans des questions difficiles. Moi et mes collègues et notre parti sommes aussi plus que prêts à faire preuve de ce leadership.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**M<sup>me</sup> Boyer :** Je tiens tout d'abord à remercier mes collègues de Timmins-Baie James, de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell et d'Ottawa-Centre pour leur appui, et qu'ils reconnaissent l'importance de mon amendement, qui est d'aller d'après la recommandation de M. Shortliffe et de finalement désigner la capitale du Canada, la ville d'Ottawa, officiellement bilingue.

Laissez-moi vous rappeler que M. Shortliffe, dans ses recommandations, a bien dit, et je répète, "One of the most important issues raised during the public consultation process was the question of bilingualism," ce conseiller que vous, le gouvernement, avez nommé pour s'occuper de la nouvelle ville d'Ottawa. C'est vous autres qui l'avez nommé. M. Shortliffe dit dans sa recommandation 4 : "I recommend that the enabling legislation establish and designate the city of Ottawa as officially bilingual in French and English."

J'aimerais dire à mon collègue d'Ottawa West, yes, there's much improvement in the bilingual status of Ottawa. You're talking about Shawville. Shawville is in Quebec; we're in Ontario. Let that be said.

To the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford I must say that after the recommendations of the transition committee people said, "It's a start, but it's a minimum."

Il faut absolument aujourd'hui que vous acceptiez, s'il vous plaît, de passer cet amendement en deuxième lecture, comme mon collègue de Timmins-Baie James a dit, de le passer en deuxième lecture pour au moins nous donner la chance d'avoir le débat sur cette question.

Please give us a chance to have a debate on this question.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for this ballot item has now expired.

1100

## WELFARE REFORM

**Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington):** I move the following resolution: That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

(a) Encourages the municipalities of Ontario to undertake more workfare programs in a manner consistent with the Common Sense Revolution's plan for breaking the cycle of welfare dependency and restoring able-bodied people to work;

(b) Endorses the idea that there should be zero-tolerance for welfare fraud and abuse;

(c) Supports a program of mandatory treatment for welfare recipients who use drugs; and

(d) Endorses the Blueprint commitment to take further steps to reform welfare and encourage welfare recipients to find work.

I'm very pleased to rise this morning and debate this topic. June 8 is a very important day for many of us on this side of the House. This is the anniversary, five years to the day, of when we were elected to turn around Ontario. An awful lot has changed in this province over these past five years.

In 1995—it's hard to remember back—we were in a very bleak time here in Ontario. Ten thousand jobs had been lost over the previous four years; we were in an annual deficit position, shockingly, of \$11.3 billion; and our debt had doubled in the five years between 1990 and 1995.

One of the most shocking statistics that sunk home to me and a number of people in my riding was that we had 1.3 million people on welfare. It was costing Ontario taxpayers about \$6.8 billion a year. Ontario had the highest number of people per capita on welfare in Canada; approximately one in 12 people was on welfare. In a province we think of as being prosperous and healthy, that was a shocking thing.

Clearly, on this side of the House we've worked very hard to do everything we can to help lead Ontario back to prosperity. Taxes had been increased 66 times under the former government. We have reduced taxes well over that, having already implemented 99 tax cuts, with many more to come. We believe we are going to exceed our target of creating 725,000 jobs. Just recently, the ministry has announced not only a balanced budget for this year, but for last year as well. The Minister of Community and Social Services this morning is announcing that we have succeeded in taking 500,000 people off the welfare rolls; that's half a million people who will no longer be dependent on welfare rolls.

We have worked very hard to keep our promises. We have worked very hard to restore this province to prosperity. In the case of welfare, we have worked very hard to allow people the opportunity to get out of the welfare trap, to get back on the road to self-sufficiency and prosperity, and to return welfare to what it was originally intended to be—a stepping stone, an opportunity for assistance as a last resort—and most importantly, to develop welfare into what it was supposed to be, an opportunity to get back into the workforce, to develop skills and a sense of self-worth. That only comes when you're back in contact with the working world.

One of the things we did, most importantly, in the whole welfare file, and I would like to speak to that for a moment, was to remove people who were on disability from the welfare situation. People on disability should never have been on welfare in the first place and I was very pleased that we acted quickly to do that.

We have designed a much more generous program for those on disability, specially designed to meet their needs. I would like to mention specifically some of the things we have done: removed the label of "permanently unemployable"; reinstated benefits if a job attempt fails;

no longer require people on disability to go through eligibility testing every one or two years, except where their condition is expected to improve; allowed them to keep more of their assets and benefits from families, inheritances and gifts and so on; provided individualized employment planning which assists them with technological aids and devices so that they can secure and maintain employment. The benefit level is about 47% more than if they were on welfare.

This, I think, was absolutely the right thing to do. I have had many constituents in my riding who, although they have some comments about how to still improve the system, have for the most part been very pleased and quite surprised because they weren't originally supporters of our government. They have been quite pleased that we undertook this program and have had strong praise for the changes we've made on this file.

At the very beginning of our term in office, we changed the welfare benefits. In 1995 we had the richest welfare benefits of any province in Canada—actually 35% higher. We reduced those rates so that they were much more commensurate with working wage levels, but our welfare benefit levels are still quite high: about 25% higher than the provincial average for single, employable people; 13% higher for single parents; and 9.6% higher for couples with children. Ontario welfare benefits right now are still the most generous earning provisions in the country. So while we have made tremendous changes and given over half a million people opportunities to be back at jobs and in the workforce, we have made the whole system much more accountable.

We've undertaken four different tactics to improve the welfare system. One of the most interesting is encouraging municipalities to be partners with us in developing the workfare program. Earlier this week, the minister announced that we're actually ahead of our target in welfare placements, that 30,000 placements have been successfully undertaken with our municipalities. We're ahead of our target now and we are very pleased that our municipalities are becoming very strong partners with us. We certainly see that there's room for improvement. I have to say that's true for my own jurisdiction in Guelph-Wellington.

What we have done to assist our municipalities tangibly is provide \$1,000 for every placement above its target. This year the province will be providing \$7 million to various municipalities that have surpassed their targets. That money, in each jurisdiction, must be spent on helping those on welfare by either providing assistance to vulnerable children, supporting homelessness or through child care.

There is much more to be done on this file. We have said that under the welfare reform program, if you are going to be entertaining benefits on welfare as a temporary assistance program, you must be part of a workfare program and you must be part of a learnfare program. It's been quite a challenge to get these up and running in the face of so many reforms, but we're very pleased to see

that this is happening and is on target; in fact, very slightly ahead of target.

What has been very distressing about welfare is to find situations where people have been abusing the system. There are a number of examples of people receiving welfare who have, for instance, been paying on credit cards greater amounts monthly than they have received on their welfare benefit cheques. Obviously that was a serious case of fraud.

Our view is that welfare is a very sincere program that needs to be given to those in need and so can be given only to those in need. Our welfare fraud hotline has been quite successful. The saving from determining people and taking away the benefits of those who have been ineligible and have been illegally receiving welfare has actually reached the astonishing number of \$60 million, which of course is much better spent on those who truly need our assistance in either welfare or other programs. Extended out, the additional costs would have been \$38 million, so that's almost \$100 million that has been saved in finding people who should never have been on welfare in the first place and were robbing those who truly needed the assistance of the program.

The other thing we promised in the Blueprint, and which is being established, was to allow case workers to indicate to certain recipients of welfare, if it's believed that they are on drugs, that a drug test will be required. It's absolutely impossible to hold down a job and be a productive member of society if you are on drugs, so that is part of our drug reform program, which we believe will strengthen the welfare program right across Ontario. Institutions like Homewood, in my riding of Guelph-Wellington, are very eager to provide their expertise in this sort of thing, to assist us in making sure that we are doing this properly.

I'm reaching the end of my time. I want to encourage colleagues in the debate this morning to consider the changes we have made in the welfare program, to consider how far we have come over the past four years on this file. The number of one in 12, 1.3 million people on welfare, is shocking for any jurisdiction, particularly for a province like this which has such potential. It is most disheartening for those individuals who have lost out on opportunities, and that's why we have been so intent on improving this program.

There is a saying in my riding, "By work and by worth we rise." I have always taken that to heart, and I feel that a job, any job, is an opportunity for advancement and an opportunity to learn new things and meet new people. Certainly with the 725,000 jobs we have created across the province, we are trying very hard to give everybody an opportunity.

What I'm hoping with this resolution today is we will have very vigorous debate. I'm very anxious to hear what my colleagues across the House will say, because in campaigns to date they have not been supportive of welfare reform. We think it's a very important part of making Ontario prosperous for each and every individual.

1110

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** I'm very happy to speak about this area of concern and about the great opportunity this government has missed obviously in its mandate—and it's celebrating its fifth anniversary today. Perhaps this is the greatest symbol of this government's failure in its mandate. What's really disturbing to me is that this government has engaged in the great blame game, in the great scapegoating. It has done that extremely successfully. When it comes to welfare recipients, they have been the most victimized and the most scapegoated group of the bunch during this government's mandate.

You had a great opportunity to reform the welfare system and to move it forward. In fact, the opposite has taken hold. You have moved it backwards in time. You have moved it to an era we haven't seen in this province since the 1930s, before the Great Depression, where people are scavenging, where people are homeless, where people are destitute, where people are desperate and have been left behind as a direct result of this government's policies. The first thing this government did to welfare recipients was cut assistance by 22% right off the bat. That had a devastating impact on people in this province at a time, we must recall, when the province was still mired in a difficult economic situation. We are coming out of that economic downturn just now, in the last number of years. Yes, there have been many more jobs created. And yes, there has been an economic boom, attributable to the great exports to the United States, the greatest boom we have seen in the history of this province, so it's no accident that a great number of new jobs were created. It is a tragedy that this government has not used this era wisely and has not used this time, this great opportunity, to reform the welfare system as we know it and to modernize it.

I want to examine the points that have been brought forward for consideration in this member's resolution this morning, because they tell a tale about this government and how it has engaged, time and again, in the blame game. If something goes wrong in Ontario, it's the federal government's fault, because they haven't transferred enough funds for health care. It's the federal government's fault, because they haven't transferred enough funds for anything. As far as this government is concerned, they never take responsibility for any of their actions. That's the first rule of this government in the way that it governs: never take responsibility, never take it to a level of accountability where this government is held to account for its actions or lack of action. We now see that tragically with Walkerton. It's taken to its most bizarre and most tragic end.

In fact, it's the erosion of one regulatory framework after another. It's the erosion of confidence in the system. This government does not believe in truly making changes that are positive. This government has made changes to get rid of the problem, as in the case of welfare. Workfare is nothing short of a fraud in this province, and I'm going to elaborate on why.

This government promised to put people back to work. It promised to take people forward and give them career options that they didn't have before. It promised to put them back in the workplace. In fact, the workfare program was an abysmal failure up until this past year. It's still a failure and a sham, and the only reason that the minister is able to talk about placements in the workfare program is because he threatened municipalities. He threatened them with cutbacks in administrative dollars for their social assistance programs. If the municipalities failed to create these placements, then the minister was going to reduce the funding available to administer their social programs—a clear threat to those municipalities to create placements. What are these placements? These placements are nothing but temporary, meaningless, menial jobs.

I don't want to belittle the volunteer work that's been done by people in community after community; certainly we value that. But most of these placements are in that area, in municipal agencies or the kind of work that was done by volunteers and the kind of work that was done by municipal workers providing services. These welfare recipients, these people now on workfare are being put in those placements. These jobs are temporary. They do not lead to additional skills or skills enhancement. In fact, they're not providing any additional education for these people. They're temporary, they're stop-gap. What happens when the economy goes into a downturn? Many of these jobs, which are not in the private sector, will continually have to be propped up by the government. The \$1,000 per job placement will have to be there ad infinitum, and municipalities will not have the ability to sustain these placements over a long period of time.

This is the critical question: Will these jobs lead to permanent employment in the private sector? The skill sets that are required today are well beyond what is being offered in these job placements. We need better training and education.

The experience in Michigan has been that workfare has failed because of a lack of child care spaces. When the state of Michigan realized that it needed to spend a great deal more money on child care, then they were able to find that single parents could re-enter the workforce. The state of Michigan spends twice as much on child care as it does on social assistance payments to make certain that people are given the opportunity to go back into the workplace.

I want to address the other parts of the resolution very quickly.

**Zero tolerance for welfare fraud and abuse:** This government has, time and again, gone after people for defrauding the system. It has raised the spectre of this huge amount of welfare fraud. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is a myth. Seven hundred and forty-seven cases of convicted fraud in 1999, less than 1% of all cases, is not a huge crisis. That is not the stuff that governments should be focused on. There is a problem, but it's not the huge problem that this government makes out is prevalent throughout our society—again, scapegoating

those people who are on social assistance: "We're going to test you for drug abuse."

In fact, the rate of incidence of drug abuse among welfare recipients is no greater and no less than among the general population. So stop scapegoating others, stop blaming others. Stop that insidious kind of governance. It leads to the end result of being a government that does not want to take responsibility, that does not act in the best interests of the citizens of this province, does not protect the public interests of the citizens of this province. When it comes to welfare, this government is an abysmal failure.

1120

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

The resolution that's in front of the House today from the member from Guelph encourages municipalities to undertake more workfare programs, also zero tolerance for welfare fraud and abuse, a program of mandatory treatment for welfare recipients who use drugs and to take further steps to reform welfare and encourage welfare recipients to work.

From a general perspective, I want to talk to this. Welfare should be temporary help when you need it and not a way of life. In 1995, there were three times as many people on welfare as there were in 1985. The average time welfare recipients collected general welfare assistance nearly doubled under the NDP government.

We've moved people with disabilities off welfare and into special programs that recognize their unique needs. The ODSP provides people with disabilities with 47% more benefits than their welfare counterparts and by far exceeds any program provided by provincial governments across Canada. The fundamental point is, people with disabilities are off welfare.

In 1999, some 106,458 stopped relying on welfare. Since 1995, we have helped nearly 500,000 people get off the welfare treadmill and get their lives back on track. We want to make sure that nobody in Ontario is left behind without the hope of a job and a better future, because quite frankly, the best program you can have with respect to social services is a well-paying job and a good economy to make sure that those social service programs, health and education are there for our citizens.

When we took office in 1995, Ontario had the richest welfare benefit of any province in Canada—35% higher than the provincial average. Ontario welfare income is 25% higher than the provincial average for single employable people; 13% higher for a single parent and 9.6% higher for couples with children. Marginal employment earnings were clawed back, punishing those who had the initiative to get back into the workforce and rewarding those who didn't try.

Today's Ontario welfare benefits include the most generous earning provisions in the country. Recipients can now take part in work that they might have refused under the NDP because they would have lost their benefits.

With respect to fraud and abuse, I know the member from Lawrence trivializes it and casts aspersions without

foundation. We established the welfare fraud hotline for the general public to report suspected fraud. It also resulted in termination of or reduction of benefits in thousands of cases where fraud was occurring. Between April 1, 1998, and March 31, 1999, assistance was reduced or terminated in 16,900 cases based on eligibility investigations. That was the equivalent of \$60 million in social assistance that people were entitled to.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Cordiano:** Less than 1%. Don't distort the facts.

**Mr Tascona:** The members across the floor are ranting away. "That's nothing"; that's really what they're saying. That's a lot of money.

We've entered into information-sharing arrangements to help us identify people who might be abusing the system. We've introduced a zero tolerance policy for welfare fraud. People convicted in court of social assistance fraud will be permanently ineligible for future social assistance. We've terminated welfare for prisoners when they are in jail, and we've ensured that those who are no longer eligible for welfare do not receive free drug cards.

The Liberal record with respect to workfare is fairly clear. Neither workfare nor welfare is mentioned in the Liberal Party Web site. Secondly, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have opposed welfare reform every step of the way and they've voted against every single bill to implement it. The opposition leader, Mr McGuinty, has proposed a mandatory opportunity program for people on social assistance.

The NDP record speaks for itself. They liked the way welfare was before, when over a million people were trapped in the cycle of dependency.

The member from Guelph has stated very clearly what approach should be taken. I think she has put a lot of thought into this. Quite frankly, the initiatives that are being asked for are being done, and they make a lot of sense. I think the track record will speak for itself and history will speak for itself in terms of how to best approach welfare. That's how it's being done in the United States. That's the approach that has been mandated by a democratic government in the United States, so I don't know what the complaints are on the other side.

In conclusion, I support the resolution and I know that other members of the caucus will too.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** I would like to say that it's a pleasure to join in this debate today, but I must say, one more time we are subjected to the Tory scapegoating of vulnerable people in the province of Ontario. I will be voting no to this resolution today, with great vigour and pride. I'm proud that I'm representing the interests of my constituents, many of whom are the most vulnerable people in our society.

The real story that needs to be told, that must go forth from here today is that the Tories, such an abject failure at the role of governing in Ontario, have turned back to something that they spent so much time on in their earliest days. Were we not here, we could be down at

SkyDome with the Premier today witnessing him embroiling himself once again in an issue that they spent so much time on early in their mandate, in the first term, because they have nothing working for them right now. The province of Ontario is not being governed. They are not a government that is in control of their actions. Everything that they touch has fallen apart, so they go back to something that gave them great joy around red meat issues in their first term. I think that's the real message that needs to be sent out and people need to be reminded of that.

This is the triumph of rhetoric over reality. Yesterday the member for Guelph-Wellington, in talking to American guests, said that the issues that are debated typically during private member's hour are issues that matter a lot to her constituents. I would say that I am joining this debate because I have many constituents who are on welfare and I work for those people every single day.

To hear the member from Barrie talk about how the Ontario welfare benefit is the most generous one—without putting into context the fact that the cost of living in the province of Ontario, and particularly in the city of Toronto, is so high—so as to suggest to people who are watching that those who are collecting welfare benefits are living in the lap of luxury, is an injustice. The benefits for an individual are something like \$562 a month. Imagine, in the city of Toronto, trying to live, to sustain yourself, on that kind of monthly income.

No one is here to suggest that we should have people stuck in a cycle of dependency, but this government has done nothing to try and help those people. There's nothing in their intent except punishment, and that is the real shame. They talk the talk but they do not walk the walk.

I am proud to say that I work in the riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale for citizens. This government across the way—and their most recent budget reflects this better than anything else—works for taxpayers, and they make a distinction. There are classes of people in Ontario now because of that government. We are not all citizens and all equal. They put taxpayers on a higher plane, and that speaks to a very real problem with this government.

Let us look back to the day when they cut welfare benefits by 21.6%. On the very same day, they also cut funding to the agencies that help people who are living on social assistance to get jobs, to improve their resumés and to get job skills. They talk about the need for people to get jobs and sustain themselves that way, but what have they done to improve or provide access to daycare for individuals who are on welfare and have children? They have done nothing, and that is the real story behind the Tory work on welfare. It's all show and no go. It does nothing in a positive way to really help people with the cycle of dependency.

**1130**

Let's talk about drugs and addiction. I deal every day with many people who are struggling along that way. My community office is in a building that also has a methadone clinic, and you can only imagine the challenges that

people who are addicted to drugs like crack cocaine and heroin suffer from. But what has this government done around that? If they really wanted to deal with crime and safety in my community, they'd put more police on the streets, to try to help that way, and they would invest meaningful dollars in programs to help people who are addicted to drugs. But they do not. They talk about it and they do nothing.

I should say that those of us who are dealing with real problems and seeking to address them in a real way, rather than a rhetorical way, are increasingly frustrated by this government, which talks the talk but will not walk the walk. If you want to do something about it, put money into treatment programs and provide daycare.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my distinct pleasure and privilege to rise today and support the member for Guelph-Wellington in her resolution, which deals with welfare reform in the general sense and endorses a strengthening in the commitments made in the Blueprint, which I will be covering in my limited time that I'll be splitting with the member for London-Fanshawe.

I think it's important to start with the promise we made in 1995 to reform a system that was clearly broken. We had many references to the highest number of people on welfare. This just wasn't a positive situation for anyone in Ontario. We made commitments in 1995 and, as the member for Guelph-Wellington has stated, today I'm pleased to celebrate our fifth anniversary. June 8, 1995, is when the train stopped and we turned around to go back to the promises made and the promise of hope in the future for everyone.

Our plan is an inclusive plan. It's an economic plan, but it does include everyone. It includes people who were rendered permanently powerless in a system or trap of welfare. We made a commitment of 500,000 people off the welfare rolls, and we're closing in on that mark as I speak. There are half a million people fewer, who are actually bringing home their own food and their own paycheque, and I believe that's positive. The 725,000 net new jobs is clearly another target we made as a promise and a commitment.

In a general philosophical sense, I remember some of the terms we used while trying to communicate the plan by saying such things as, "A hand up instead of a hand-out." That was just a phrase at the time, but it's certainly an important empowerment. Behind that phrase is the idea of extending a hand to someone, the idea of extending hope to someone in their lives, who had otherwise been termed a life of hopelessness, in my view.

There was a whole industry built around the idea of, I would say, a group of do-gooders feeding off the less fortunate. It's unfortunate to think they were permanently employed to sort of dole out to those people who were unable to help themselves. Our plan focuses on the positive, providing them with the hope and supports they need and the encouragement and motivation to help themselves and to be sure we're there for it.

It's this powerlessness, the permanence of powerlessness that I think is absolutely appalling in the policy

level from the opposition and the third party. To me, it's that attitude that you're going to give to them. You can't give someone that sense of powerfulness themselves. The real solution, I believe, was in the plan of getting people who were disabled off the welfare rolls. That's been done, and I believe the real solution is the work for welfare plan. I would say that the best welfare plan—another phrase we use—is a job. Clearly, we've created 725,000 net new jobs.

The fundamental requirement is to have a strong economy and, in that, to be inclusive with people—the reforms in our provincial income tax system to get people below certain income levels totally off the tax rolls and give them more of their money to spend in their way, as their decision, as opposed to some bureaucrat.

For the record, though, I want to focus on the important thing of youth in this whole thing. Many have indicated that youth are the victims in this whole process, and that seems to be one of the caveats of some of the detractors of the plan. Our plan is to encourage youth and create opportunity and hope. I think Dr Bette Stephenson, in her children's Learning Opportunities Task Force, summed it up when she said: "Ontarians can be proud of their government's initiatives to open doors for learning disabled children. The increasingly successful experience at the post-secondary level is just one indication of their value."

The plan that increases annual benefits by \$210 for each child under seven in single-parent families—we expect this benefit will assist 77,000 children of low-income families in Ontario. Helping people through direct subsidization in the ways I have just outlined—in partnership, I might add, with the federal government—is the way to build stronger families and communities and to encourage people to take responsibility for their own lives. If you look at our plan and the increased investments in health care and children's services, I believe we're a long way in changing from the previous government's idea of giving a cheque and no hope.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** It's my pleasure to rise and speak on this resolution brought forward by the member from Guelph-Wellington, what essentially is a resolution that talks about helping people. We can talk about welfare rates in this province being 10% higher than the national average and so on. But in reality, if people are not allowed the opportunity to have a job, they then live in poverty. That is the reality.

I continually hear the Liberals complaining and so on, but the reality is that anyone who remains on welfare will live in some sort of poverty situation. The best we can do is allow people an opportunity to get a job, and that's what workfare does. It allows people who do not have the skills an opportunity to go into an environment to obtain new skills, or perhaps skills they have forgotten because it's been some time since they've been in a workplace.

They continually complain about all these issues; in fact, they had the opportunity to do something about this. But instead when they were in government—the David Peterson government—welfare rates just continued to

climb in this province, and that's what we inherited. We believe that people should be allowed the opportunity to work and to be productive members of our communities.

Let's look at some of the savings we've achieved through 500,000 new people getting a job and having dignity. The savings have actually been reinvested in health care, and that is very important. When we took over government, \$17 billion was spent on health care, and now we're up \$5 billion to \$22 billion. That is despite the federal government's continued cuts to transfer payments to Ontario.

The federal Liberals are just no longer a partner in health care in Ontario today. They fund approximately 10% of health care. Is that a true partner? I suspect not. When we look at the definition of partnerships, generally we look at 50-50. That would be a true partner. We certainly ask the federal government not to treat the people of Ontario any differently than they treat people in other provinces and restore that funding to health care.

The member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale spoke about the methadone program. He would certainly know that anyone going through the methadone program is obviously in no condition to work until they've received some treatment. But in order to get into the methadone program, the problem has to be identified. That's what the testing for drugs in our plan is. You cannot get someone treatment—the methadone program is treatment—until you've identified that there's a problem. That is what we're doing. At some point, we hope that people on methadone programs or other programs become active and productive members in Ontario's economy and get their own dignity back by becoming involved in their communities and by no longer being drug addicts.

I'd like to close by saying that this should be a non-partisan issue, one that is about helping people. If the Liberals want to come to the table and say they truly care about Ontarians, then they should support this resolution because that's exactly what it talks about: caring; giving people their dignity back; future savings that can be redirected into health care. I will have an opportunity to speak on this a little bit later.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Further debate? Response, the member for Guelph-Wellington.

**Mrs Elliott:** I'm very pleased to hear from my colleagues representing York South-Weston, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Durham and London-Fanshawe.

We've had various viewpoints on this resolution. I guess the bottom line is that I see our welfare reforms as an opportunity to turn around a system that was clearly not working. The 1.3 million people on welfare in Ontario five years ago was absolutely unacceptable. There is still a lot more to do because there are still only 500,000 people off the welfare rolls, so that leaves us with 800,000 people who need a job and need an opportunity. That's what we are working for in this government. The resolution today is asking for continued support for our changes, for welfare reform. I thought my



colleague from London-Fanshawe put it very succinctly: He said these proposals are about helping people.

I would say to my colleagues across the way that if you're not in support of welfare reform, then are you supporting not giving people opportunities for jobs? If you are against zero tolerance for welfare fraud abuse, does that mean you support welfare abuse? If you are against mandatory treatment for welfare recipients who use drugs, does that mean you support giving welfare to people who are on drugs and are not prepared to do anything about it?

We have said this is a priority for us. We have said from 1995 on that we are going to continue to make these changes, and we are resolute in doing that. The dignity of a job, the opportunity to go to work and be part of a meaningful activity, to be able to support your family, to be able to be in an education program, is absolutely essential, and that is what these reforms are all about.

I said earlier that there's a saying in my riding that is so very important: "By work and by worth we rise." We are going to give those on welfare those opportunities.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for this ballot item has now expired. I will put the questions related to ballot items 29 and 30 at 12 noon. Pursuant to standing order 96(e), this House stands recessed until 12 noon.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1200.*

CITY OF OTTAWA  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA CITÉ D'OTTAWA

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** M<sup>me</sup> Boyer has moved second reading of Bill 79. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will now deal with ballot item number 30. The division will take place following that.

WELFARE REFORM

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Mrs Elliott has moved ballot item number 30. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will deal with that following ballot item number 29. Call in the members. It'll be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.*

CITY OF OTTAWA  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2000  
LOI DE 2000 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA CITÉ D'OTTAWA

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Will members please take their seats? M<sup>me</sup> Boyer has moved second reading of Bill 79. All those in favour will please rise and stay standing until your name is called.

**Ayes**

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Phillips, Gerry
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce		

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and stay standing until your name is called.

**Nays**

Arnott, Ted	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Klees, Frank	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Marland, Margaret	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Mazzilli, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Molinari, Tina R.	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Palladini, Al	Young, David
Hodgson, Chris		

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 19; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

WELFARE REFORM

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with ballot item number 30, private member's notice of motion number 16, moved by Mrs Elliott. All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until your name is called.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Klees, Frank	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Marland, Margaret	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Mazzilli, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Molinari, Tina R.	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Palladini, Al	Young, David
Hodgson, Chris		

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until your name is called.

## Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Phillips, Gerry
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce		

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The eyes are 37; the nays are 19.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business have now been completed. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1212 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** Concerned citizens in my riding of St Paul's have been contacting my constituency office to express their condolences to the families of Walkerton devastated by the E coli infection of their water. Constituents have also expressed their horror that this could happen in the province of Ontario.

We know about the \$200 dividend for Ontarians, the so-called benefit of the Harris revolution. But now we also know of the latest cost of the revolution: the death of at least seven people, thousands sick and an entire community in ruins.

Who is democratically accountable for this tragedy? These are the facts: This government cut the environment budget by 40%, laid off half of the environmental officials dedicated to protecting water, and downloaded \$1 billion worth of responsibility on to municipalities. These facts lay the responsibility for this tragedy at the feet of this government.

It's time for the Premier to exercise leadership, to take responsibility for this tragedy and do everything possible to guarantee the safety of our water. Yet it seems that Mike Harris is busy pointing fingers at his predecessors or at other politicians at the municipal and federal levels.

In contrast, Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have put forward an action plan to protect drinking water safety pending the outcome of a public inquiry, including the immediate hiring of 100 inspectors and enforcement officers, the testing of every municipal water treatment facility in Ontario within six months and the introduction of tough new clean water legislation.

To date, the government has failed to act on this action plan. I urge the Premier to set aside partisan bickering and finger pointing. Act on the McGuinty action plan, Premier, so that one day all Ontarians can drink our water without having to think twice.

## DURHAM SCHOOLS

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My growing riding of Durham is home to some of the finest schools in Ontario. Today I would like to highlight two of those exceptional facilities.

Cartwright high school located in Port Perry is celebrating its 75th anniversary this very weekend. Former and current students know that Cartwright is one of the smallest high schools in the province, with a current enrolment of about 200, with the highest achievement. These graduates and future graduates will also tell you that Cartwright may be the smallest but it has the biggest heart in the area.

This weekend's 75th anniversary celebration is evidence of the heart and the sense of the whole community behind it. I must congratulate the organizers: Debbie Bauer, John Beirness, Laura Micklewright, Grant Micklewright, Gord Paisely, Tim Taylor, the principal, Shirley Turner, Aileen Van Camp, Merrill Van Camp and John Walkout. This weekend's events include an open house, complete with decade rooms celebrating the history of the school, its teachers and its students, and a barbecue in the evening followed by a dinner and dance.

Not far away is Bowmanville high school. The high school attended the Heritage Festival in Vancouver and came home with a number of important awards. The senior band, under Shawn Hills, won a silver medal, as did the senior jazz band, led by Mike Menheere. Mr Kevin Chocorlan led both the choir and the senior girls to gold medals.

I would like to congratulate all the students, teachers, and the community for making sure that our schools are excellent and the activities, both in school and extra-curricular, are always delivered on time, with passion.

## ARCHIVAL PRESERVATION

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the county of Elgin for its initiative and commitment to the establishment of a county archives.

I commend them for the recognition of the importance of preserving our written, printed and visual heritage for future generations. An archives plays an important role in ensuring that genealogists, students and historians are able to gain access to important historical information.

We continue to see a decreasing number of municipalities in Ontario, and I fear that important archival materials will be lost as a result. It is incumbent on all of us to express concern and sound the alarm bells. I have personally heard from one municipality in the Hamilton area that cannot find a home for many of its municipal artifacts. The loss of these items should not be allowed to continue.

As municipal amalgamation increases throughout the province and small municipalities are swallowed up by larger ones, this issue becomes ever more pressing. I urge the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Chair of Man-

agement Board, the ministry responsible for the Archives of Ontario, to work with the Archivist of Ontario and the Archives Association of Ontario to develop a comprehensive municipal archival preservation plan.

Our province has entered its fourth century of local government, and in a time of financial prosperity the commitment must be made to ensure that the Ontario archives and municipalities receive adequate financial support to preserve our heritage. The county of Elgin has taken the lead and it is my hope that others will follow.

#### AIR CADETS

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** It's beyond ironic, it's disgusting, that at the same time as the Minister of Education is promoting her code of conduct for our students, she is also, through her and her government's Conservative policies, forcing the eviction of the Thorold Flying Dragons Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron 128 from their 58-year home at Thorold Secondary School.

For almost 60 years, that school has been able to host the air cadet squadron, producing annually scores upon scores of young women and men who are nurtured by the training, discipline and skills promoted in the air cadets. As a result of this government's policies—in fact, school board chair Don Reilly puts it this way: “The ministry has reduced payments for school maintenance and in doing so took away our ability to give the school for free to the air cadets.”

Back in 1986, the air cadets paid for their own renovations. Can another home be found? Probably, but there's a historic link. In fact, this school is an ideal location, with its gymnasium for use as an indoor square and parade ground and for the asphalt outside.

Instead of bashing students, bashing young people, bashing teachers, it's about time this minister did something positive. I want her to intervene and assure the young people and their families, the members of the air cadet squadron, their leadership and the many volunteers who work with them that they will continue to have a home at Thorold Secondary School free of charge.

Schools belong to the community. Schools ought to be utilized by the community. We don't need codes of conduct. We need support for groups like these air cadets.

#### PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I rise in the House today to congratulate the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on taking courageous and ambitious steps to help post-secondary students in my riding. Recently, Minister Cunningham announced the province's intentions to give private post-secondary institutions degree-granting status. This has come as welcome news for students in my riding.

Last week I had the opportunity to introduce a petition in the Legislature signed by over 700 students of the DeVry Institute, a great many of those students at the

Scarborough campus. The petition was supportive of the minister's plans and called for its speedy implementation.

Currently, DeVry students at the Scarborough and Mississauga campuses must spend the final four months of their studies at a sister campus in Calgary or in southern California. This government's plans mean that those students will be able to obtain a degree at home in Ontario. Keeping these students in the province is a small step in addressing the growing brain drain problem.

By allowing private post-secondary institutions to grant degrees, this government is providing the young people of this province with important choice in their education.

There are many reasons why members should support the proposals coming from Minister Cunningham. First and foremost is that her plans are good for the young people of Ontario.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** The Minister of Health finally made an announcement about hospital funding yesterday—three months into the hospitals' fiscal year. Unfortunately, she didn't give hospitals the money to pay the bills for the rest of the year, so once again the hospitals are hoping there's going to be more money somewhere down the road.

In the meantime, hospitals that are trying to cope with deficits are wondering what they have to do today. Half of the province's hospitals were facing deficits last year and that was before another \$300 million in wage increases was figured in. The government is offering only \$329 million in what they call new money; in fact, all but \$100 million of that was already in last year's budget. So the deficits that many hospitals were facing last year are going to be there again this year.

Windsor hospitals need \$18 million more. Hamilton Health Sciences Centre is still at least \$20 million short of what it needs. Sunnybrook hospital says that it will have to close operating rooms and acute care beds to eliminate a \$23-million deficit. The Ottawa Hospital is facing a \$39-million deficit; they received \$15 million yesterday. Little Atikokan Hospital found that most of the money they received had actually been given to them last December and now they're back to looking at a deficit again this year.

The government is supposed to bring in a new hospital funding formula. They need about \$100 million to start implementing it. Some hospitals will benefit; others won't.

The cuts can't be delayed much longer in the hopes of more money coming. The hospitals need clear answers now. Down payments and vague promises are not enough to ensure that we'll have access to hospital care where and when it's needed.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** On behalf of the members of this Legislature, I'd like to show appreciation for our legislative pages.

Pages are grade 7 and 8 students who have been granted a leave of absence from school while working in the legislative chamber for a term of four to six weeks.

The duties of the pages vary. They can be seen carrying messages to and from the MPPs, meeting with politicians and officials, learning how laws are made and how our great province is governed.

To apply to the page program, students must maintain a level 4 scholastic achievement and be actively involved in a variety of co-instructional activities, both in and outside of school.

One of our current pages, Alexandra Stephenson, comes from my riding of Peterborough. I've had the opportunity to meet with Alexandra, and her parents are in the gallery. Welcome. It's very uplifting to meet young people with qualities like Alexandra's.

I know we're all very proud of each and every one of these young people. Please join me in thanking the pages for their continued service.

1340

## HIGHWAY ACCIDENT

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** It is indeed unfortunate and in a solemn moment that I rise in the House today to share our heartfelt thoughts on the tragic news of an accident that occurred on a stretch of Highway 401 near Chatham. Again we have a stark and chilly reminder of the reality that is faced day to day by our police officers across the province of Ontario.

That is why I want to express publicly again my total and complete respect, understanding, pride and support to the police officers, support staff and administration of the police services of the county of Brant and Brantford when I pay respect to the police officers serving the Chatham-Kent OPP.

To Constable Patti Pask and her family, Constable Brad Sakalow and his family, and especially Sergeant Mary Eve and her family, I offer heartfelt prayers and thoughts for a speedy recovery.

A total of six people were taken to hospital. To all the injured in this accident, on behalf of all of us, I offer our heartfelt prayers for a speedy recovery.

To the police officers doing their duty, please be assured that we honour you and thank you for a job well done.

Again, our prayers and thoughts are with the injured and their families at this time, and I know I speak for all members on behalf of the House. We do recognize and understand that there are few jobs in the public service, and even in the private service, where people go to work day to day putting their lives on the line. For this, we thank you and we pray for you.

## WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** It was my privilege and pleasure to attend the recent Women of Distinction Awards ceremony in Toronto. This remarkable event, chaired by Joann Chechalk, who is president of the board of directors of the YWCA of Toronto, celebrates and honours women who have made an outstanding contribution in their field.

Rahima Nenshi, one of my constituents in Thornhill, was the recipient of this year's Young Woman of Distinction Award. She is currently in her first year pursuing a combined degree in international studies and general science at Huron College at the University of Western Ontario. She has maintained an 85% average in her first year of post-secondary study and is a deserving recipient of the Huron College National Scholarship. Her future goal is to attend medical school and to pursue a career in international medical relief.

While pursuing her post-secondary studies, Rahima was elected as the first-year representative of the Ismaili Students Association and was actively involved on the Huron College social issues committee. Rahima has also taken part in Frontier College's nationwide volunteer literacy program.

During high school Rahima volunteered at the day care centre, tutored grade 3 and 4 students and organized student volunteering both at the Daily Bread Food Bank and at York Central Hospital in Thornhill. Rahima was actively involved in the youth wing of the Rotary Club of Canada and in the provincial student body OSSSA. I would like to congratulate Rahima for her commitment to helping others, particularly young children. She is an inspiration to all of us.

At this time I would like to recognize Rahima Nenshi and Joann Chechalk, president of the board of directors of the YWCA, in the east gallery.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Also with us today in the Speaker's gallery are the 1999-2000 Ontario legislative interns. With us today we have Emily Bain, Jennifer Harrington, Stephanie Lu, Kevin Machida, Brandy Miller, Chris Morley, Andrew Owen and Priya Suagh. Would all the members please join in welcoming our interns.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I beg leave to present a report on the Andersen Consulting contract from the standing committee on public accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Gerretsen:** First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for the unanimous report that has resulted from our hearings that took place over two days last December. Specifically, I'd like to thank co-Chair John Cleary, John Hastings, Bart Maves, Marilyn Mushinski, Shelley Martel, Julia Munro and Richard Patten for coming up with the unanimous report that contains eight unanimous recommendations. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Erik Peters, our Provincial Auditor, and his staff, and the clerks of the committee, Donna Bryce and Douglas Arnott, as well as the research officer, Ray McLellan.

The recommendations speak for themselves, but if I could just highlight one, it specifically states that "No further payment should be made to Andersen Consulting until the primary objective of implementing new technology is met and overall benefits exceed costs."

I am pleased to present this report and move that the debate now be adjourned.

**The Speaker:** Mr Gerretsen moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I beg leave to present a report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and move its adoption.

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

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Tuesday, May 15, 2000, the bill is ordered for third reading.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS ACT, 2000

##### LOI DE 2000 SUR LES GÉOSCIENTIFIQUES PROFESSIONNELS

Mr Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 86, An Act to establish the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario / Projet de loi 86, Loi visant à établir l'Ordre des géoscientifiques professionnels de l'Ontario.

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

Does the minister have a short statement?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I'll defer my statement to ministers' statements, Mr Speaker.

#### MOTIONS

##### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

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

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

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot item 32.

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

1350

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### ENERGY COMPETITION

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** The Energy Competition Act was passed by this Legislature more than two years ago in order to ensure Ontarians a safe, reliable supply of electricity at the lowest possible cost. Like a three-legged stool, there are three elements that must work together to keep costs down. The first is competition in generation. Every jurisdiction in the world that has introduced competition has seen savings in generation of from 5% to 40%. The second leg of the savings stool is debt reduction. Thirdly, there must be fair and stable distribution rates.

As a government, we've moved to take care of the first two. We've introduced competition in generation. This is spelled out in a far-reaching plan that requires Hydro's successor company, Ontario Power Generation, to reduce its current dominant position in the generation market to 35% over the next 10 years. We've also put a plan in place to reduce and eliminate Ontario Hydro's legacy of debt and liabilities.

But for the third, important leg of the stool we must look to our partners: Ontario's municipalities and their local electric utilities. Local distribution is the regulated, monopoly side of the electricity business. It's much like the wires side of the telephone business. Bell Canada owns the wires but any long-distance competitor can use

those wires in exchange for a fair rate, regulated by the CRTC. By the same token, municipalities, which own the electricity wires, must deliver electricity to customers at fair and reasonable rates.

There is only one wire. Customers have no choice but to use the municipal utility's wires. That's why local distribution rates are subject to the review and approval of the Ontario Energy Board under our new act, and that is why today I have directed the Ontario Energy Board to make customer protection its first priority when deciding rate applications before them. I have further directed the OEB to ask municipalities to justify the rate applications before they are approved.

More than two years ago, when we were drafting the Energy Competition Act, the Municipal Electrical Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario urged the government not to force amalgamations and mergers in the electricity distribution sector. At that time, we were told that if we gave them the tools and incentives, municipalities would do the right thing for customers and move to rationalize the distribution systems, find efficiencies and ensure the lowest possible price.

Our legislation gave municipalities the tools they requested. The act clarified for the first time that municipalities own their electricity utilities. Local municipal councils are the shareholders. We expected municipalities to act responsibly. Some of them have. Communities like Whitby and Thunder Bay have announced they will not be seeking rate increases. Our own company, Hydro One, has promised no increase, not only for existing customers but also for customers of the small utilities it is seeking to purchase.

But elsewhere the story has been very much different. Unfortunately, some municipalities have followed the ill-conceived advice of consultants and have filed with the Ontario Energy Board for significant increases in local distribution rates. There is no reason for distribution rates to go up in the competitive market. There are more than 250 municipal electric utilities in Ontario. That's more than 10 times the rest of Canada combined. They are monopoly businesses that have been bought and paid for by electricity customers. Between them, they have more than a billion dollars in cash and investments in the bank. That's pretty good for a so-called non-profit sector.

Customers have already put more than enough money into the electricity system to shield against any short-term transitional and regulatory costs brought on by electricity restructuring. As I have said many times, municipalities must earn their rate of return by squeezing efficiencies in their operations. Our own company, Hydro One, has done this. It conducted an employee pension buyout to finance its rate of return. I have asked municipalities to do the same, to find ways of becoming more efficient. I have urged them to put customers first. We believe in the benefits of competition, but customers must be protected in a competitive market.

Our government did not get into electricity competition to see prices increase, especially on the monopoly,

regulated side of the business. That is why I have given direction to the Ontario Energy Board, and it is why I am informing the House today that the government is preparing legislation that, if passed, would ensure municipal politicians put electricity customers first.

In conclusion, I hope and I expect that all members of this House will also want to put customers first and will support this bill.

#### REGULATION OF GEOSCIENTISTS

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** Today I have great pleasure in introducing into this House legislation to govern the geoscience profession in Ontario. This legislation, to be known as the Professional Geoscientists Act, will establish the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario as the governing body for professional geoscientists. It will empower the association to establish standards of professional practice for persons who wish to be recognized as geoscientists.

The bill is being introduced three months after I first indicated my intention to address this issue at the mining industry's Mining Millennium 2000 held in March in Toronto. That was followed by an intensive period of public consultations. These consultations were distinguished by the thoughtful and outstanding contributions of all those interested in the issue. It is that level of public participation that has enabled me to bring forward this legislation today.

I must commend all the participants for their input and add a special word of thanks to my parliamentary assistant, Jerry Ouellette, who so diligently led the consultation process across the province, from corner to corner in the province of Ontario. Great work, Jerry.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Hudak:** I'm getting heckled by the minister, Mr Speaker.

I'd also like to thank the opposition, particularly Michael Brown, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, and Shelley Martel, the member for Nickel Belt, for their letters of support on this initiative. I also want to thank the Chair of Management Board, the member for Haldiburton-Victoria-Brock, Chris Hodgson, who as my predecessor as Minister of Northern Development and Mines initiated this process that has led to the introduction of the bill today.

As well, let me acknowledge the presence in the gallery of some key stakeholders whose expertise and assistance have contributed greatly to the drafting of this legislation. Allow me to welcome John Bowlby, vice-president of the Association of Geoscientists of Ontario; Andy Cooper, secretary treasurer of the Association of Geoscientists; Neil Westoll, the chair of the advisory committee of the AGO; and Maureen Jensen, director of mining services, the Toronto Stock Exchange. Welcome and thank you for being with us here today.

As I've told this House on previous occasions, Ontario's mining sector contributes some \$5 billion an-

nally to the province's economy and sustains hundreds of communities across the province, particularly in northern Ontario. My ministry is therefore committed to ensuring that Ontario continues to be one of the most attractive jurisdictions for mining investment in this world. In fact, we strive to be the best. This bill, coupled with our past mining initiatives and those announced in last May's provincial budget, including record tax cuts to the mining industry, puts us well on our way to claiming this lofty status.

This proposed legislation responds to the February 1999 recommendations of the Mining Standards Task Force, a joint committee of the Ontario Securities Commission and the Toronto Stock Exchange. It intends to bring Ontario's geoscientists under a system of licensure that would set out professional standards. These would allow geoscientists to become qualified persons who would review and approve all mineral exploration results to be published and protect the public against unskilled or unethical actions. This bill will put Ontario in a position to comply fully with rules that are expected to be adopted by securities regulators to strengthen quality and integrity in public disclosure.

This proposed legislation supports economic growth and job creation. It tells the world that Ontario is open for business, that Ontario is ready and able to participate successfully in the global market and that Ontario will continue to be regarded as the mining financing capital of the world.

The legislation will ensure that geoscientists working in environmental fields possess a high level of professionalism. All sectors of the province are affected by the actions of geoscientists through their contributions to mapping groundwater, siting landfills or mapping hazardous land. The standards of accountability we are proposing are fundamental to protecting the public interest and will serve as a model for other jurisdictions.

This bill enhances Ontario's international competitiveness by showcasing the province's excellence in geoscience, while supporting the development and professionalism of the geoscience community. This proposed legislation provides support for Ontario's geoscientists and geoscience-based companies to compete in international markets.

I hope I can count on the support of all parties in the Legislature to bring this legislation forward and ensure its passage through to enactment.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Briefly, I would just like to reply to the statement from the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and indicate our support for this measure and our appreciation for the help of the parliamentary assistant and staff of the ministry in providing us with a briefing on this measure.

It will be helpful to juniors, to prospectors, to investors and the investment community. We are in support, and I thank you for that.

1400

## ENERGY COMPETITION

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I'm going to respond on behalf of the official opposition to the Minister of Energy's statement today about electricity rates. I really appreciate the opportunity, as one member of this Legislature, to raise and focus attention on the question of electricity rates, because make no mistake about it, my friends, regardless of which party you belong to, and to the audience out there, electricity rates in the province are going to go up and they're going to go up sharply, for both residential and industrial and commercial consumers.

While the government of Ontario is not entirely responsible for these rate increases, the electricity policy pursued by the Harris government is substantially responsible for the sharply increased electricity rates that all consumers of electricity are going to experience over the next six to 18 months.

What we have today from Jim Wilson, Minister of Energy, is, incredibly, yet more of the Harris disease, namely, blame the municipalities: Blame, blame, blame; accept no responsibility. That's what we've got today. We've just heard the Minister of Energy stand in his place and blame the municipal utilities when the Minister of Energy himself knows that the electricity policy which he brought and piloted through this Legislature gamed the rules against the municipal utilities in favour of Ontario Hydro.

He hasn't said today or he hasn't said at any other time that in fact one of the things going on out in the marketplace today is that his company, Hydro One, is out there in the Ottawa Valley and elsewhere in the province paying premium prices buying up utilities. Professor Joe Kushner, over at Brock University, has done some very good work on this very point. I repeat: Jim Wilson and Mike Harris's company, Hydro One, is up in places like the Ottawa Valley and in central and western Ontario paying premium prices to buy up municipal utilities.

Should there be a restructuring? Absolutely, and in southern Ontario most of that restructuring should be in favour of fewer, larger MEUs. But that's not what we're getting. We're getting a bigger, stronger Ontario Hydro, and that's only possible because the rules that were written by the Harris government made it possible for Ontario Hydro Retail to get bigger, and that's precisely what Mr Osborne is doing.

But it's more than that. Just in the last few days, my colleagues Mrs McLeod, Mr Gravelle and Mr Crozier, to name but three, have come to me with cases in their own constituencies, and I have several of my own and I know my colleagues opposite on the government bench have as well. Direct customers of Ontario Hydro are being told by Ontario Hydro Generation: "Get ready. Your rates are going to go up anywhere from 15% to 25% very shortly after the market opens." That has nothing to do with the

MEUs. That has nothing to do with Toronto Hydro or Pembroke Hydro or Sarnia Hydro.

I don't want to embarrass some of the big companies, but we know who they are. I'll be quite frank, I had Inco in yesterday and they are very worried, as is Falconbridge, as are a number of these resource-extractors in northern Ontario. Let me repeat: They are being told, as direct customers of Ontario Hydro, that their rates are going to go up anywhere between 15%, 20% and 25%, and that has nothing to do with the MEUs.

I will be the first one to say this is a difficult, complicated policy, and all of us have a responsibility. I accept what the government says about the past. But I tell you, I never thought, given what this government said it was about, which was competition in generation—that's 70% of your hydro bill. We're not getting that, and we're not getting it because Harris and Farlinger rejected the advice of people like Donald Macdonald and Darcy McKeough. Incredibly, the Harris government has become a kind of parlour poodle for the new, bigger, stronger, more expansive, more imperial Ontario Hydro. Because the Harris government has sold out to a bigger, stronger Ontario Hydro and because we're not going to get competition in generation, everybody's electricity rates, both residential-farm and industrial-commercial, are going to go up. They're going to go up sharply and soon, to the detriment of the social and economic well-being of this Ontario of ours.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I very much want to respond to the Minister of Energy. It was the Minister of Energy, when he introduced this legislation, who said to all of us, "Rates are going to go down." On this side of the House, we said, "All you need to do is look at the so-called deregulated market in the United States, where their costs of energy are higher than ours, and anyone can figure out that rates are going to go up." And what do we have today? We have the Minister of Energy coming back a year and a half later and saying, "Oops, rates are going to go up." But he's got to find someone to blame. This government can't admit that it got it all screwed up again. You've got to find someone to blame. Isn't it amazing? The government said a year and a half ago, "Deregulation is the answer." Today we have the Minister of Energy in here saying, "Oops, I have to re-regulate."

Minister, you're not fooling anyone. Your attempt to blame the municipalities is like your Premier's attempt to blame municipalities. It is shallow, it is cynical and the facts don't bear it out. Let's be clear about where this government is going with Hydro. The legislation they brought into this House and passed ostensibly tilts the scales in favour of their corporate friends who are now running Ontario Hydro. It puts municipal utilities in a position where they are being steamrollered to sell to their corporate friends who are going to run the old Ontario Hydro.

Some of the municipalities are thinking: "You know, we kind of like to look after our community. Also, this is a very valuable asset. We don't want to sell it to Mike

Harris's corporate friends cheap. We'd like to make sure our people, our taxpayers get something out of it." To do that under your rules, they virtually have to raise their rates, according to your formula. That's what they're doing. They're only behaving according to your formula set out in the legislation. Your legislation says they need to earn a market rate of return, so that's what they're doing. But now, when they behave as your legislation tells them to, you're going to stomp all over them and blame them. This minister is more incompetent than the Minister of the Environment. That much is clear.

I want to say very directly to all of the people across Ontario that everybody's power rates are going to go up. In my community, a representative of a paper mill, which has run successfully for almost 100 years, came into my office and said as a result of this government's privatization and so-called deregulation they are looking at power rate increases of 25% to 30%. They are looking at the potential of having to close down during certain months of the year because of the high cost of power. I want to tell people who have large, industrial complexes in their community, like paper mills, pulp mills, steel mills and nickel mines, that this is something which is going to hit every community, and there's a reason.

The minister says once the market is privatized, this is going to work. Folks, the people who are coming into Ontario to buy up chunks of our hydro-generating capacity are overwhelmingly American companies. Do you think all these hydro-generating stations are going to sell in Ontario for a cheap price or they're going to sell into Chicago for a bigger price, into Detroit for a bigger price or into New York for a bigger price? I have to tell you these corporations aren't in business to lower rates. They're in business to achieve the highest rate of return, and they will achieve the highest rate of return by buying up power stations in Ontario and selling the power in Chicago for a bigger price, selling the power in New York for a bigger price or selling the power in Detroit for a bigger price. If citizens in Ontario want to buy the power that is being generated here, we will have to pay a higher price.

That is the dirty little secret of this government in terms of energy policy. The cost of power, the price of power to people all across Ontario, is not going to go down, it's going to go up. Trying to blame municipalities, as you are today, is the same shallow, disgusting, cynical game that we saw the Premier engage in earlier this week, and it's going to be exposed in this situation exactly as it was exposed with the Premier in the whole issue around Walkerton.

1410

ADRIAN FILLMORE

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence in honour of Adrian Fillmore, a constituent of Toronto Centre-Rosedale. Mr Fillmore was a man who made his



home in a bus shelter at the corner of Bay and Wellesley, adjacent to the Mowat Block. His vicious murder on Monday night has been a traumatic event for many in the Queen's Park government precinct. Mr Fillmore was well known to many members of this Legislature and to thousands of Ontario public servants with whom he shared that corner.

Mr Fillmore's murder is regrettably only one occurrence of many that have ravaged our city's vulnerable homeless community recently. In addition to wishing our police service Godspeed in bringing his murderer to justice, I ask for unanimous consent for a moment of silence in honour of the life of Adrian Fillmore.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. Would all of our friends in the galleries join us for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment and it's about the Walkerton water tragedy. A week ago Mike Harris said, "There's not a shred of evidence that there isn't enough staff, nor a shred of evidence that the procedures and the regulations, if they were complied with, would not have prevented this tragedy." There is much more, in fact, than a mere shred of evidence; there is a mountain of evidence. It's coming in day after day after day, and it is all damning.

I have in my hand today a copy of a document prepared inside your ministry by the water policy branch. It is dated January 2000. This document makes it perfectly clear that as a result of the decisions and actions that have taken place affecting the Ministry of the Environment here in Ontario, the kind of thing that happened at Walkerton was about to happen.

Tell us, Minister, why did you not only ignore the advice of the auditor and the Environmental Commissioner but now a document prepared by your own staff warning you that your negligence was about to get our province, our people, into serious trouble?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):** Every change that we've made and every policy that we have approved we felt has always been in the best interests of the citizens and taxpayers of Ontario. Neither I nor the Premier have attempted to deny or to lay blame in this case at all. We've tried to answer questions openly and we've tried to answer those questions to the best of our ability. I know this effort has been attributed by some as an attempt to lay blame. This has never been our intent, and I apologize if anyone has taken it that way.

I recognize that the member opposite has questions about this issue, and so do I. That's why there's an inquiry and three other investigations getting to the bottom

of what happened in Walkerton. That's why everything, including the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table to be examined by the public inquiry and the three other investigations.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, you did not answer the question. The question is, why did you ignore your staff? Why did you ignore all of those warnings that were placed under your nose and the Premier's nose? You act now as if this suddenly came from out of nowhere and you had no warning whatsoever of any kind at any time.

The fact of the matter is you had many, many warnings. In January 2000 this was placed before your ministry and your Premier. Inside this document your ministry staff make it perfectly clear that no procedures were in place to make certain that the medical officer of health was informed if deadly bacteria were found inside water. That was the warning that was given in January 2000. That's exactly what happened at Walkerton. That's what took place there. You didn't heed this warning and people died.

Tell us now again—because you didn't the first time—answer the question: Why did you refuse to heed this warning?

**Hon Mr Newman:** There are many questions over the unfortunate circumstances at Walkerton. That's why there is the public inquiry and there are three other investigations taking place, to ensure that we get to the bottom of this matter so that all of us in Ontario have answers, so that the people in Walkerton have answers to their questions. And that's why everything, including the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table to be looked at by the public inquiry and also by the other three investigations that are underway.

As a government we accept our responsibility and I give you this commitment: We want to do everything possible to get to the bottom of this terrible tragedy so that what happened at Walkerton never again happens in our province.

**Mr McGuinty:** The sad and terrifying prospect here is that what happened in Walkerton is going to happen again, because not only have you ignored warnings in the past but you are ignoring them today.

Minister, do you know what else this document prepared by your own ministry officials says? It says that a number of smaller municipalities are not complying with the minimum monitoring and reporting requirements. Cost was cited by these municipalities as the main reason for non-compliance.

Mike Harris, on the other hand, said, and I quote: "Any downloading that took place on the costs of water testing [was] very minor. There has not been any significant call from municipalities for them to pay for the testing."

Your own officials told you back in January 2000 that not only were smaller municipalities not complying with monitoring and testing requirements, but that they didn't do so because they didn't have the money to do so. They told you this back in January 2000.

Why, Minister, in addition to ignoring warnings from the Provincial Auditor and the Environmental Commissioner, did you ignore the warnings from those who are in your employ, people who work inside your ministry, people who placed a document under your nose and said: "Watch out. We're going to be in trouble here in Ontario. People are going to die"? Why did you ignore all of that?

**Hon Mr Newman:** There are many questions with respect to the tragic events at Walkerton. That's why there is a public inquiry, and that's why there are three other investigations, including the OPP's investigation. There is also the coroner's inquest. There's the investigation through the Ministry of the Environment's investigations and enforcement branch, looking at all possible answers in this tragic situation in Walkerton. And that's why the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment are on the table in all of these investigations, because we want to get to the bottom of it so that the people of Walkerton and the people of Ontario have the answers they need so that something like this never, ever happens again in our province.

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**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, here's a document produced in January 2000 by ministry officials. It warns that your negligence is going to cause the kind of disaster that took place at Walkerton. Why did you ignore your officials? The people of Ontario want to know. Forget the message track for a minute. Why did you ignore your own officials who stepped to the fore and said that your negligence, what you had done to the ministry in terms of cuts and reducing inspections and downloading testing, was having a horrific effect on their ability to do their job? They warned that municipalities, but especially smaller municipalities in Ontario, weren't able to keep up with their responsibilities because they couldn't afford to do so.

Minister, again, why did you ignore that blatant warning?

**Hon Mr Newman:** The member opposite makes the point that the people of Ontario want to know, and he's absolutely right. They do want to know. So do I want to know. So do all members in this House, as do the people of Ontario. They want to know what happened in Walkerton, and that's why there is an inquiry under way. There are three other investigations—the OPP's investigation, the coroner's investigation, and the Ministry of the Environment's investigation—looking at all aspects of what happened in Walkerton so we can get to the bottom of it. As a government, we've accepted our responsibility and we want to get to the bottom of this tragedy. We want to ensure that something like this never, ever happens again in Ontario.

**Mr McGuinty:** Can you tell us, Minister, exactly how the minister responded when he was made aware of this memo, produced in January 2000 by his own officials, warning of the dire consequences as a result of cuts and downloading? Can you tell us exactly what happened at that time?

**Hon Mr Newman:** I can tell you that we take the protection of the environment in this province very seriously. Whether it's the protection of the water for the people of Ontario, whether it's the protection of the air for the people of Ontario, or whether it's the land protection, we take this very seriously. That's why in this case here in Walkerton there is a public inquiry that will be underway and other investigations, so we can get to the bottom of the tragic circumstances in Walkerton.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, you don't get it. There are hundreds of Walkertons waiting to happen today in Ontario. This document warns that smaller municipalities aren't able to live up to their responsibilities when it comes to testing and monitoring water. It says they can't do that for one important reason: They can't cope with the additional costs that have been downloaded on to them. You ministry officials knew about this. They thought it was very, very important to bring it to the minister's attention, so they put it in writing, they put it in black and white, and they did so in January 2000. They sent it forward and they prayed and they hoped that the minister would receive it and do something about it and act on it immediately.

I'm going to ask you again, Minister, what happened when the minister received this document prepared by his officials warning about an impending disaster because of actions that had taken place inside the ministry?

**Hon Mr Newman:** I don't think fearmongering or laying blame is going to do anyone any good in this case. There are water tests that take place in our province. Municipalities have a responsibility, as do public utilities. Where you have a municipality of under 100,000 people, they would test their water eight times a month, plus an additional test of one per thousand of population. Populations greater than 100,000 would have 100 tests per month, plus an additional test being conducted for every 10,000 of population. That's what's in the Ontario Drinking Water Objectives with respect to water testing.

I again remind the member opposite that all matters pertaining to Walkerton and all matters pertaining to the Ministry of the Environment are obviously going to be looked at via the public inquiry and the other three investigations underway.

**The Speaker:** New question; the leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Minister of the Environment, this is the report that you should have read. This is the report which contains the evidence that I think is now overwhelming against your government. This report says that as early as 1997, Ministry of the Environment officials were telling your government that there were problems with the quality of drinking water and that you did not have the standards in place, you did not have the machinery in place to check that or do anything about it. And it says that after closing the government labs, after laying off 900 scientists, inspectors and enforcement officers, it says clearly, "Restructuring necessitates a review of the protocol for the notification of the medical officer of health on

discovery of adverse drinking water quality.” It tells you that very plainly. But it seems you did nothing, and now at least seven people are dead in Walkerton as a result of this, possibly 11.

Minister, you had more warnings than that. You had warnings in January, February and March that there were problems with the water in that particular community. You did nothings then, as well.

Minister, why didn't you take action? Is it because, for your government, giving another tax cut to the well-off is more important than protecting the quality of water for the citizens of Ontario? Is that the real reason?

**Hon Mr Newman:** I know the leader of the third party has many questions with respect to what happened at Walkerton, and I too have many questions. That's why there are investigations underway. There is the public inquiry that is simply going to look at all the events that happened in Walkerton. That's why we're doing everything including having the procedures and operations of the Ministry of the Environment be examined by a public inquiry.

We've accepted our responsibility as a government. We definitely want to get to the bottom of this. We want to have answers, as do the people of Walkerton. We want to ensure that an event like this never happens again in Ontario.

We have committed to do whatever it takes to get to the bottom of this and to provide whatever is needed to help the people of Walkerton. That's why later this afternoon my colleagues Ministers Marland, Jackson, Palladini and Flaherty, along with Bill Murdoch, the local member, will be in Walkerton to indicate further steps the government will be taking to address the needs of the people of Walkerton.

**Mr Hampton:** Tragically, after 11 people have died and over 2,000 have been rendered sick, this government discovers a problem. What this document tells us and tells all the people in Ontario, Minister, is that these 11 deaths could have been prevented, that the thousands of people becoming ill didn't have to happen.

Listen to the words in this memo: “The drinking water coordination committee noted that not monitoring drinking water is a serious concern for the ministry, in view of its mandate to protect public health.” It said that the reporting system was obsolete and expressed serious concerns about the ministry's ability to protect public health in regard to drinking water. In January, at least, they were telling you there was a massive problem, and you did nothing.

I'm going to ask you again, Minister, is the reason that you did nothing, the reason your whole government did nothing, because another tax cut for the well-off is more important than making an investment to protect the quality of drinking water for the people of Ontario? Is that the real reason? Is that why you don't have an answer here today?

**Hon Mr Newman:** Again, the leader of the third party has many questions with respect to the tragic incidents at Walkerton. We have questions as well, and that's why

there is a public inquiry. There are three other investigations, whether an investigation through the Ontario Provincial Police or a coroner's inquest or the investigations and enforcement branch of the Ministry of the Environment conducting their investigation. We want to get to the bottom of it so we have answers, so that, once again, we never have a situation like what happened in Walkerton ever again happening in our province.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, the inquiry is very important; we need to get to the bottom of why this happened. But you need to give some answers to the people of Ontario. You were the minister in charge. You were told by officials in your ministry, in words that are ever so clear, that there was a huge problem. They told you this before 11 people died, they told you this before 2,000 people became ill, and you did absolutely nothing, not a damn thing.

Tell us, if you insist that you want to get to the bottom of this now, please tell us, what did you do when you got this memorandum that warned you that people's lives were at risk, that the quality of drinking water was seriously contaminated, that in community after community they weren't able to do the quality drinking water checks because of your downloading, because of your privatization? What did you do, Minister, to prevent 2,000 people from becoming ill and prevent the deaths of several innocent people? What did you do?

**Hon Mr Newman:** The leader of the third party indicates that the inquiry is important. Those are his words. I absolutely agree with him. That's why the inquiry is going to get to the bottom of what happened in Walkerton. There's also the OPP investigation, the coroner's inquest and the Ministry of the Environment's investigation through the investigations and enforcement branch. We want to get to the bottom of it so we have answers for the people of Walkerton and for the people of Ontario, because we want to ensure that what happened in Walkerton never ever again happens in our province.

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#### ONTARIO CLEAN WATER AGENCY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood):** To the Minister of the Environment: This morning I got a call from a radio station calling this your government's Watergate. I've got to say to you that if you continue on with this cover-up and denial, it's looking closer and closer to that every day.

I have a very important question and I want an answer today, Minister. We've all known for some time that the Ontario Clean Water Agency was on the list for possible privatization. Yesterday you refused to agree to take it off the auction block. Well, today I received a report that employees at OCWA say they've been told it is up for sale. They say that many staff are already leaving the Toronto head office. We were told negotiations were underway but have been put on hold because of Walkerton. Will you confirm or deny today whether or not OCWA is up for sale?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):**

First I want to acknowledge the role that the Ontario Clean Water Agency is playing in Walkerton. They're playing a very important role in ensuring that there is safe water provided to the people of Walkerton. Just like, for example, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, there's no active sale of the property at this time. I can tell you that we want to ensure that all agencies of government are more effective and more efficient, just like the LCBO has become, because that only benefits the taxpayers of our province.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, I just said to you that we heard that negotiations are on hold. So you did not confirm or deny whether or not OCWA is up for sale, and that is the question we ask you today.

I want to come to another issue. Yesterday and on Monday when my leader was in Walkerton, all the people he met said it was more than they could bear to go another six to eight weeks without their water. Today, at a press conference, we learned that before the door-to-door disinfection can even begin you have to tear up schools to get at the pipes, and that two seniors homes, the hospital and the jail all must be hooked up to a separate water supply.

Minister, when I asked you why you refused an offer from Ottawa to send personnel to assist with the effort, you said it wasn't true. Our staff called Ottawa. They said they did make the offer and that the offer is still good. Will you call the federal environment minister today and accept the offer of extra personnel so that the people of Walkerton won't have to wait eight more weeks to be able to turn their taps on?

**Hon Mr Newman:** We've indicated that we'll do whatever it takes to help the people of Walkerton and the needs that they have as a result of this unfortunate situation. As a government, we've accepted our responsibility. We want to get to the bottom of the unfortunate situation that happened in Walkerton to ensure that it never happens again. That's why later today Ministers Marland, Jackson, Palladini and Flaherty, along with Bill Murdoch, the local member, will be in Walkerton to indicate further steps the province will be taking to address the needs of the people of Walkerton.

## MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

I'll return to the Minister of the Environment on the same memo. In the same memo prepared by your own staff dated January 2000, they state, "Not monitoring drinking water quality is a serious concern for the ministry in view of its mandate to protect public health." They then go on at great length to warn the minister of the potential dangers connected with the cuts and the downloading and the inability of smaller municipalities in particular to cope with the additional financial burden of having to do their own testing. Minister, what did you do when you received this memo?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):**

All the events with respect to Walkerton are going to be looked at through a public inquiry, through the Ontario Provincial Police investigation, through the coroner's inquest and through the Ministry of the Environment's investigation and enforcement branch. Neither I nor the Premier have ever attempted to lay blame. We simply tried to answer questions openly and to the best of our ability. The member opposite has many questions; so do we. That's why there are the four investigations underway, including the public inquiry, so we can get to the bottom of this matter.

**Mr McGuinty:** I'll tell you why it's so important.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education):** So we should scrap the inquiry?

**Mr McGuinty:** I'll tell the Minister of Education why it's so important here today that we get an answer to this. Because the Premier said, "There is not a shred of evidence that there isn't enough staff nor a shred of evidence that the procedures and the regulations, if they were complied with, would not have prevented this tragedy." That is the Premier's unequivocal, categorical assertion. There is no doubt in his assertion whatsoever. But on the other hand, we have information from the minister's own staff dated January 2000 warning him about the cuts and the downloading and the additional financial burden on smaller municipalities. Minister, when was this memo first brought to your attention?

**Hon Mr Newman:** There are many questions with respect to Walkerton and that's why there is the public inquiry, there is the OPP investigation, and also the coroner's inquest, that are looking at everything with respect to the matters in Walkerton. We want to get to the bottom of it—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Minister take his seat. We'll just wait and let the clock run down.

Sorry for the interruption. Minister.

**Hon Mr Newman:** That's why everything, including the procedures and operations of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table to be examined by that inquiry and the other investigations. We've accepted our responsibility. We want to get to the bottom of the events in Walkerton, this awful tragedy that affected the people of Walkerton.

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** My question is for the Minister of Correctional Services. Minister, yesterday in the Hamilton Spectator a reporter stated that the Liberal corrections critic, Dave Levac, believed that "female inmates will be exposed to physical dangers when the ... women's wing is opened at the expanded Maplehurst" corrections complex in my riding because men will be housed there along with the women. In fact, Mr Levac is quoted as saying, "It's like putting the fox in the hen house."

Minister, there is a great concern in my riding as well that women will be exposed to physical violence and that the rehabilitation and treatment programs will be reduced or discontinued. What is your ministry doing, and is there any credibility to these statements?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** I'm more than happy to speak to the concerns of the member for Halton and his constituents, as well as the member for Brant. I think both members and constituents from both ridings would know that of course public safety is a top concern of this government. We wouldn't do anything as a result of the restructuring of the correctional services we're going through, the infrastructure changes we're doing, that would jeopardize the public safety. In fact, we would do things that would strengthen public safety. That is indeed what we're doing at Maplehurst, where female and male offenders will be in the same complex but in completely separate institutions as it relates to the functioning of those institutions. Yes, they will share some common services, as they should if you want to have effective and efficient correctional services, but it will be in an institution that will have programming focused to deal with the particular challenges of the female young offenders as well as the other offenders we have in this province who are in that particular institution.

1440

**Mr Chudleigh:** I'd like to thank the Minister of Correctional Services for that response. Minister, I'm aware that the correctional system is in need of improvement. However, some may disagree with your ministry's decision to consolidate programs and services for female offenders in the greater Toronto area. In fact, in that same newspaper article, the Liberal corrections critic continues to say that this government is taking a "step backward" by reverting to a more prison-like facility for women. He also noted that the new federal women's prison in Kitchener was modelled after the ministry's Vanier Centre for Women in Brampton. Minister, is this government taking a backward step by reverting to a more prison-like facility for women?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** To the member for Halton, it's quite clear that this government believes that correctional institutions and jails in general should be places that people don't want to go to.

We understand very correctly and very clearly the Liberal philosophy of jails and prisons. We understand the member for Brant very clearly said "putting foxes in the henhouse." It was the Liberal government in Ottawa that sent two cop-killers to go to the same minimum-security institution in Joliette, Quebec. We stood for the victims of that crime. We stood and we said it was wrong, and they reversed that decision.

We believe that jails should be places that people don't want to go to, male or female—

*Interjections.*

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

A point of order? Stop the clock for a moment, please.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** On a point of order, Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party throughout question period have been referring to a memo prepared for the Minister of the Environment. I wonder if that report could be tabled, because we have no idea what memo that is—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I'm going to start the clock for your point of order, though. For your point of order, the clock will start.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We already know that they have no idea what's going on with this.

**The Speaker:** It's not helpful for points of order that are going to waste time. Members have very important questions. The leader of the official opposition has the floor.

#### MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to return to the Minister of the Environment and the same memo.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Come to order. Sorry for the interruption. Leader of the official opposition.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I can't call for order and then you yell again. Last warning to the chief government whip. Otherwise, I'll name him. Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** You know, if there wasn't such a tragic aspect to the Walkerton issue, it would be comical that we have representatives of the government who are now asking for a copy of a staff memo prepared for the Ministry of the Environment.

To return: There's a quote here that is particularly relevant. It says, "Restructuring of public sector laboratory services (which have resulted in a move to private sector lab testing of drinking water) necessitates a review of the protocol for notification of the medical officer of health on discovery of adverse drinking water quality." What your staff were saying at the time was that it was important to place a real responsibility on the private lab testers to notify the ministry when they found contaminated water.

Minister, are you telling us that this memo was not brought to your attention until you read about it in this morning's papers? Is that what you're telling us here today?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):** There are many questions surrounding the events at Walkerton. That's why there is a public inquiry that will be underway, that's why there's the OPP investigation, that's why there's a coroner's inquest and the Ministry of the Environment's investigations and enforcement branch investigation. That's why everything, including the oper-

ations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table to be examined by that public inquiry and by those other three investigations.

**Mr McGuinty:** Your memo also says, Minister: “A number of smaller municipalities do not comply with the minimum monitoring and reporting requirements.... Cost was cited by these municipalities as the main reason for non-compliance.”

The only thing we can conclude over here is that the very first time this memo was brought to your attention was by means of this morning’s newspaper, and that scares the heck out of us over here. You have done nothing to take responsibility for what has happened in connection with Walkerton. You have done nothing to take responsibility for making sure that it doesn’t happen again in the future. Tell us, when was this memo first brought to your attention?

**Hon Mr Newman:** As a government, we accept our responsibility. We want to get to the bottom of the tragic events that happened in Walkerton.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Attorney General, come to order. The question has been asked, his own minister is answering, and I can’t hear the answer for the government members yelling.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Beaches-East York, come to order as well, please.

**Hon Mr Newman:** There are indeed many questions about what happened in Walkerton, and all of us want answers. The people of Walkerton want answers and I want answers. That’s why there are the investigations underway, the public inquiry, the OPP investigation, the coroner’s inquest and the investigations and enforcement branch of my ministry conducting those investigations.

We wanted to ensure that everything, including the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table to be examined by that public inquiry and by the other investigations. We have accepted our responsibility. We want to get to the bottom of this terrible tragedy so that something like this never again happens in our province.

#### WSIB PREMIUMS

**Mr John O’Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, it’s a pleasure to have your undivided attention. You would know that small business clearly creates the majority of jobs in not just my riding of Durham but across the province of Ontario. I thank small business for that. But in my constituency, businesses like MP Plastic, Bowmanville Foundry, Humphries Landscape Service, Old Port Marketing—I could go on. It’s an impressive list of small businesses that are successful.

Minister, you know how important it is to a thriving economy, but recently, I’ve been reading articles in the Red Star—the Toronto Star, rather—dealing with changes in the workplace insurance experience rating

system. According to the article, the proposed prospective experience rating model would see employer premiums skyrocket. Clearly, this is unacceptable, Minister. Tell me today it isn’t true.

**Interjection:** Tell us it isn’t true.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I’ll do my best.

The WSIB is focusing on prevention, illness and injury. One objective is in developing a new plan to provide more financial rewards and incentives to employers for good performance. Along with the rewards comes the risk of greater penalties for poor performance. The idea of the plan is simply this: If it is truly an insurance plan, which everyone seems to admit that it is, then it would seem to me that if you are a truly safe employer and provide a safe working place, follow the rules to the letter and in fact maybe go beyond those, why would it not make sense to say to that employer, “Your premiums should go down”? Now, if you’re an unsafe workplace, you’re not following the rules, we’re always writing orders and you don’t have a safe workplace, you get a lot of accidents, why then would it not make sense to tell that employer, “You’re premiums are going up?”

These are radical and dramatic thoughts, I know, for the other side, but this is how insurance plans work. That’s how we would want to run the WSIB. That’s the approach we’re taking. That’s what we’re telling the employers. As far as I can see in that article, the only one in disagreement is the one person who was speaking at the time. From everyone else I’ve spoken to: good performance, low premiums; bad performance, high premiums—pretty simple.

**Mr O’Toole:** Thank you very much, Minister, for that very commonsense response. Clearly, your willingness to respond to my questions is being demonstrated here today.

People want to know the real facts, Minister. However, you can’t trust the Toronto Star, from my experience. The article goes on to mention that Ontario has the highest premium rates in Canada and the unfunded liability still remains very high. Of course, both of these are unacceptable. With the current unjust and unnecessary level of federal government employment insurance premiums—now, there’s something we should be talking about—the last thing small business owners need is higher premium rates in Ontario.

Minister, can you shed a little bit of light on the claims this Toronto Star article is making?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Let me just say that article’s insane.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It is. We have had a 24% drop in rates in five years. Let me tell you, the rates today are at the same level or lower than pre the 10 lost years. Employers right across the spectrum are getting reductions in their premiums. The unfunded liability is a success story all on its own. There should be a book written about that. The fact is, when we came to office, there was \$11.6 billion in unfunded liability. Today we’re looking in the

range of a \$6-billion unfunded liability, on schedule to be retired in 2014—probably ahead of time. I don't know where the research was done for that. That was an unfair story that wasn't reasonable, wasn't factual. In fact, it struck me as one of the questions you'd receive in this House.

1450

#### MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, this is the memorandum you would have received in January of this year. On the first page, the first bullet point says, "A number of smaller municipalities do not comply with the minimum monitoring and reporting requirements established" for drinking water. On the second page, "Restructuring of public sector laboratory services ... necessitate a review of the protocol for notification of the medical officer of health." Next bullet point: "Propose alternative sampling and monitoring requirements" of drinking water for small municipalities.

Those are the first two pages of this memo. What did you do when you got this? Did you share it with your cabinet colleagues? Did you ask anyone for advice? What did you do when you got a memo which so clearly says there are very serious problems and recommends the measures you need to take? Did you share it with anyone? Did you take any action? What did you do, Minister?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):** There are a lot of questions with respect to what happened in Walkerton. That's why there are the investigations. There is the public inquiry that will get to the bottom of everything that happened with respect to Walkerton.

I can say to the leader of the third party that any community that has less than 100,000 population would have a test done eight times per month, plus an additional test for every 1,000 population. Those populations that are greater than 100,000 would have 100 tests per month with an additional test per 10,000 population. If any municipality was not in compliance, a field order would be issued to ensure that community was brought back into line.

**Mr Hampton:** We know that one of the big problems at Walkerton was that, despite a number of tests showing there were serious problems with the quality of the drinking water, the medical officer of health was never advised. Your ministry was advised, but the medical officer of health was never advised. This is what this memorandum from your official says. It says that when the drinking water regs were last revised, MOE labs were performing most drinking water analyses for municipalities. Since MOE labs were the first, typically, to know if there was a problem, they let the medical officer of health know, but when you closed down the government labs there was no way for this information to be transferred to the medical officer of health.

They're telling you in this memo that there is no way to get the information from the lab to the medical officer of health. That's what happened at Walkerton. The medical officer of health wasn't told by you or by anyone else, and they're telling you that this should have been thought about and should have been dealt with.

Minister, 11 people have died and they tell you in this memorandum what you needed to do back in January to avoid it. Why didn't you do something, Minister? Why didn't you follow the advice of those officials? Aren't you concerned that 11 people have died, that 2,000 other people are seriously ill and that it could have been prevented? What did you do?

**Hon Mr Newman:** Of course this government has taken responsibility and accepted our responsibility as the government. We want to get to the bottom of the tragedy that happened in Walkerton so that something like this never, ever again happens in our province. That's why there is an inquiry. That's why there are the three investigations, so that we can get answers and get to the bottom of what happened in Walkerton. That's why everything, including the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table to be examined with that public inquiry and the other three investigations.

I can tell you that a week ago Monday I announced that we're bringing forward strong regulations with respect to drinking water in this province and I intend to keep that commitment.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Back to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, as a cabinet member you would have been briefed this morning about stories arising in today's paper and this memo would have been brought to your attention. I'm sure that at the time you would have asked your ministry officials what had been done in response to this memo. Can you tell us what their answer was? What had been done inside the ministry in response to this memo when it was received in January 2000?

**Hon Mr Newman:** There are indeed many questions with respect to what happened in Walkerton. I know the Leader of the Opposition has questions, and I have questions as well, and all of us want answers. That's why we have an inquiry. That's why there are the three investigations, the OPP investigation, the coroner's inquest and the investigation through the Ministry of the Environment's investigations and enforcement branch, to get to the bottom of everything.

That's why we have the operations and procedures of the ministry on the table to be examined by the public inquiry and by the other three investigations. We want to get to the bottom of this so that something like this never again happens in our province.

**Mr McGuinty:** What we have here is much, much more than incompetence. This is negligence writ large. This minister, this government have ignored warnings from the Provincial Auditor, from the Environmental Commissioner and from their own ministry staff. They have attempted to lay the blame on everything from

human error to the people of Walkerton themselves. Now this minister persists in telling us that he knows nothing about a memo prepared by his own staff. The only thing we can conclude is that he does in fact know about this memo and that once more he has ignored another warning. He's ignoring today the most powerful warning and the most terrible warning of all: death and funerals.

Minister, why is it that, continually, you ignore so many warnings that point to so much impending disaster and why, in particular, did you ignore this warning that came from your own staff which told us of such terrible potential and danger as a result of actions that took place inside your ministry?

**Hon Mr Newman:** Neither the Premier nor I have attempted to deny or to lay blame with respect to Walkerton. There are many questions that need answers. That's why there's the public inquiry and the three other investigations underway in our province: the OPP investigation, the coroner's inquest and the Ministry of the Environment's investigation through the investigations and enforcement branch. Everything is on the table, including the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, to be examined by that public inquiry and by any other investigation that may take place.

We're doing everything we possibly can as a government to get to the bottom of this so that something like this never happens again in our province.

1500

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. I know you will agree with me when I say that Ontario is blessed with the distinction of welcoming well over half of Canada's immigrants to our province every year. We know that our immigrants contribute greatly to our economy and to our culture, and also help make this province perhaps the best place in North America in which to live.

Minister, as you know, in my riding of Scarborough Centre we have many new immigrants arrive on a regular basis every year and it's been suggested that this province still does not receive its fair share of funding from the federal Liberal government in Ottawa when it comes to helping these immigrants to settle. I'm wondering if you could inform this House today what progress we've been able to make in this particular area.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women):** I'd like to thank my colleague the member for Scarborough Centre for her question. It's a good question and it's on the minds of a number of people across the province and, of course, across Canada. The province of Ontario and the people of Ontario value the major contribution that immigrants make to Ontario. They make it the great place it is.

Let me tell you that even though the province is putting \$4 million into nearly 100 newcomer settlement

programs that work with immigrants to ensure that they settle quickly in this province, the province only receives 40% of the dollars that are spent on immigration across this country, when we receive 55% of the immigrants that come. Yes, of course, we need to work with the federal government because we need more dollars. The more dollars we have, the faster we can have these wonderful immigrants settle in our communities, the faster we can ensure that they're working, that they have opportunities, that their children are in school. We continue to lobby the federal government to make sure that Ontario receives its fair share of the dollars—

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

**Ms Mushinski:** It should come as no surprise that Ontario's Liberal caucus in Ottawa has once again failed in their duties to promote the interests of their constituents, I would say especially in my riding. I also understand that the federal government is considering changes in the immigration legislation for this country.

I'm wondering, Minister, if you could tell us what assurances you have received, if any, that these changes will address federal mismanagement of the refugee system that costs our province millions of dollars every year and threatens the safety of our citizens.

**Hon Mrs Johns:** There's no question that Ontario is not receiving its fair share. We want to ensure that immigrants come to Ontario. We need these dollars. As you know, the minister responsible for immigration was a Liberal member in this House from Ontario. I certainly hope she will remember how she felt, when she was sitting in a ministry such as this, when Ontario didn't get the fair share of the dollars that it required.

The federal auditor noted that the department of immigration is susceptible, vulnerable, to fraud and abuse. We have to make sure we continue to work to get the dollars that we need to make sure our immigrants are served. Every dollar that we receive goes into new immigrant programs. As I said earlier, we're spending \$4 million on nearly 100 newcomer settlement agencies in this province to make sure that we're settling—

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

#### MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Minister of the Environment, this morning when you reviewed this memo with your staff and you heard about its powerful call for immediate action, what steps did you then take? What decisions have you made effective this morning in order to heed the call for action that is found inside this memo?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):** There are many questions with respect to what happened in Walkerton. The Leader of the Opposition has questions. I have questions. I believe all members in this House have questions as to the tragic events at Walkerton. That's why there is a public inquiry that has been called. There are three other investigations— the Ontario



Provincial Police investigation, the investigation through the coroner's inquest, and also through the Ministry of the Environment's investigations and enforcement branch—that are looking at all of the issues with respect to this tragic incident.

Everything is on the table, including the procedures and operations of the Ministry of the Environment, to be examined by that public inquiry and by the other three investigations that are underway.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, it is bad enough to sit on this memo for five months. It is bad enough for you to claim today that you weren't aware of the memo or its contents until this morning. But now that it was brought to your attention this morning, and now that you understand the gravity of the information found inside it, now that you understand that it is an important call for action because of the danger that so many smaller municipalities in particular find themselves in, now that all of that is inside your head, Minister, what specific decisions did you take this morning in response to this memo to protect drinking water in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Newman:** Again, there are many questions. The Leader of the Opposition has questions with respect to Walkerton. Everyone has questions with respect to Walkerton. I can tell you that municipalities in our province have a responsibility to test water. Those with populations of under 100,000 must have eight tests per month, plus an additional test per 1,000 population. Those municipalities or those areas with populations of greater than 100,000 have 100 tests per month, plus an additional test for every 10,000 population. For any municipality or public utility that is not in compliance, that is not testing to those levels, field orders are issued by the ministry to bring those municipalities into compliance.

#### WORKFARE

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. During the last election there was a lot of commentary by skeptics who didn't believe we could achieve a lot of the commitments we had made. My question to you is specific on our government's pledge to double our targets for workfare participation. The media, our critics believed that our government couldn't make workfare work. In fact, they didn't want it to work.

Our promise to get more people working for their welfare cheques was important to the constituents of Thornhill in my riding. All Ontarians wanted to help people move from welfare to work. This is one of the promises we made in the last election, and it's one of the reasons our electorate voted this government back into office for a second term.

Minister, can you tell me what progress you have made on our Blueprint promises to double our targets for workfare participation?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Ontario Works, this government's mandatory

work-for-welfare program, is really an essential part of our plan to help get people off the bench and back into the game and to get them some supports to move to paid employment. Whether people are working towards their high school equivalency, working at certificates to be able to operate a forklift, whether they're working at a job search, whether they're working through a private or a public sector placement, it can be an important support.

I'm pleased to tell the member opposite that this past year this government actually delivered on meeting our target. We were able to double, over the last 12 months, the number of people getting some valuable experience as part of an Ontario Works placement. We do so because we believe—someone said this, and I think it was particularly good: "I think there is absolutely nothing wrong with placing responsibility on a welfare recipient to be involved in some kind of job placement. There is nothing wrong with that." Do you know who said that? Dalton McGuinty.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Molinari:** Thank you for the response, Minister. Although I had a difficult time hearing the response because of all the noise in the Legislature, I tried to listen.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. We're getting down to the last question for the NDP, and we are going to get to that, so if you yell, we are going to stop the clock. We can take two hours to do it if you want; we're going to get down there. I quite frankly say to the member that the reason she can't hear is because her own members are yelling.

**Mrs Molinari:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I couldn't hear the answer to the question because I believe it was the opposition members who don't want to hear the answers to the questions. They obviously have trouble with the correct answers to the questions asked in this House.

Minister, I know the government's welfare reforms have been very successful, because in York region, where my riding of Thornhill is, they have created over 1,480 placements. That equates to over 185% above their target. Of course, getting people into workfare placements is the first step. The second step is moving people off of welfare. Minister, can you tell me what areas, other than Thornhill and York region, have been successful in creating placements?

**Hon Mr Baird:** The honourable member should be very proud of the opportunities that people in York region have been giving to people who are desperately looking for work and who need the skills and the experience and the job reference and stuff to put down on their next job application. I want to congratulate them.

We believe in work for welfare and getting placements. The member from York region will be interested to learn that we're not the only ones, because in 1995 the red book said, "Work experience activities can give people a chance to upgrade their skills, gain experience that will help in a job search, and interact with a wide variety of people." It was in the Liberal red book and we agree.

But York region isn't the only one that's doing a great job. Bruce, which my colleague Helen Johns represents, is number one, 493%, and I want to congratulate—

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

1510

#### MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. I want to read three of the recommendations from this memo. The first says, "The sampling requirements for chlorine residual testing in distribution systems be clarified and enhanced as set out above." It deals specifically with what happened at Walkerton.

Another says, "The owner of the water works will immediately notify the medical officer of health if adverse water quality is discovered as set out in" the regs. It deals very clearly with exactly what happened at Walkerton.

Minister, when you received this memo, did you discuss it with your deputy minister? Did you discuss it with any other member of cabinet?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment):** There are many things to look at with respect to the tragic events at Walkerton and that's why there is a public inquiry. That's how the member opposite will get answers; that's how I'm going to get answers. We want to ensure that something like this never again happens in our province. That's why everything, including the operation and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is on the table for that investigation, to go through the public inquiry as well as the other investigations. As a government, we've taken responsibility and we want to get to the bottom of this terrible tragedy so that it never again happens in our province.

**Mr Hampton:** This is so unbelievable. The recommendations in this memorandum—the very clear recommendations—would have ensured that Walkerton didn't happen. It is almost as if somebody was clairvoyant, could see what was going to happen at Walkerton and gave you the recommendations before that tragedy ever happened. You have an obligation to those people up there to give an answer. This is nothing more than a cover-up. What did you do? Did you talk to the deputy minister? Did you talk to any other cabinet minister? What did you do when somebody gave you a memorandum that would have prevented the deaths of 11 people and the illnesses of 2,000 others? What did you do?

**Hon Mr Newman:** That's one of the very reasons why there is a public inquiry: so we can get to the bottom of what happened Walkerton. That's why everything, including the operations and procedures of the Ministry of the Environment, is to be on the table, to be examined by that public inquiry and by the other three investigations.

#### PETITIONS

##### SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Mr Speaker, I have a petition here from the residents of my riding of Davenport and I'm telling you ahead of time that I will sign it as well because I agree with this 100%. It's a petition to the Legislature and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario disability support plan recipients have not had an increase in their benefits for 10 years; and

"Whereas the cost of living has been constantly increasing in the past 10 years; and

"Whereas Premier Mike Harris and his government should realize that the cost of basic essential services has been on a continual rise. To have a basic telephone line 10 years ago was only approximately \$12 a month; today it's \$20 a month; and

"Whereas it is not acceptable for ODSP recipients to be forced to live below the standard of living because they are assessed disabled and unable to work,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request Premier Mike Harris and his government to immediately increase the Ontario disability support plan benefits."

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

##### EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I've got a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That's signed by Patricia Todd from Thorold and hundreds of other people from the Niagara region.

## HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

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

“Whereas Canada’s number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter traffic; and

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

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

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

“We, therefore, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.”

## OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I have a petition to save the Oak Ridges moraine for future generations by passing Bill 12.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is the rain barrel of southern Ontario and the headwaters for over 65 rivers and streams, from Cobourg to Caledon; and

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is threatened by uncontrolled development that is destroying precious natural wetlands, forests, groundwater and wildlife; and

“Whereas 465 world-renowned scientists, local residents and naturalists all support an immediate development freeze and the implementation of a comprehensive protection plan for the moraine; and

“Whereas only the province has the power to coordinate planning over a wide area of nine regions and 26 municipalities and the province must act quickly; and

“Whereas every month new developments are being approved that will destroy the environmental integrity of the moraine;

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

“That the provincial government immediately freeze development on the Oak Ridges moraine and pass Bill 12, the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection and Preservation Act, so that there will be a comprehensive plan to protect and preserve the moraine for future generations.”

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I’ve got a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario is actively pursuing private sector operators to run Ontario’s correctional facilities, including adult, strict-discipline boot camps, three megajails and five young offender facilities;

“Whereas findings show there is no cost savings to the taxpayer of Ontario;

“Whereas public safety will be greatly jeopardized in our communities;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon all plans to privatize any aspects of the province’s correctional system.”

That is signed by literally thousands of people. I place this with you, Speaker.

## OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is a glacial ridge running across the top of Toronto including Caledon, King, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Uxbridge, Pickering, Scugog, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington; and

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is the headwater for about 35 rivers and streams flowing south to Lake Ontario and north to Lake Simcoe; and

“Whereas the drinking water for millions of GTA residents, the wetlands, wildlife and natural areas will suffer irreparable damage if industrial, commercial and/or residential development is permitted without protective planning for preservation;

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

“That the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything in its power to ensure the Oak Ridges moraine remains zoned as agricultural and rural;

“Work with the Ontario Municipal Board to ensure conservation of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

“Provide a policy statement to enshrine its position.”

I’m pleased to join with my great colleague from Durham, Mr O’Toole, in signing this petition.

1520

## EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m in agreement with this. I’ve signed it and I’m handing it over to Mark now.

Before sitting down, I might just indicate that tonight we’re holding public hearings on Bill 74 in the North Fredericksburgh township hall, just south of Napanee. We invite all the public to attend there.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I present a petition on behalf of my colleague, Rosario Marchese, representing the riding of Trinity-Spadina.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is signed by thousands of people. I give it to the page Alex, from Haldimand-Norfolk, who’ll deliver it to the clerks’ table now.

#### ABORTION

**Mr John O’Toole (Durham):** I’m presenting thousands of petitions that I’ve received on this issue and I’m reading it on behalf of Christine Closs, Mary Hood, Jennifer Potts and Penny Manion, for instance.

“To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas we have recently learned that our tax money is being used to pay the rent on the Morgentaler abortuary;

“Whereas by the end of his lease this amount will be \$5 million;

“Whereas we strongly object to this use of our tax dollars;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately cease these payments.”

I’m pleased to sign my name and support this petition.

#### EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin):** Further petitions; the member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** It’s Davenport, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Davenport. It used to be Dovercourt, right?

**Mr Ruprecht:** No, it’s not Dovercourt, it’s Davenport.

**Mr Ruprecht:** I have a petition that has been signed by a number of people from my riding of Davenport and also a number of people from around the city of Toronto and other ridings. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since I agree with this petition wholeheartedly, I sign my name to it as well.

#### BRONTE CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I’m presenting this on behalf of my good friend the member for Oakville, who, Mr Speaker, as you know, is unable to present petitions himself.

“With respect to proposed current and future development of Bronte Creek Provincial Park as outlined in the Bronte Creek management plan dated March 27, 1998, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the planning and development of the eastern portion of Bronte Creek Provincial Park that calls for

establishment and construction of 400 campsites be terminated immediately;

“That any current and future development planned for Bronte Creek Provincial Park be strictly limited to the western portion of the park where an infrastructure already exists;

“That the eastern portion of the park and the Bronte Creek Valley be protected from any and all future development of any kind whatsoever and be maintained in posterity as a wholly natural parcel of land.”

This petition is signed by some 6,000 people from the riding of Oakville.

#### OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought the time would never arrive, but it has. I'm presenting this on behalf of the constituents of Durham, of course, and I usually like to read out their names: Art Evans, Annis, Bant, and Mr Harford.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is a glacial ridge running across the top of Toronto, including Caledon, King, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Whitechurch Stouffville, Uxbridge, Pickering, Scugog, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington;

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine is the headwater for about 35 rivers and streams flowing south to Lake Ontario and north to Lake Simcoe;

“Whereas the drinking water for millions of GTA residents, the wetlands, wildlife and natural areas will suffer irreparable damage if industrial, commercial and/or residential development is permitted without protective planning for preservation,

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

“That the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything in its power to ensure the Oak Ridges moraine remains zoned as agricultural and rural;

“Work with the Ontario Municipal Board to ensure conservation in the Oak Ridges moraine continues; and

“Provide a policy statement to enshrine its position.”

It just so happens that's the end of petition time.

1530

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### SAFE SCHOOLS ACT, 2000

##### LOI DE 2000 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES ÉCOLES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 7, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 81, An Act to increase respect and responsibility, to set standards for safe learning and safe teaching in schools and to amend the Teaching Profession Act / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à accroître le respect et le sens des responsabilités, à fixer

des normes pour garantir la sécurité des conditions d'apprentissage et d'enseignement dans les écoles et à modifier la Loi sur la profession enseignante.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin):** We'll go to questions and comments.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** The member for Kingston and the Islands last spoke to this and I'm pleased to follow him. I will be speaking to Bill 81 in approximately 10 minutes, although my time will be restricted to a mere 20 minutes. That's what the rule changes have done: They've restricted the right, quite frankly, and the obligation of members of this Legislature to participate in these debates and to speak out on behalf of their constituents, to speak out with the views they hold on these issues and to explain why it is they're voting the way they are—unless they don't want to explain that they're voting the way they're voting merely because they're being whipped.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Please, Mr Tascona, the clock's doing fine. Don't point fingers. There you go. I got a little break there. I got a little 30 seconds thrown into the hopper, and I can use every nanosecond of it, let me tell you.

I will be speaking to this bill in 10 minutes, after it has gone through its rotation of questions and comments and after Mr Gerretsen has had a chance to reply.

This bill is another one of those phony, pathetic pieces of legislation, very similar, quite frankly—think about this—to the Parental Responsibility Act, because it doesn't do much to change the status quo, yet it paints a picture out there of violent young people, it paints a picture of schools that have fallen to rot and decay. Schools have, in some respects, fallen to rot and decay, because this government has undermined them; this government has attacked them at the very foundation. It has been bashing and attacking teachers and students during the course of the five years that it has been in power here in the province of Ontario. The students know it; the teachers know it; the members of this Legislature know it. Unfortunately, it's left to the opposition to speak to it, because government members are like Mao's little soldiers with their little red book—

**Interjection:** Trained seals.

**Mr Kormos:** Trained seals, the little Maoist fanatics who want to read the quotations of Chairman Mike and who don't want to talk to real people out there and speak in this Legislature about the reality of real people.

I'm going to be talking about two things during the course of my discussions around Bill 81: I'm going to be talking about a young student, Scott McKay, from E.L. Crossley Secondary School, who, I tell you, is far more representative of the young people of this province than this government would have us believe. I'm also going to be talking about the young people of the 128th squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets who are being evicted from their home at Thorold high school because of you, Mr Harris, and your colleagues.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to respond to the comments by the member for Kingston and the Islands. He always provides some very interesting comments with respect to his interpretation of what legislation is about and also what it's intended to do. This legislation deals with enhancing safe school zones in terms of what we had already implemented through Bill 26, the community safety zones. That is directly relevant to what we're trying to accomplish.

Safe school teams—certainly that has already been dealt with under the legislation because we're requiring school boards to review their policies and guidelines re codes of conduct and safe schools, and when doing so, they must seek the views of students, teachers, staff, volunteers working in schools, parents and guardians, school councils and the public. The Safe Schools Act requires the principal of a school to involve school councils when developing or revising school codes of conduct and the schools' safety policies.

There's a tremendous role for the parents, councils, teachers and students to get involved in bringing together a safe environment. I've said before that we need a safe environment for students to learn and for teachers to teach. That's fundamental to what makes an education system work. What we're trying to do through this bill is make sure that those standards are in place across the province, that they are transparent and clearly understood, and the groups that will make it work, which are set out in the act, have a role.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** It's a great pleasure for me to have an opportunity to offer a comment on the fine speech given by the member for Kingston and the Islands yesterday. In considering his comments, which I would recommend to all members of this House and those watching at home, I'm reminded that that member works diligently on behalf of many fine people, including two who are good friends of mine, Andrew and Matthew, who go to the elementary school in Marysville on Wolf Island. I think we need to remind ourselves that's what this bill is about. It's about kids. But once again, we see on behalf of this government an effort to mask the very reality of their policies.

The reality of their policies is cuts. That's at the heart of what this government has done with respect to education: A system designed to provide for those on an equal basis across the breadth of the province has, in fact, led to the deterioration of classroom education in Ontario. That's what we work against every day. This Bill 81 is designed merely to focus attention on a punitive piece without dealing with any of the elements that would provide efforts and energy and resources to work towards really dealing in a meaningful way with the challenge of having safe schools.

We see, as is often the case from this government, only the focus on the punitive. But in fact, if we look at the reality, school boards already had these procedures in place. We talk about the need for additional prevention

and such; there's nothing in here for that. I would say to the members opposite, who will no doubt follow the lead of Dr Laura of the north, the Minister of Education, who's got all the answers on this that I recommend them to the speech yesterday by the member from Kingston and the Islands. It was a fine speech. He finely serves his constituents, and the members opposite would be well served by reading it.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Since we are replying to the member from Kingston and the Islands, it is important to recognize that he was saying earlier that he's having a public hearing tonight. I can tell you, I've had several public hearings on the issue of education quality. With respect to this one, Principal Mandryk, in one of our senior elementary schools, convened a meeting and we had parents, students and citizens at large. I would say it was a very respectful gathering of people who are commonly concerned, not politics that you might hear in this place, even from me, although I try to be neutral on this issue. The common concern—it has been since 1994—was to ensure that schools are safe for our children and for the teachers in those facilities. Everyone has a right to feel safe in our schools. Indeed, you might say that could be extended in a broader sense to our communities at large.

Mr Speaker, what I'm trying to say here is it does start with respect. Respect for one another is really at the very heart of Bill 81. You might say, "How does it apply to this House?" The decorum that you and other Speakers sometimes rule on is the model that we present to our children, to the young people of this province and indeed this country. I can tell you that it starts here and it starts with the leadership of the province, it starts with our Premier, and it starts with our minister, Janet Ecker.

There will be those who criticize and scorn the importance of having safe schools, but I can assure you that's the intention, and I will be speaking on it later this afternoon and making it clearer to the people of Ontario that it's the right thing to do.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** First of all, I'd like to remind the members, of course, that in my 20-minute speech yesterday, I was joined by the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell and the member from Ottawa-Vanier. I would like to thank all the members who spoke in reply: the member for Niagara Centre, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Toronto Centre-Rosedale, and Durham.

I would just like to pick up on something the last member mentioned, and that's respect. I totally agree with him that what we're talking about is respect, respect of everyone involved in the teaching of our young people. The respect, first of all, has to start with respect for the teachers.

**1540**

If there's one thing this government has shown in its various activities over the last five years, it's that it has no respect for teachers. It has no respect for teaching federations. How can we expect that the teachers have

the high morale that is necessary, the high motivation that is necessary, to teach our youngsters in the best possible way when they've been dealt with by a government that has constantly beaten up on them time and time again?

We're all in favour of safe schools, but what we're saying on this side is that everything you've got in this bill already exists within the powers that school boards and principals in high schools and elementary schools have.

Finally, in the last 30 seconds, I just remind all those people who live in southeastern Ontario, from Kingston to Belleville to Napanee and all places in between and to the north of that, that tonight, starting at 7 o'clock, we will be holding public hearings on Bill 74 to allow the public an opportunity to respond, because this government has seen fit to only give one and a half days to public hearings on that bill. We will be there from 7 to 9 tonight and from 1 to 4 tomorrow afternoon, and we invite all the members of the public, whether you're pro or con Bill 74, to come to the Fredericksburgh township hall and join us there for a free and open public debate on Bill 74.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Kormos:** As I indicated a few minutes ago, I have but 20 minutes to speak to this. That, I submit, is a gross imposition on my right and indeed responsibilities as a member of this Legislature to participate in the canvass of policies and legislation that purport to make their way through here. I'll do my best within that context.

Two things here. One is the attempt, in the style of former Minister of Education Snobelen, to create a crisis where one doesn't exist. It's a pattern that's been consistent through the five years of Tory government here in the province of Ontario. Even as recently as last night on the Michael Coren show, from 10 pm to 11:30 pm on cable 9 here in Toronto—the reception is very poor in Toronto; a pox on Rogers Cable for fouling up the reception here in the city of Toronto, but down in Niagara it's cable 18—a Tory backbencher, in the context of Bill 81, said, "Oh, what about the massacre at Columbine?" He made reference to one of their great American disasters, you know, these tragic shootings of kids by kids in their high schools. I don't mind the reference, because are any of us immune to that? Of course not. Let's not be stupid or naive. But the fact is it's pretty inflammatory stuff to try to justify legislation that, but for one section, does for all intents and purposes nothing to change the status quo.

The only thing I can see in that legislation that makes any fundamental change to the status quo is empowering teachers to suspend instead of requiring that they refer a student who breaches the rules to the principal. I quite frankly am not sure teachers want that role, and I think this government has an obligation, a responsibility, a duty. It doesn't give a tinker's damn about obligation, responsibility or duty to the public, but I think it has a responsibility. Let's put this bill up for committee, because I'd like to hear from teachers as to whether this

gesture of saying, "We'll give the teachers the power to suspend instead of requiring the teacher to refer the matter to"—mind you, the role of the principal has been seriously undermined in the school as well as a result of this government's attack on public education here in Ontario.

Students are being suspended and, yes, expelled every day. Boards of education across this province have codes of conduct in effect, and over the course of the last decade they've become very rigid codes and zero-tolerance type codes, and the behaviour that the government speaks about in terms of illustrating that misconduct which carries with it, let's say, the minimum sentence, is behaviour which, in almost every illustration one could provide, is in and of itself criminal. So this Bill 81 is a lot of hullabaloo.

The fact is that everything it talks about is in effect across the province. The singing of O Canada: These people went to some schools—I remember the last Tory member who tried to go to a high school. Remember Mr Young? He was quickly escorted from the property. The principal of the school said, "Please, go away." He wasn't welcome there. He was considered somehow inappropriate.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, that's what happened.

If this government's backbenchers would go to some of these schools to talk to the teachers and face them face-to-face—of course we know that government members don't want to do that—and talk to the students and be there at opening time, they'd understand that schools are playing O Canada across this province. There's nothing wrong with young people, with anybody, singing O Canada. Of course not. But please, there's nothing novel about this bill in terms of stating that it's going to require the singing of O Canada.

We should sing it more often. Schools should be disrupted throughout the day by classrooms and whole student bodies spontaneously breaking into O Canada, first and second verse. The second verse is the most interesting, and it's one to which I do not know the words by heart, if you will. The second verse I find far more lyrical than the first verse of O Canada. But yes, let students sing. Let them sing O Canada. Let them sing it at lunch break. Let them sing it in the hallways. Let them sing it in the gymnasiums. Let them sing O Canada in their classrooms as solos, as duets, as trios, as barbershop quartets, as whole choirs. They should sing it as often as they can and as often as they want to and in both official languages.

But please, no matter how many times kids sing O Canada it isn't going to change what this government has done to public education in this province. It isn't going to restore the junior kindergartens. It isn't going to put the special ed teachers back into those classrooms. It isn't going to put the guidance counsellors back. It isn't going to open the locked library doors. It isn't going to put books on the bookshelves. It isn't going to put teachers in the classrooms. It isn't going to provide schools with

those basic resources that schools need if teachers are going to have the tools they ought to have to teach our kids.

I talk to teachers almost every day now, and teacher after teacher after teacher, as well as parents of kids in school, tell me about teachers who are buying out of their own pockets what used to be basic classroom tools, be it erasers or pencils or construction paper for little kids or pots of glue. I go to classrooms and I remark on some of the projects that teachers are doing with their students and discover that that teacher went to the Wal-Mart or whatever it is to buy the materials for that class project: 50, 100, 200 bucks at a time out of their own pockets.

Restore some of those programs that were very critical to the student in the elementary or, perhaps more frequently, high school, those programs which may not have been part of the mainstream curriculum but those programs which captured the interest and attention of the student whose strongest forte may not have been academics, so we can restore the retention rate, which had grown to an admirably high level.

I say to this government, don't try to suggest that somehow out there among our young people there's some sort rot and decay that's pervasive. There are difficulties out there. I say you are the author of those difficulties, Mr Harris. Don't blame your victims. I told you, yesterday morning the Pelham Rotary Club had their breakfast meeting. As guests they had the South St Catharines Rotary Club. I was pleased to join them at the Shorthill's Villa just north of Keith's Restaurant in downtown Pelham. I met a remarkable young man there, a student at E.L. Crossley Secondary School. He received the Rotary Volunteer of the Month Award: Scott McKay, a grade 10 student, student council rep for his grade 10 class. When they listed his achievements, his accomplishments, I thought, my goodness, I've been invited to the Rotary Club to speak to them. I stood up and I said: "I'm prepared to relinquish to Mr McKay. This young man, with his vast experience at his youthful age, has got a whole lot he should be telling us."

#### 1550

You see, I know students like Scott McKay, I know the students at E.L. Crossley and Welland's Eastdale and Centennial and Thorold secondary. I know their families. These are bright, hard-working, capable kids, whose fear of not being able to go to college or university is growing on a daily basis, not because they don't have the potential or the capacity or the skill or the desire, but because this government's persistence at ratcheting up tuition increases has made it impossible for all but the richest of young people to go to post-secondary education without accumulating horrendous and crippling debt.

You people want to vilify the Scott McKays of Ontario. I want to tell you, and I tell you, that although he is exceptional in his class, he is still very much illustrative of his peers, young people who quite frankly could teach this government a whole lot if only this government were to listen to them.

I pointed out earlier today how ironic it was that the Harris government and Ms Ecker would want to impose some sort of code of conduct which in fact already exists in every board of education in the province, when at the same time it served the eviction notice down in Thorold on the 128 Thorold Flying Dragons Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, It's given them their eviction notice as of July 1—a 58-year history that squadron has with Thorold Secondary School. Thorold Secondary School has been its host since the inception in 1942. Scores of young women and men every year since 1942 have been participating in that air cadet squadron. They've become leaders in our community and leaders in our province and leaders in our country. Two nights a week these young women and men meet at Thorold Secondary School, as they have for 58 years, to participate in their training as air cadets, to acquire those leadership skills, to expand their knowledge base and learn how to work together with their peers as a team and become eligible for incredible summer programs, be it flight school and air glide school and all sorts of programs across the province provided by the ministry of defence. And scores of volunteers work with these young people.

This government, Mike Harris and Janet Ecker, have served an eviction notice on the 128th air cadet squadron of Thorold. For 58 years the school has hosted them, and it's the ideal location. That air cadet squadron is part of the history and tradition of the school and is as much a part of the school as any other facet of what goes on there. Indeed—catch this one, Ms Ecker, you who want to impose involuntary voluntary participation by teachers—it involves, among other things, a number of teachers as volunteer instructors etc. So after 58 years, squadron 128 finds itself getting the bum's rush from Mike Harris.

I'll explain to you what happened. The fact is, notwithstanding that the school has hosted them for almost six decades now, the Niagara district board of education is compelled to charge them almost \$12,000 a year rent. Their total budget is just shy of \$9,000 a year. Heck, they built their headquarters and their training rooms in the school back in 1986. They built it themselves. They're using the school when otherwise it would sit vacant. They're using it in the evenings and from time to time, somewhat rarely, on weekends. They can't afford \$1,000 a month rent. Do you get it?

This government talks about codes of conduct, yet it wants to throw these young people out on to the street. And Don Reilly, chair of the Niagara District School Board, said that the board's hands are tied. Mr Reilly said that the Ministry of Education has reduced payments for school maintenance and, in so doing, took away the board's ability to give away for free, that is to say, to host the young women and men of the 128 Thorold Flying Dragons Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets.

Those types of activities, the air cadet, the army cadet and sea cadet programs, the scouting and guide movements in every community of this province, big city and small, any number of recreational and athletic activities,



all of them have been whacked by this government as a result of, on the municipal level, the imposition of downloading and more and more user fees being imposed by those municipalities. The utilization of arenas for youngsters wanting to play hockey has become more and more expensive as municipalities are forced to impose more and more user fees as a result of this government's downloading on to them. The community halls that were used by so many guide and scout groups now carry with them user fees, the result of this government's downloading on to municipalities like Welland, like Thorold, like Pelham, like St Catharines.

This government has shown no shame about the fact that it could well be interrupting the incredible history of the 128th squadron in Thorold, terminating it. People in Thorold are going to look for alternative accommodations, and I have no doubt that when push comes to shove, there'll be some sort of alternative accommodation. But will it have the huge parade ground that they've had for 58 years at Thorold Secondary School? I suggest to you not. Will it have the indoor gymnasium that these young people can use for their parade and other activities in wintertime? I suggest to you not. Will it have that training area and administrative area that this squadron built with its own money and its own volunteer work back in 1986? I suggest to you not.

And this government talks about a code of conduct. Who should have a code of conduct imposed on them? It should be Harris and his backbenchers. I would support, in a New York minute, a code of conduct for this gang after its persistent attack on teachers and students and young people in this province, after its gross mismanagement, its negligence, quite frankly criminal negligence, as to the supply of safe water in this province. How many people dead in Walkerton, and thousands more suffering from infection, because of this government's negligence? This government has put the welfare and security of the richest in this province ahead of common decency. They talk about common sense; let's talk about common decency. You want to talk about common sense? I want to talk about common decency. What's decent about evicting those young air cadets from Thorold Secondary School? Not a thing.

Earlier today during my member's statement, your minister was invited to do the right thing for once, to make a phone call down to the district board in Niagara and ensure that that air cadet squadron is able, as it should be entitled, to use Thorold Secondary School for another 58 years without the imposition of gross user fees dictated directly by this government. Please, let's not hear Ms Ecker start talking about how the local board can do this and the local board can do that. She tied the local board's hands. Mr Reilly indicated that because of this government's defunding of local education, the board can no longer supply the premises for free.

This code of conduct is phony. This code of conduct doesn't do a single, little, tiny bit to change the status quo, nor does it do anything to improve the quality of education or the safety of our schools in this province.

This government keeps on wanting to send out decoys to deflect people's attention—like David Copperfield, the magician—to redirect your attention, or like any sleight of hand artist, the legerdemain artists of Ontario, the Mike Harris government. “Distract them and make them think about code of conduct and we'll whack teachers and education over there.”

I'm not going to support this legislation. As an honourable member, I can't.

1600

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** I want to comment on a couple of statements that were made by the member opposite. I think all of us can relate to the vast majority of students in our schools today, who do work hard, who do give us hope for the future as the citizens who will take on the leadership of our communities, our province and our country. No one is disputing the reality and the recognition of those students.

What we are talking about is providing an opportunity for those students to receive their education in a classroom environment where teachers are given the opportunity to teach, not to spend a lot of time and effort in what is sometimes referred to as class management. No one disputes that for some time there have been codes of conduct in individual schools. What this piece of legislation does is talk about providing a consistent code of conduct, recognizing that teachers and administration may need more specific tools.

It is at those students, the majority of students, who want an education, who want to benefit from the expertise of their teachers, that this legislation is aimed. It is those students who deserve our attention, through giving tools to the schools to make sure that they're in a learning environment, not one which is jeopardized by the very few.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** I was listening to my colleague the member for Niagara Centre on the monitor. He is right when he talks about—

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** It's a good place to listen to him.

**Mr Cordiano:** It certainly is. Everyone's busy around here, in and out of our offices, but we have television sets.

This morning I made a speech about how this government likes to put the blame on others for things that have gone wrong. Of course safe schools are important, but the real issue is that this government continues to pull resources out of the education system. Cut after cut, we see a decimation of special ed programs and English-as-a-second-language programs. I could go on and talk about adult education and how they decimated that.

Then the government turns around and says, “We've got to have safe schools,” as if this is the most important of priorities. There is no doubt we need security in our schools. My wife is a teacher and has told me about some of the problems being faced, but at the same time, admit that you need to put additional resources into those programs that are going to make a difference in people's

lives. Don't continue to cut those programs and then turn around and say, "We have got to make our schools safe; we need a code of conduct," as if that's going to solve the real problems.

It is important to recognize that this government continues to denigrate teachers, to make them the scapegoats for everything that has gone wrong, or is perceived to have gone wrong because not a whole lot has gone wrong, by the way. Our education system used to be one of the best in the world and has produced a very vibrant group of people who have gone out and made this economy the most productive we've ever seen in the history of this province. So a lot has gone right.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton and Springdale.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Well done, Mr Speaker, I know it's a long and tedious riding name but a very good riding, let me assure you of that.

I'm sure the people at home sometimes wonder what we are talking about, what subject we are on, what bill we are discussing. A lot of times people go off on tangents. They go so far away. They bring in Walkerton, the code of conduct, many other things. Let me let the people know that we are talking about a code of conduct, and that is Bill 81. If people want to follow it, this is available on the Ministry of Education Web site. I'll be speaking on this a little later, as will my good colleague from Durham.

Certainly members opposite will agree with me that there's nothing they can oppose. They've agreed that we need more discipline in schools.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** He's nodding his head.

**Mr Gill:** Thank you.

I've had the pleasure over the years of travelling to many countries of the world. We spoke about Parkdale Collegiate yesterday, a very fine school; in fact I did my grade 13 at that school. In the meantime I've had the pleasure of studying in many languages, being at many schools, and I don't mean to downgrade any school but discipline has been lost in our schools. There are kids out there who are mouthing off to teachers, who are sitting any which way they like, and they think they know more than the teachers. They forget that one of the purposes they're in school is to learn something. I'll be spending some more time on this bill later on. Let me assure you this whole bill is about a code of conduct, discipline. The students should be doing what they're supposed to be doing in terms of learning.

**The Acting Speaker:** We'll go for a two-minute response to the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** I want to make it clear that we've got a serious problem in education and in our schools in this province. It's a problem of teacher shortages, of teachers being ganged up on by this government and knocked around and beaten up and treated with thorough disdain.

We've got a problem with classroom sizes and too few teachers and too many kids. We've got problems with young people in our elementary and high schools having

access to libraries and guidance counsellors and special ed people. We've got a problem with the inadequate level of teachers' aides as a result of this government's cutting and slashing.

We've got a serious problem of teacher morale as a result of this government's Bill 74, around which it doesn't really want to hold any committee hearings whatsoever. We've got a problem when young people like Scott McKay down at E.L. Crossley Secondary School in Pelham, so illustrative or demonstrative of his generation—a bright, capable young man who gives so much to his community—are vilified by this government as it tries to paint young people with some broad brush as being a bunch of hooligans and disrespectful.

Quite frankly, Mr Gill, I don't care how the student sits as long as she or he is learning. I don't care if they're sprawled out on the floor, God bless 'em, as long as they are getting an education. Please. What a peculiar but typical Tory "whack 'em, smarten 'em up, straighten 'em up" attitude. It doesn't sell any more, guys. It doesn't work.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's again my pleasure to rise to speak on Bill 81. The member from Niagara Centre in his closing remarks sort of summarized the general disrepair or disrespect, the environment that has been set by those lower expectations. Children today are thirsting for goals, models and hope in their lives. I think this whole bill set about to provide a respectful, safe learning environment, and it's as simple as that.

As a starting point here, it's important in any remarks I have to make this afternoon to keep in perspective that we're talking about a very small percentage of young people. The vast majority of young people that I'm familiar with or that I think our community is represented by are exemplary and should be complimented. It's in respect of that 2% or 3% who ruin it for the majority that my remarks may be a little bit critical.

**1610**

I go back to the motive here. The member for Niagara Centre has left the chamber now, but he's aware that their government dealt with the same issue in 1994. They tried to introduce, as you would know, Mr Speaker, a code of conduct, so to speak, behaviour policies within a school, which I think is a good idea. They were thirsting for it. I guess most of the federations were arguing that schools were becoming, because of some disruptive behaviour, difficult places for teachers to teach and for students to learn. That was a commonly heard expression.

By starting with the premise that all children—the vast majority have faced a changing world. I might say there's a lot more violence on videos and there's a lot more of the rave kind of atmosphere around, but most of them who attend those things are, like my five children, law-abiding, fun-loving, spirited young people. Let's keep that in mind. But a place of learning has to have a bit of decorum. It has to have mutual respect for the teacher and the learner. It has to provide a structured environment, a good start and stop time, order and respect for

one another. It's in that vein that I address Bill 81 this afternoon.

When Minister Ecker introduced the bill, it was after long discussions and consultations with external stakeholders, the parent advisory groups, teacher groups and parent groups, as well as students. I think the end result here in a general sense is promoting respect, responsibility and civility. Those are the three words that I think capture the most important essence.

Of course, much of the media attention has been paid to things like the singing of O Canada, the national anthem. There are those who attribute this to "Americanization." I think it's getting back to basics. It's just a practical approach to having things that we can agree on. Certainly we all should respect our country. For someone to criticize that approach is maybe eroding the very foundations of the strong, wonderful country we share. We each have responsibilities and roles in that country, and in that a good place to start is learning what we might call civics. You might put a lot of names on it. It's setting the right tone for a safe learning environment.

It's also providing consistent, province-wide standards of expectations as well as consequences. I'm now moving to the shadowy part of the debate here. All of us should know that there are, or should be, consequences for our actions. When the actions are to the disadvantage of the majority, ie, somebody disrupting a class or bringing a weapon, threatening a teacher or something like that, that should be dealt with. Teachers and educators need the tools to manage the learning environment. Maybe some here would have problems with the term "manage," but I think there has to be some sort of order and in that respect I'm using the word "manage." They need tools to deal with it. Then you get into the whole idea of suspensions and expulsions.

I did serve as a trustee. There used to be a special committee of the school board that dealt with those very rare occasions where expulsions got that far. Probably there should have been more of them, but because there was such an elongated procedure, so to speak, the school could have burned down by the time the school board had heard the appeal. We're trying to bring immediacy to the disruption.

Of course, there are those on the other side of the House who have said that there is no real problem, there is no situation that exists that's drawing on some legislative action by the government. I think it's important to put on the record today that in Ontario there have been a number of expulsions and suspensions under the current system in 1997-98. For the record, I'm just going to draw this to the attention of the members listening. For possession of weapons, for instance, in the Toronto district school board and the Toronto Catholic school board—this is a combined number, not weighting either one of them—there were 11 expulsions and a total of 228 suspensions. That's in the Toronto area.

It's not just unique to Toronto. We should all be cautious, and hopefully not alarmed, but certainly we should have procedures for dealing with it. I know in one

of our high schools, someone brought an axe into school. There was quite a bit of controversy. It was on the front page of the paper and I believe the principal of the time, who is now a superintendent, handled it well. But again, it was because he's a person who did bring some authority and respect to the school that he was principal of.

The Peel district school board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic district school board, under possession of weapons, had four expelled and 41 suspended in the 1997-98 school year. For Ontario, under that one offence, possession of weapons—now, this is a pretty serious offence; talk about a threatening environment—they had 20 expulsions in the province and 649 suspensions. As we all know, there are approximately two million students, so again, to reiterate, it's a very small percentage. But we can't have those very few radical groups or individuals spoiling it for the vast majority. We need to have safe learning and teaching environments. Without that, it's anarchy. It's just not the right kind of climate to set.

I think there's a lot to be learned here in a general sense that can be applied to the last 10 years of experience with the Young Offenders Act. I'm not just trying to turn this into fed-bashing, but the federal Liberal government sets the tone of tolerance for—repetitive violent behaviour is simply not acceptable. I challenge Anne McLellan and Allan Rock to address that federal issue and set the stage that for repeat violent predatory-type young offenders, they need to, on their second or third attempt at least, be seriously reminded that that kind of behaviour in our civil society of Canada is not acceptable.

We're moving that down again to the very few who ruin it for the many. Mr Speaker, I would hope that you're in some respect agreeing with most of what I'm saying, and that might be presumptive on my part, but I'm putting it on the record anyway.

I want to discuss whether there is a need to have this. Some of the members on the opposition side have said that there's no need for this legislation at all. I'm going to read in again here, "threatening serious physical injury." In Toronto schools—I'll be quick about it—there were 202 suspensions in 1997-98 school year. In the Dufferin-Peel public and separate systems, there were 41 suspensions. Provincially—there are 73 school boards, remember—there were 1,429 suspended for threats of serious physical injury. That kind of behaviour is not acceptable. People don't want to hear this, and the opposition are going to go back and repeat things that—for instance, I think the member for York South may have suggested that this wasn't needed. I think he should pay closer attention to the actual details of what I'm saying here. He's still reading, but anyway, he's here. Assault causing serious bodily harm, for instance, in the province of Ontario—I'm going to repeat this: In 1997-98 in our schools, 2,289 were suspended and 22 were expelled. In total, there were 50 expulsions under these codes of conduct issues. Almost 5,000 were suspended.

1620

We've established quite clearly that for that very small number of students there is a problem. Those who want me to stop there and say that we shouldn't do something aren't prepared to govern; they don't have the strength to stand up and do the right thing to make sure our students and our teachers have both a safe teaching and a safe learning environment. That whole thing about setting the tone and having the leadership with the courage is what this government stands on: keeping its promises, which is of course the right thing to do.

I have a number of points I want to make, but I do have a letter here from a retired teacher from Peterborough. I had promised that I would not use his name. He is saying that many of the changes, the curriculum changes and the code of conduct, the behaviour and the whole anxiety level—and I admit that there is an anxiety level in our schools and I admit that the anxiety level is part of that higher-order power struggle, teacher unions versus a government that wants to improve the quality and accountability of education. It's that power struggle that has transcended into the classroom which deprives students of extra learning opportunities, whether it's travel or trips or sports or chess or drama or music. It creates the tension and the disappointment and the sadness that have pervaded the schools for the past few months. Most teachers themselves are full of anxiety and tension about how to respond to their peers who are putting pressure on them and that's part of a code of conduct.

In this letter, this former teacher, whose spouse was a principal, said they should not have the right to strike. Mr Speaker, you probably know, if you were paying attention, and if you weren't I'll tell you again: My wife is a teacher and my oldest daughter will be teaching high school for the first time this year. They know that the school learning environment is changing and they hope that the tensions that are being caused are finished by September. Neither one of them has really participated in that kind of strike mentality thing and there is anxiety in there with some of the individuals who were friends for a long time, but it's the power thing.

I should put on the record, and I think it's important that Hansard note this with a double underline, that the Liberal government, specifically their leader, Dalton McGuinty, did submit a private member's bill that banned or outlawed a teacher's right to strike—not just extracurricular activities. Dalton McGuinty then and Dalton McGuinty now are two different things. With that kind of vacillating leadership, they clearly have no policy that I've heard in my five years here. When you have a policy that the moment you stand up someone can point and criticize—and I think it's important, the criticism. As I said, I am listening to the member for St Catharines and I have the greatest respect, but I'm going to listen intently for what positive things he has to say on Bill 81—not on the environment; that's an appropriate question at that time—but on this bill. Are you for it or agin it, or has Dalton not made up his mind, have the Liberal Party not

made up their mind, are they soft on crime, are they soft on any kind of—

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** They haven't been told, and that's clearly the point that has been made.

Is this the right thing? I'm going to refer to a few documents here. I like third-party endorsement. It's not just my view. As a parliamentarian, I'm here to speak and represent my constituents and the people of Ontario. Supportive quotes, for instance, on the code of conduct from the president of the Canadian Safe School Network:

"But the absolute direction they're headed I think is a good one. The fact that they're engaging parents, they're providing parents with the opportunity to have uniforms in the school for their kids, the fact that they're setting a standard, and when we talked a bit about this earlier on, the fact that they're setting a standard for all schools to reach to, providing resources for alternative programs, all are something that's a good idea."

Further from the president of the Canadian Safe School Network, "I think it's important to keep shining a light on this issue,"—don't sweep it under the carpet—"and that's what's happening today, and that's a good situation, where you've got a government showing the leadership, shining a light on this very important aspect, and hopefully what that will do is good for our students and play an important part of making a safe learning environment."

I've also got an interesting little quote here from Gail Nyberg. She has been in many respects critical, but I think it's toned down a lot. She's not on CFRB as much.

**Mr Gill:** She's running for council now, that's why. I heard that.

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes, I heard she could be running for the city of Toronto, and good luck to her, because she does bring an energy to it. Most often she's wrong, but she does bring an energy to it. But she is right on occasion. It's sort of like Dalton. I think she's probably a Dalton supporter, because she says one thing one time and another thing the other time. That's how I think of it. It hasn't gone away. It's that flip-flop. It never leaves you. There's an old expression, "Liberals"—what's the next word? "Liberals"—I won't say it. You can't say it; it's against the standing orders to say it here.

"Where we have uniforms, it has been very successful and supported by parents and students." This is Gail Nyberg, and it was quoted in the press on September 16, 1999.

Another quote here:

"We've had amazing feedback on it. In a big public school you don't usually get a lot of positive feedback, but our phone was ringing off the wall with congratulations last September when the kids showed up for school.

"It provides a sense of community for students, a kind of team spirit."

To some that may sound a little corny. Let's just get over the designer clothes, the designer earrings and piercing, and just get on with plain ordinary learning, and

have respect for one another. It sounds corny, and I'm sure the member for Niagara Centre, in his view—"I don't care if they're lying on the floor," he said. It's that kind of permissive, tolerant indifference to learning. You actually have to pay attention to learn the times tables, to learn how to spell and learn how to read.

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** Just a moment here. I'd like a little respect. This is what we're trying to tell the students here, that this is about respect and rights and responsibilities. So I don't want any heckling. Cut that out. There's nobody here anyway, actually.

Those are the third-party endorsements that have come to my attention. I've got a plethora of them, and I'm running out of time.

I want to say one thing. In frustration, some teachers, at wit's end on a Friday, may suspend. Some principal, at wit's end after a hot, hard day, may expel. So there is an appeal process. It's very important to understand that there's an appeal process for those few times where those few offenders need to make sure. But I think the most important part here is that we're engaging parents and we're engaging students to provide a safe learning and teaching environment.

I want to end on a positive note. The member for Niagara Centre and I were on the Michael Coren show last night. There were a lot of people—hundreds of thousands of people watch that show. In the remaining time I have left, I said to Michael two things: "I don't mind coming on here. In fact, I enjoy it. It's important to get the opportunity to speak to the people of Ontario." Here's the key, though. It's sort of like three against one. I would prefer him to be kind of a moderator as opposed to a—

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** No, it was off-air I said it. In that program, Mr Kormos did talk about the cadet corps from Thorold Secondary School, and I'm putting on the record here today, thank you, Mr Kormos. I'll tell you why. My oldest boy—many have heard this story—went to the Royal Military College, where they wore uniforms. It transformed him. Just the uniform and the decorum in the school transformed him, and I'm proud to say as a parent that he's a captain in the armed forces today, serving on the Sea King helicopters in Halifax. He's a wonderful boy, and I thank the school, not just the Royal Military College, but Bowmanville High School and the other teachers who had the courage and leadership to show the vision and respect for young people, and that made him an officer in our country today.

1630

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Cordiano:** This bill, which purports to create conduct for safe schools and a policy that would make our schools safer, just doesn't go far enough. In fact, we proposed a number of amendments that have been rejected by the government.

No one in this House would be opposed to the notion of safer schools. Come on, that's motherhood. What are we talking about here? However, what we are talking about in reality is, are we, as a result of this government's legislation, really going to achieve the goal of safer schools? The answer to that is no, and that's why on this side of the house the Liberal Party has concerns with this bill.

We have proposed safer schools zones, which would truly make those schools safer and would punish individuals with stiffer provincial penalties if they should happen to go within five blocks of the school.

Mr Speaker, do I have time to go on? Is it two minutes?

**The Speaker:** We do have my watch. I know it is very difficult for members to judge because the clock isn't on there. Maybe what we could do is, when we get close to two minutes we will let you know. We are trying to get it fixed. We are having a little bit of trouble with the official clock. So the member will continue and at around 10 seconds I'll probably warn him a little bit. How's that?

**Mr Cordiano:** I'll just pretend that I can go on indefinitely, that time has stopped. It's the first time that time has ever stopped when I was speaking, and I'm delighted to be here.

Furthermore, as I pointed out earlier, this government has failed to provide the necessary resources for our schools, and they continue to denigrate our teachers. How do you expect to have safer schools when the morale of teachers and everyone associated with the education of our children is being put down and subjected to the kind of abuse that this government is subjecting teachers to? It is unworthy of this government to expect that. A code of conduct is vacuous without backing it up with real resources.

**Mr Kormos:** Let's talk about kids. Mr Bradley will know this. We were shocked in Niagara region earlier this week when the stats regarding the number of children that family and children's services has had in their custody reached historical, dramatic highs—something in excess of 500 kids, Mr Bradley?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** That's right.

**Mr Kormos:** The director of services at family and children's services was able to identify the cause. The people involved were very clear that family and children's services having a record high number of children in their care was a direct result of the attack on the social safety net here in this province by this government. We predicted that was going to happen. We warned the government. Quite frankly, I recall here a couple of years ago directly talking about family and children's services and the pressure they've had imposed upon them as a result of this government's cuts, that families are being undermined.

This government wants to talk a big game about family. Why isn't it doing things to support families? It wants to dress our kids up in little red scarves and have them marching past pictures of Mike Harris waving

copies of the Common Sense Revolution, “Hail Comrade Harris.” It has been done before. It wasn’t particularly attractive. This kind of Stalinist thinking has no place in a democratic society.

You’ve undermined young people and their parents. You’ve taken away the things that single moms and other families in economic need were able to rely on to sustain them through hard times. You created chaos in our communities. You want to divert people’s attention, like with your little bread and circuses kind of thing, talking about codes of conduct when virtually every board in this province has a code of conduct. The behaviour you’re talking about is contrary to the Criminal Code. Of course those young people should be dealt with and they are being dealt with. Your legislation doesn’t do a single thing to change the status quo. What’s the matter with you people? Why aren’t you paying attention to what’s going on down there rather than the marching orders you get every morning from the Premier’s office?

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to congratulate you on reverting back. I think it’s most appropriate to use your stopwatch for timing. We’re too modernistic in this Legislative Assembly with this clock and broadcasting. Please note it and take it under consideration.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member.

Further questions and comments?

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** To follow up on what my colleague from Etobicoke North, Mr Hastings, has said, it really is nice to see us get back to some basics. That is what the Safe Schools Act is all about.

When we’re talking about strengthening the social safety net, which is something I know Mr Kormos and his friends would like to think they did in 10 lost years of mismanagement, what we’re talking about is actually creating new jobs, because we believe the dignity of a job is the best social program that you can have, not just in this province but in this country.

Since 1995, when we took the Common Sense Revolution to the people of Ontario, we said that strengthening the social safety net for Ontarians was important to us and that the best way to do that was to balance the budget, to get rid of the deficit, start paying down the debt and to cut taxes, because we believed that putting money back into the pockets of hard-working people was going to stimulate the economy and create the kinds of jobs that we predicted would happen. Guess what? We have created 750,000 new jobs since 1995. I couldn’t think of a better way of strengthening the social safety net than creating jobs.

**Mr Bradley:** Unfortunately, to show what an exciting life I lead, I was watching Michael Coren last night. I was watching Mr O’Toole, the member for Durham, on there with his colleagues. It was rather interesting to see. As the member for Etobicoke North would say, it tends to induce snoozing at that time of night. Nevertheless, there was a good exchange of views and some people who called in, and that’s what the debate is about.

When I think of discipline, the discipline I saw exercised best this session was the Speaker of the Assembly disciplining the Premier and saying to the Premier that if he did not behave himself in this House—he gave him a last warning—he was going to be expelled for the day. It’s called “named.” He was going to be expelled for the day. I know his mother, who watches this program very much and is keenly interested, was probably very proud of him on that day when he brought the Premier to heel when the Premier was continuing to interject.

**Mr Hastings:** Ever been named?

**Mr Bradley:** To the member for Etobicoke North, I must say, in my 23 years in this House I have never been named. That is correct. In fact, tomorrow will be the anniversary for Norm Sterling and for me of 23 years in the Legislature. We were both elected on June 9, 1977, just as some relatively new members of the Legislature are having their celebration of their first election to the Legislature today.

I’m going to be looking forward to being able to make a few remarks later. I just wanted to assure Mr O’Toole that I was watching last night. I didn’t agree with everything that he said; nevertheless, I found it an interesting exchange and a good debate.

1640

**Mr O’Toole:** I’d like to thank the members for York South, Niagara Centre, Scarborough Centre and St Catharines. Congratulations on your 23 years of service to the people of St Catharines as well as the people of Ontario. That small tribute is a good start to bring us back to the debate on Bill 81. I sort of extend a congratulations, as was mentioned earlier today, to the pages of this session of the 37th Legislative Assembly. Those are the young people who watch us behave or misbehave. To you, a respectful thank you for helping us.

I really feel that if you have a more pleasant environment, people are more willing to please one another, both the teacher and the learner. It provides the right kind of stimulus. As a parent of five children, I know it’s a two-way street. I can’t just demand respect—it’s something that’s earned—nor can they. It’s a very simple approach to the world, perhaps too simple for today’s complex society, where we have to have violent sounds, violent noise and also other things to demonstrate our individuality in some respects.

Bill 81 comes back to fulfilling a promise to promote respect, responsibility and civility in our schools. I can’t think of any reason to apologize for that. I think it’s long overdue. I don’t want to even politicize it. Other governments have tried, but we’re actually doing it. We’ve taken that bold step—imagine that—of allowing parent community councils to examine or consider the option of having school uniforms. That may not be appropriate for some schools. But that’s empowerment, and this government has the courage to stand up and give people those kinds of decision-making roles.

It is an important bill. I hope all members will support it. I certainly think it will be good for our students, good for our teachers and good for Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** If only the government would amend this bill in certain ways—we've offered some constructive amendments when our previous speakers have addressed the provisions of this particular piece of legislation. I would hope the government would accept those amendments, because I think then it might well be a bill which could be accepted by the assembly.

We have to look at the motivation of this, however. To paint a picture of total chaos in the school system, as some wish to do when they want to attack the school system or to create a crisis of confidence in a public institution, would be a disservice. This does not mean that there are not challenges to be met; this does not mean that there aren't some problems within the system. We all recognize that and there always have been those kinds of problems. But this is largely a public relations exercise, because boards of education and individual schools have had a code of conduct and have enforced that code of conduct over the years. Where there is a provision for police involvement, of course the police should be involved. If there are people who are violating the Criminal Code of this province, the police are certainly entitled to and should be involved in making certain that people adhere to the laws of the province.

I looked at this, and this was a pre-election ploy. It's kind of popular, because I can't think of anybody who would be in favour of no discipline in schools. I think we want to see the appropriate amount of discipline in schools. We want to also see an atmosphere which encourages students, which makes students, teachers and other personnel want to go to the building each day and participate in the normal activities. But this is yet another bill which was designed, as I say, to paint a crisis in the system. What happens with the right wing—I'm not talking about the small-c conservatives who sat in the House in previous years, and perhaps some who sit here these days who are of the more moderate liking—what they do is they try to create a crisis in a public institution so that people will accept answers or changes which normally they would find somewhat repulsive. We've seen this happen in the health care system now, where we have Tom Long out there in the federal scene and we have the other members of the Reform Party—what is it called today?

**Interjection:** The Alliance.

**Mr Bradley:** It's called the Alliance Party today—out there suggesting: "There's a real crisis in our system. We have the solution: an American-style privatized system, a two-tier system where you have one set of rules for the richest people in the province, the most privileged, and another set for the rest of the people in the province." I think people who have looked at that two-tier system and have looked at our system, properly funded, would choose our system. There are many Americans who are in envy of it. I can tell you why they're in envy of it: You've got the major companies that don't want it to happen in the United States advertising against it, and I think the Republican Party as well, although somebody

over here could correct me because I think they go to the Republican conventions.

**Interjection:** Mike Murphy.

**Mr Bradley:** Mike Murphy, as mentioned, who is the guru in terms of political campaigning for the Republican Party in the United States.

I look at this particular bill and say normally I think people would be in favour of discipline in our schools. The real test will be when a big shot's kid gets into trouble. Wait till a friend of the Premier or a friend of one of the cabinet ministers gets in trouble. You can be sure the call will be going in to the appropriate authorities to bail them out of that. That's a problem we have to avoid in the school system, that people of influence are able to have their kids get out of trouble simply by the position of influence that they hold. We wouldn't want that to happen.

In terms of a code of conduct, I think people want them to behave. We don't want swearing of the kind that we saw when a cameraperson was at I think Prudhomme's in Vineland and he was looking over some documents, or at least scanning the room of the cabinet members of the caucus, and he scanned past the Premier and the Premier told him to get that camera out of there, except I left out one of the words because I don't want to say that kind of word in the Assembly, and besides, it's the kind of word for which a student would be expelled from school. We don't want that to happen, I'm sure, Mr Speaker. You would appropriately call to attention any member of this House who had used inappropriate language and demand that they withdraw it upon penalty of being expelled for the rest of the day. What we don't have in this House is a specific place for members to go, and that's the problem with this legislation. When they expel the students, there's supposed to be another alternative place for the students to go, but of course there's not going to be any funding to be able to provide that alternative place. If everything's in place, it makes it a lot easier.

It's like the bill we dealt with yesterday dealing with psychiatric patients. Our hearts go out to families who have individuals within the family or within a circle of friends who have psychiatric problems. Yes, it was a good bill, it's probably a necessary bill, but we wanted to make sure that the other facilities were available, the other staff were available: psychologists, psychiatrists, guidance people.

You even think of the caretakers in the school who look after the maintenance and the cleaning of the school. These are important people. I can recall in my experience in the school system that certainly the caretaker was often the person who knew who should and who shouldn't be in the school, and who was able to spot problems from time to time. That's part of a family, part of a team. Similarly, school secretaries of the day were people who were often gatekeepers as well. They looked, and if they saw something untoward happening they were prepared to alert us to that. Now those people increasingly are being marginalized and moved out of the system by a

funding formula that works against them. I think most members of the teaching profession would prefer to have those individuals within the school as well.

I was watching television today. I turned on the television set and I saw Mike Harris, our Premier, in the SkyDome for another photo opportunity. I know that was a diversionary tactic because with the embarrassment of the safety of drinking water in this province and the scandal swirling around that at the present time—"controversy" I guess is probably a better word—it's understandable, I suppose, that the Premier's advisers would say: "Look, Mike, you've got to be doing something else to divert attention. Why don't you go down to the SkyDome and put the boots to people on welfare again? Brag about how you've dealt with people on welfare."

I heard my good friend John O'Toole, the member for Durham, talk about—it's always a throwaway line that they like to use—the Liberals being soft on crime. I know that when it comes to environmental crime, Mike Harris and members of this government are certainly soft. That's why the number of prosecutions is way down and the number of convictions way down and the penalties way down under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment at this time. They have been told to be business-friendly and to get themselves, as a ministry, out of the face of people in this province who don't like the Ministry of the Environment.

#### 1650

Back to the Skydome: I thought perhaps there might be an announcement about water in there. I don't know what the trick was today because I didn't watch it as carefully as I should. Usually the Premier says, "Well, it would be five times the number of people in the Skydome who were on welfare and are not on welfare today." I'm going to tell you that I would bet it's about 100 times the number of people who could fit in the Skydome who are today concerned about the safety of drinking water in this province, particularly after the events that unfolded in the Legislature this afternoon and have unfolded for the past two weeks.

It's hard to concentrate at this time on a piece of legislation that is essentially a flop, that is essentially something that's simply adding a bit to what already exists. Is it going to be the worst thing that ever happened to the province? Probably not. But if we're talking about crime, I hope that we're as tough on environmental crime as we are on other kinds of crime, including those crimes which might be committed within the purview of a school.

We had a good suggestion as part of our platform in the last election campaign that I thought the government might have picked up. I would have commended the government for doing it, because I think it was a good suggestion. That was safe school zones, where there would be additional penalties for those who committed certain crimes within a school zone.

As you know, the drug pushers who are trying to get young people hooked on drugs that are very damaging to them, and those who perpetrate other crimes, often do so

within a school precinct or within a school zone because that's where they are going to find younger people who are vulnerable, younger people who may not be aware of the dangers that lurk out there in some of the opportunities that are presented to them. That might have been a good provision for this. I think you would have had the support of parents, teachers, school boards and students themselves.

What I lament, as well, is the loss of any authority for our school boards. Some of the members who serve in this assembly were members of school boards. Over the years I have found that members of school boards were very dedicated people, specifically to education. They were on a number of committees; they visited the schools; they talked with the teachers; they spoke with the students; they had lots of consultations with parents and the public; they communicated with the news media. They were generally positive about what was happening in the school system. Today those people are simply relegated to the position of puppets of the provincial government.

There's another piece of legislation, Bill 74—I call it a companion piece of legislation—which compels teachers to do what they have been doing for dozens of years in this province, and that is, provide assistance with extra-curricular activities.

I don't know if these people, if every member of the government—perhaps they do—recognizes how demoralizing it is to members of the teaching profession to be told that they must be instructed to engage in extra-curricular activities. I've met people, I mentioned in the Legislature before, who were up because the Canadian scholastic rowing championship was on this week. In the old days they called it the schoolboy regatta; they don't now because there are probably more girls who are doing the rowing now than there are boys, and it's great to see. It's wonderful to see both participating in the sport of rowing. I was down at the Henley regatta on Sunday presenting medals at that event.

The coaches, many of them teachers, were up at 4 o'clock in the morning, because you have to be up at 4 to be down by 5 o'clock in the morning to be on the rowing course before school starts. They'd be coaching there. Some of them would be teaching after that, helping students with additional activities, and then be involved, perhaps, in another sport or another activity later on in the day.

The inference found in the companion piece of legislation, Bill 74, is that somehow teachers are dodging those responsibilities. It's very discouraging to people who have spent all those extra hours, sometimes sacrificing home. Some people get home and a spouse or a member of the family may not be entirely happy about the fact they've been spending time with students for a period that may be 10 or 12 hours, and then on the weekend taking them to tournaments of some kind, or involved in another activity like debating or public speaking or, as I say, sports events.



It is most discouraging for teachers to see that happen. That's why I must warn that you're seeing these teachers now leave the day they can. There was a time when teachers often taught to the age of 65, even though they might have been able to retire at an earlier age. Now teachers don't even teach to the end of the year. They often teach to the day they have to teach and then they're out the door.

That wouldn't be the case if there was a lot of enthusiasm there, if they felt they were wanted and welcomed by the government which governs the province. I know they at least appreciate the fact that the students appreciate their work. I think it's a huge mistake for the government to pass that kind of legislation. It'll be much more damaging than this legislation, which is, as I say, relatively benign when you look at the whole scheme of things and what has happened.

There has emerged a major debate in this province. The government and I think my friend from Durham—I hope I'm not misquoting him—stated that it was a conflict between the government of Ontario representing the people and the teachers' unions, as he called them. I would prefer to say that what I have seen in this province, and I think it's a fair observation, is that the fight has been between those who believe in a strong, vibrant, high-quality, publicly funded education system and those who do not.

Every time you erode confidence in that system it means that people are going to accept different challenges, different solutions—charter schools, for instance, which are going to marginalize those who are not in the upper echelons of society in terms of the economics and their influence, or we'll see a continuing privatization of the schools in one form or another.

One of the institutions that I believe should be publicly funded, with investment in that area and it should be in the public domain, is the education system of this province. There are some areas that should not. I don't believe government should build cars. I don't believe there are a lot of activities in which government should be involved. But that would be one, and I can assure you another would be the Ministry of the Environment.

That's why I was very concerned when I heard the figures that came out of the Niagara region. Reference was made to those figures by the member for Niagara Centre, of over 500 youngsters being dealt with by Family and Children's Services of Niagara—a growing number, a growing challenge to be dealt with. That presents a problem for a school system, but we must deal with it in a multi-faceted way. Not only must we deal with penalties, because penalties are necessary on occasion, there's no question about it, but we also must deal with the problems that create those youngsters who cause disruption.

Interesting enough, some of the people who are most supportive of that are members of police forces across the province, because they see what happens. They get the final product very often of broken homes, of children who haven't had the appropriate guidance, of children

who may have a psychological problem. They will tell you, "Yes, we need police officers, of course we do, and we want to see them on the front-line in the streets." They will also tell you it's important to have support services for those youngsters, so that those police can help guide them to those support services instead of having to guide them to a jail where ultimately real problems begin.

I look at what is happening within our school system. There was a lot of discussion of this at the Grantham High School reunion. I know people here were wondering how the reunion went and it went very well. It was almost a three-day affair, but essentially two days. We talked a lot about the old days in school and discipline and the enthusiasm of teachers.

It was interesting. Out of Grantham High School came an inordinate number of members of the teacher profession. I was actually amazed to see the number of people who had become teachers. There was a lot of enthusiasm at that time for being in education. When you talked to the younger people there who had gone into the teaching profession, there was an entirely different attitude. They're still enthusiastic about the students, still enthusiastic to want to impart knowledge and skills, and provide guidance and leadership to students, but the morale is down considerably, largely because of the attitude this government has taken towards teachers and education in this province.

I hope that can be resolved. I would prefer not to be able to criticize the government in that regard. I would really prefer that. I'd like to pick another issue because it really means there's a pall over the education system as a result. If you mention the Premier's name in any gathering of teachers, I'll tell you there isn't a lot of enthusiasm. I would like to say, when I go to an event on behalf of the provincial government, that I bring the greetings of the Premier of this province, the Honourable Michael D. Harris, and get a round of applause. I have a difficult time stirring that round of applause with that particular salutation these days. That's most unfortunate, because I have done it in years gone by. I've done it with Premier Davis when he was the Premier and I've done it with ministers of education of the day, and there was a welcome reception of that at the time.

#### 1700

I know what's happened. There is a division within the ranks of teaching right now where the government is trying to set elementary people against secondary people, boards of education against teaching staff and non-teaching staff, Catholic boards against non-Catholic boards. There's just a general battle going on in the field of education. What we need is some serenity. What we need is some civility out there. I think the government could go a long way to doing that by avoiding—more Bill 74 than this particular piece of legislation. Some may welcome this, but I think most would say it is overridden by Bill 74.

I think I noted as well—someone in the House can correct me if I'm wrong—that the environment is not as

important part of the curriculum this time around. I was informed by people that where it used to be fairly central to the curriculum—students became very acutely aware of environmental problems in the province and students were very much involved in it—I understand now that in the revision to the curriculum that has been de-emphasized. The member for Barrie may be able to correct me on that and have the curriculum in hand to say that, but I have been informed by what I think are reliable sources that, compared to what existed previously in the curriculum and what exists today, there's a de-emphasis on it. After the events of the last couple of weeks in the province, I think there has to be a re-emphasis in the curriculum on the field of the environment.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Kormos:** A quorum, Speaker.

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

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Kormos:** Speaker, that's a little better. There should be government members here to keep quorum. Talk about codes of conduct. Once again, it's the government's responsibility to keep quorum. Maybe the code of conduct that should be considered should be one for Tories here at Queen's Park.

Mr Bradley, though, raised some interesting points. It's quite appropriate to talk about this dramatic, highest historical caseload of FACS. Look, there are young people who are so disruptive in the classroom for any number of reasons, who pose dangers to themselves and to other kids, that they shouldn't be in our schools, and they are being suspended and they are being expelled. There's nothing new about your legislation. But their parents are coming to the offices of Mr Bradley, to my constituency office, saying: "Look, we need help. We've got a kid with serious problems. The classroom isn't working for him or her and, quite frankly, he or she is so problematic in the classroom that we agree it isn't going to work out." It's the support for those families that has been totally eliminated from the communities of Ontario. Mental health treatment for kids in Niagara is at an abysmally low level of accessibility. Those special programs that boards of education were funded to provide for those kids who were expelled—because the law says a kid has to attend school until age 16. This government is encouraging the violation of that law by saying, "Expel the kid." We need a restoration of those special programs that dealt with those very disturbed and, yes, sometimes dangerous kids, to ensure that they had the adequate supervision, treatment and education that any Ontarian has a right to. You people have abandoned that entirely.

**Mr O'Toole:** For the record, the member for St Catharines raised a point about providing supports for those few students who would be suspended or expelled. Clearly, one of the nine category grants in the ministry is a learning opportunities grant. In that grant, which, by the

way, is \$214 million, there are provisions providing counselling, mentoring, classroom assistance, after-school programming and reducing of class size. On top of that, recently in the budget there was additional money announced to reduce class size in the primary grades as well as in secondary school.

On a positive note, today I was fortunate—a very rare occasion, I might add—to make a member's statement, one of the very few this week. I was speaking about the successes of our local high schools. In Blackstock community, Cartwright high school is celebrating its 75th anniversary. What immediately comes to mind is the leader of the band there, one of the teachers, Mr John Beirness. That band, with a small school of 200 students, is world-renowned, sort of like Spike Jones, really. Tim Taylor, the principal, is a person who builds pride in his staff, and that overflows to the students. It's a wonderful school.

I could go on, but theoretically Port Perry is just one of many success stories, and it really starts with providing the right kind of learning environment. That's an environment where the rights of individuals are respected and where there are consequences for actions, and it's a safe, supportive learning environment. I think those kinds of applications apply in the home. Homes that have violence perhaps aren't a very safe place for children or adults. I think the same applies and we should do no less for the students in our schools. I thank Minister Ecker for her leadership and Premier Harris for doing the right things for our students.

**Mr Cordiano:** As is customary for the member for St Catharines, he made excellent remarks on this bill. I would agree with him. One of the things he pointed out and one of the things I would like to reiterate about this government is that, like so many other bills, this is a notional bill. It entails the notion that somehow schools will be safer because we have a bill that says they will be safer. The fact of the matter is that resources aren't adequate. They aren't adequately provided by this bill. If this bill made resources more available, I'd certainly be the first to stand up in this House and support this piece of legislation.

We as a Liberal caucus have made numerous recommendations for amendments. Safe school zones—that certainly would put the idea that you could create safe school zones in and around schools, but again, resources would be added to this so it's not just notional, so it becomes real. My wife, who's a teacher, tells me she's having to deal with behavioural students in her class who are not able to cope in that kind of classroom setting. There are no additional programs for these kids who are behavioural problems. At the end of the day, these kids are put into a regular classroom, are put into special ed programs. They shouldn't be there; they should be in behavioural classes. These classes have been cut because the funding has been cut. It has been many years that this has been going on, so the problems we're talking about, with safe schools or codes of conduct, this isn't going to really address the problems the schools are facing.

Teachers would like to see that solved. They would like to co-operate, but they aren't given the opportunity with this bill.

1710

**Mrs Munro:** I wanted to speak to the point that was made by the member opposite with regard to publicly funded schools. In his remarks there were suggestions made that this government has not demonstrated a commitment to publicly funded schools. I wanted to make sure the record is clarified that indeed it is quite the opposite. When you look at the work that has been done by this government in the last five years, it has been to strengthen the position of publicly funded schools. Let me remind the member opposite that we created a funding formula that provides equity for every student in this province, that we have amended the funding formula in a way that allows for the development of new schools on a more timely basis. We have also addressed the issue of revising a curriculum that better meets the needs of students today as they look forward to careers and various job opportunities that simply did not exist a few short years ago.

Another method is of course to provide a method of testing. We have committed to and have introduced various testings at different grade levels, again designed to ensure that our students in this province are receiving the kind of education they deserve, the kind of education that will serve them in their future role of leadership within the province and within the country.

The issue of teacher advisers is another demonstration of our commitment to support publicly funded education.

**The Speaker:** Responses?

**Mr Bradley:** I thank my colleagues very much for their responses. Some of them I agree with and some of them I disagree with. I heard some interjections. One has to listen carefully for these interjections. When the member for York South-Weston mentioned that his wife was a teacher, I heard the interjection, "Well, she must make lots of money," and somebody else interjected, "She must work six months a year." That's exactly the kind of attitude this government has tried to perpetrate on the population of this province. That's most unfortunate when that happens. That is exactly what happens, and then you wonder why members of the teaching profession are less than enamoured with this government, when you make those kinds of comments. I think they're most unfair.

The member for Niagara Falls would tell you that's not true, because he's aware through his close association that in fact that isn't true. If he were to say that were true he would get in trouble at home, so I'm certain he wouldn't do that.

I also want to say that in coping with any discipline problems, we're going to have fewer teachers within the school to do so. If you look at the provisions of Bill 160, they were designed to have fewer teachers within the system. I can remember when the Secondary School Teachers' Federation made a presentation on Bill 160, a negotiating presentation, which said: "We will extend the

length of the day. We'll cut out some days which will be professional activity days. We're prepared to meet all the requirements you would want for students to have more contact time with teachers." The government rejected that, because their real goal was to reduce the number of teachers in schools, and that will have consequences in terms of discipline as well as other areas.

## ROYAL ASSENT

### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

Bill 33, An Act to require fair dealing between parties to franchise agreements, to ensure that franchisees have the right to associate and to impose disclosure obligations on franchisors / *Projet de loi 33, Loi obligeant les parties aux contrats de franchisage à agir équitablement, garantissant le droit d'association aux franchisés et imposant des obligations en matière de divulgation aux franchiseurs;*

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;*

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;*

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

## SAFE SCHOOLS ACT, 2000

### LOI DE 2000 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES ÉCOLES

(continued)

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gill:** I hear the nice sounds coming only from this side of the House. I'm pleased to join in this debate. I'm a little concerned as well. I was listening to the debate very carefully and I was very happy to take part in it, but now I don't see anyone in the third party, and I see two Liberal members. I'm very happy that they're here.

This debate on Bill 81, the Safe Schools Act, is very close to my heart. I'm pleased to take part. I'm very pleased to be part of a government that is taking such an important step in improving our education system. This bill is part of an ambitious agenda of changes to the education system. This agenda is the result of the input of thousands of people across the province who have been coming together since 1995 to craft realistic, practical and common sense solutions to the sicknesses in our education system.

Who deems education sick? This is not a partisan judgment. In a democracy, the citizen is the boss. It is the broad consensus among our bosses that the education system is not nearly as good as it could be. Our constituents also say that the system is light-years behind where it should be.

Who wins if we make significant changes? Our children win. They become more productive economically and they reap higher salaries as a result. They become better-informed citizens and better critical thinkers, and society is a better place because of that. They become more enlightened, more skilled and more inspired.

Who wins if we make no changes? In the short run, I guess that would be a victory for the union bosses, but in the long run, no one wins if we keep the status quo. Our children will stay mired in an aimless system that fails them when they wish to succeed. Too many of our teachers go home after a hard day's work knowing that the system as it stands won't let them be the good teachers they want to be. The system must change. You simply cannot reconcile a commitment to the future of our children with opposition to change. Anti-change means anti-education.

This government is pro-education, pro-change and progressive in the sense of making decisive policy changes to help children learn. All stakeholders who are pro-child are welcome on our crusade. Teachers who are true professionals, who wish to practise the difficult craft, the sacred calling of teaching, are welcome. Our government, our party has nothing but respect and admiration for our teachers.

This doesn't change the fact that the teachers' unions are the biggest impediment to quality education in Ontario today. They resist change because some of their members are scared of it. That is only human. Everyone is scared of change, but teacher union bosses cynically feed this fear, spread panic and misinformation in order to shore up their support and protect their union positions. After all, they wouldn't want to change and go back to teaching now, would they?

**1720**

I look forward to the day when individual professional teachers will no longer be scared of their own unions, their own so-called brothers and sisters who harass, intimidate and silence them. Someday, teaching professionals will no longer be scared to raise their own voices to contribute their expertise to the process of perfecting education policies for the children of Ontario. In fact, I find it sickening that in a democratic country so many

union members are gagged or subjected to intimidation when union bosses decide how their members should think even in the teaching profession.

It disgusts me that honest, hard-working teachers are forced to line up and clap like trained seals at the command from the union ringmasters. To all those teachers who are stuck in that situation, I say, do not fear the government. We are on the side of anyone who cares about children and we're also on the side of anyone who cares about democracy. It seems to me that our teacher unions could use a little more democracy themselves. Indeed, on page 14 of our 1999 Blueprint we committed to increasing the quality of union democracy. We have not forgotten the rank-and-file teachers of Ontario.

Bill 81 is about responsibility. Our government is fighting the tide of irresponsibility, including irresponsible unions and irresponsible students. Bill 81 is one more solid brick in the system we are building. We have made many changes to education already: a new curriculum, smaller class sizes, a College of Teachers to cultivate professionalism. It ensures that the other progress we are making is not endangered by disrespect within school walls. We promised in the Blueprint that we would respect the rights of teachers to have classrooms and work environments free of violence, disrespect and disorder.

Bill 81 puts teeth into that commitment. Very clearly, the bill lays out our expectations for students and the consequences of failing to meet our expectations. The vast majority of students are solid and well-behaved members of their school communities, but it only takes one bad apple, just one hooligan with a bad attitude and no respect for others, to shatter the peace that is so essential to proper learning. With the passage of Bill 81, hooligans will be banished from regular classrooms and given the discipline they so clearly lack. Let me say that this is a small minority that does not respect the civility, obedience and behaviour requirements in our schools. With the passage of Bill 81, he will no longer be anywhere near a school to disrupt the rights of others.

Bill 81 also makes O Canada mandatory and lets school councils decide on a daily oath of citizenship and dress code. Let me also say that I hope all school councils will take this opportunity. I hope the decision is a unanimous yes all across Ontario. The dress code and O Canada are all tools that will build a sense of membership in the school community.

Shared experiences like these, which many of us had in our own school days, unite society and give us common ground so we can understand and respect each other. We're trying to build a society of civility, order and respect. That job starts with what our children experience in their school days. Bill 81 is about responsibility. Children learn by example. When we take responsibility for our children, they learn responsibility from us.

What's in Bill 81 is just common sense. It is what worked for Ontario's children before the educrats and the social engineers went insane and wrecked the education system. In the past, when there was respect for authority

and respect for learning, the Ontario education system was great. Ontario was an example to the world from the days when Egerton Ryerson first promised, as he put it, "to educate all the brats of the province."

We will restore the good behaviour, civility and respect that schools have lost, and this is a step towards making Ontario schools great once again. I'd like to hope that the House will unanimously endorse this bill and pass it quickly.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bradley:** I think the greatest regret probably is that instead of listening to my good friend from Brampton-Gore and other parts of the riding here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, had he won the Liberal nomination he ran—was it 1993?—for the federal Liberals—I know it must have cost him a bundle because he had to have all those memberships—

**Mr Kormos:** How many?

**Mr Bradley:** I would say just hundreds upon hundreds of memberships. I hope he didn't pay for them himself because that wouldn't be right.

I could have seen him in the House of Commons as a member of Liberal government, and here he is in the Legislative Assembly. So there's a chance to see him in either place, and I was happy to hear him this afternoon, but how nice it would have been to see him in the House of Commons. I've never run for a Conservative nomination, so I think it's just interesting to note that. It reminded me of my good friend the member for Stoney Creek, who encouraged the Liberal nominee and I think bought a membership and everything and then he turned around and ran against him in the campaign. I know you wouldn't do that, Mr Speaker. Even though from time to time you may not have been on exactly the same wavelength as the Premier, I know you would not have done that.

Back to the bill. I'm always interested to hear what government members have been told to say about this bill.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hastings:** When did you ever have an original idea in your head?

**Mr Bradley:** I'm sorry I've stirred up the member for Etobicoke North, so I'll simply wish the member a nice weekend before he has a stroke.

**Mr Kormos:** It's been a most interesting afternoon. What's interesting is the effort on the part of this government to once again, as they did with the Family—the Parental Responsibility Act—

**Mr Hastings:** Yeah, be careful.

**Mr Kormos:** I was going to talk about that debacle up in North York there, the family responsibility plan. That is the horror show that was the subject, and still is, quite frankly, in my office. If you guys want to raise MPPs' salaries, please raise our office budgets so we can hire more staff. I've got complaints coming in—they're flooding the office—over the Family Responsibility Office. My staff are working 10- and 11-hour days dealing with the messes you're still creating up in North

York. Lord knows, if Shelley Martel and I hadn't been there with the video camera, it would probably still be packed up in packing boxes and crates and dismembered and dismantled computers laid up against the wall. It's still a horror show.

Look, kids are being suspended and expelled from schools today, as we speak. Schools have codes of conduct. Schools play O Canada at the onset in the morning.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** They do. You haven't mentioned a single school board that is not performing to the level you're speaking of as being achieved by this sham bill. All of us understand the need to protect our students and create a safe environment. Please, give the teachers the tools to do that. We have no quarrel with that. But please ensure as well that those kids who are pulled out of our schools for good reasons have alternative programs to participate in. That's critical as well.

1730

**Mr Tascona:** I just want to comment on a couple of aspects. The member for St Catharines was talking about the environment and I just wanted to point out that environmental studies used to be a separate course. The new curriculum integrates environmental studies into the compulsory core science curriculum so that all students can benefit from that.

With respect to the proposed Safe Schools Act, I want to clarify something that has been somewhat of a misrepresentation in terms of how this code applies. The provincial standards of behaviour apply not only to students but also to all individuals involved in the publicly funded school system: parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members, whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities. So we're holding everyone to the same standard with respect to this piece of legislation.

This is a matter that requires serious consideration because, as was indicated earlier, these are the statistics we have with respect to students suspended and expelled for the 1997-98 period: for the offence of possession of weapons, in Ontario there were 20 expulsions and 649 suspensions; for the offence of threats of serious physical injury, in Ontario there were eight expulsions and 1,429 suspensions; for the offence of assault causing serious bodily harm, expulsions in Ontario were 22 and suspensions were 2,289.

That is very serious conduct, conduct that has to be looked on by everyone in a very serious manner. For the opposition parties to say that this is business as usual—they're out of touch.

**Mr Smitherman:** I've had the exciting opportunity this afternoon to sit and listen to the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, the home MPP for many members of my family. I found it interesting that in the very same speech where the member said it was his goal to make Ontario schools great once again, he managed to disparage teachers, the very people who are charged with that responsibility.

He was the member, singled out earlier but not named in particular, who talked about teachers working only six months a year. I ask the member whether he thinks that's the best way to approach the notion of improving the education system here in the province of Ontario.

We're joined as well in the Legislature today by the member for Brampton West-Mississauga, who yesterday was sallying on about the issue of bocce courts, that the predominantly Italian residents of portions of North York ought not to have support from their municipality for a very important recreational activity, one which provides extraordinarily important recreational and physical benefits for those residents. Yet that member, along with the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, helps to send a very important message to Ontarians, and that is, "If you differ in any way, if you disagree in any way, if you don't fall into our core voting group, that narrow casting demograph that we guard so jealously, you're in big trouble."

Yesterday the assault was on those people who wish to play bocce ball; today it is on teachers. The very people charged with the responsibility every single day to assist in educating our children are under assault from that government.

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Gill:** I do appreciate the members' comments, even though they were not on point. The member for St Catharines talked about my political career. He's been here 23 years. He's a very senior member and I look up to him sometimes. But maybe he's been here too long. Perhaps he should be a Senator next.

The member for Niagara Centre, who has left again—he's not here—talked about getting some more in the budget. I do recall in the first few days of the House sitting we were the government that very quickly, even though their party had been wiped out of official status, recognized them. We lowered the number and we did give them substantial—I think it comes to more than \$1 million—research money that they can spend.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale spoke, so I thank you, even though you were on a tangent and never on the subject.

It is a very basic thing we're talking about. We want to bring discipline back. Nobody will disagree—and if somebody does they can certainly rebut me in the next round—that students can bring weapons to their schools, and a teacher should have the authority to suspend a student who does not listen to them, and a principal should have the authority to expel students for one school year.

Coming back to uniforms, there has not even been one parent who has disagreed with that. So I hope that everybody will get together. It's a very pet subject of mine and I want to make sure that it is implemented.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Smitherman:** I was awaiting the applause. It's great to have the opportunity today to participate in this discussion about the importance of our education system and about the government's priorities with respect to it. I use the word "priorities" because I think that is very

much at the heart of the challenge for this government, that is, when faced with the challenges of reforming the education system in Ontario, instead of dealing with the issues at hand of adequate funding, as an example, this government chooses only to offer one more piece of rhetoric.

Through the course of this debate, and again today, on the fifth anniversary of those members coming to hold power, we have witnessed—

*Applause.*

**Mr Smitherman:** I would like to extend recognition to those members who have that anniversary, and recognition as well that in the time since, we've had one Minister of Education of that government who said on tape that it was his goal to help create a crisis in education, and then we've had subsequent ministers who have gone and done just that. That is the accomplishment; that is the record for five years.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Smitherman:** The member for Etobicoke Centre, my home riding, says, "We won the election, George." I'm aware of that—painfully aware from the vantage point of my seat here in the fourth row. Just one year or so past the anniversary of my own election, I have been witness yet again to the member for Etobicoke Centre—"the peacock" I like to call him, out of pride for his performances in this House—saying in utter arrogance, "We won the election, George." We're aware of that. And so to you goes the burden of responsibility for Ontario's education system. It is the issue of that responsibility that I would like to speak to today, because it is the policies of this government opposite that have wreaked havoc on our education system.

I'd like to speak to some of the challenges with respect to the funding formula, a funding formula that, as an example, for the city of Toronto fails to reflect the distinct nature of communities. This is a government that talks a lot—it certainly has in explanation of their policies of downloading—of the need to allow as much decision-making as possible to go on at the local level. Yet they bring in policies which fail to reflect the fact that in the riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, home to this lovely heritage building, the Ontario Legislature, and many more, some schools were built when there were different styles that called for, as one example, wider corridors. Yet we have from this government a funding formula that punishes those school boards that have facilities which were built before a certain time. So in my riding, where we have heritage properties that are serving as schools even today—Jesse Ketchum up the street at Bay and Davenport, Park school on Shuter Street and the great Jarvis Collegiate at the corner of Jarvis and Wellesley—we have a funding formula which punishes the Toronto District School Board.

1740

The nature of kids who are being taught in these schools—there is in this government's funding formula no reflection of the very distinct differences that occur across the breadth of a province as vast and populous as

ours. In my own riding, there are extraordinary challenges which the school system faces that are not as profound in other parts of our great province. In my own riding, regrettably, many kids come to school every day hungry. I have school principals who must deal with the challenge of trying to properly clothe kids. We hear all the time from the government opposite about the extent to which the economy is great, but they do a really lousy job of making the case for the people who are being left behind, and our school system is sometimes left to pick up that responsibility.

As well, we have a funding formula which does a lousy job of reflecting the fact that it's going to cost more when you've got kids in a classroom who do not speak English very well, yet we see a decline in the kind of support that's available to them. We see a decline in the support for special education, which is at the heart of behavioural challenges, which this bill ought to deal with. So yet again from the government opposite, instead of offering additional funds to try and help with problem kids they offer rhetoric, because it costs them nothing, and they pass to others the responsibility to deal with it.

We think about school uniforms. School uniforms would be just great, except that some of the kids in my riding don't even have proper shoes. It doesn't matter to the government opposite. They choose to ignore child poverty rates that have increased dramatically since they came to office.

I've seen in my riding these great disparities between communities that have and have not. I represent both with pride. But the ability of parents in those wealthier areas to put additional dollars into the schools is not and cannot be matched by the schools in the inner city. But the government opposite cares nothing about that.

The Minister of Education, who's not with us at the moment but has been very active around this bill—I think we should call this the Dr Laura Has All the Answers Act—stands in her place every single day and tells a story about how great she is and how great the government is, but the reality is not matched by the rhetoric. We have extraordinary declines in the support for public education in the city of Toronto, in particular those inner city schools, which require additional assistance.

This bill that is before us talks a lot about punishment, but it doesn't talk very much about intervention or about prevention. This is a crisis perpetuated by the government opposite to cover up the fact that they have taken funds away from the education system. The evidence of that is very, very clear in my own riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

I note that this bill mirrors much of what has gone on in the United States, another Mike Harris government import from Mike Murphy in the United States. Is that the best we can do? I think we need to acknowledge that this is not new, this notion of conduct. The school boards have worked on these protocols for a long time. Yet the very real difference is that contrary to so much of what this government talks about, on this one they say, "All the answers are at Bay and Wellesley." For our vast

province of Ontario, all the answers can be found in a few floors of a government office building at Bay and Wellesley.

I note there's talk in there about school councils developing pledges of citizenship, some suggestion that the school councils could offer something in addition to O Canada. I note that the Minister of Municipal Affairs—we had an opportunity to talk about his referendum bill, where he reserved the right in all those cases to be able to give the stamp of approval or, more likely, to say no to municipalities that might want to answer questions. I'm going to work with the school councils in my riding to have a pledge that talks about the fundamental right to a textbook, which, because of your funding formula, they do not have. I'm going to talk about a pledge that talks about the fundamental right to come to school without a grumbling tummy from not having eaten because child poverty rates have increased under your government.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Smitherman:** You want to talk about behavioural problems. Go back under your rock, the member for Etobicoke North, climb back under your rock. You want to talk about behavioural problems? I think a lot of them stem from the fact that we've got too many kids who come to school hungry every day, improperly nourished and without adequate clothing. But this government chooses to do nothing about that.

When the federal government offered increases to the child tax benefit, you clawed them back. You clawed back the shoes and the clothing and the food of the poorest and most vulnerable kids in our society, and yet you stand today with so much beaming pride about the work that you've done around the education system.

**Mr Hastings:** Go talk to Barbara Hall.

**Mr Smitherman:** I'd happily go and talk to Barbara Hall. I'd happily go and talk to her, because no finer public servant has been around.

We have a real challenge. In my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, there are lots of kids who are challenged. There are lots of kids who have behavioural problems. We need additional resources to help them—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Take a seat. Stop the clock for a quick moment. There are 31 seconds left. Order. It's coming down to the end of the day. It's been a long week, a hard week. We're coming down to the last 10 minutes. If all members could try and behave for 10 minutes, then we can let loose at 6:05.

Sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Smitherman:** I thought I was letting loose, Mr Speaker.

The last point I want to leave this House with on this issue is that we need to link this into the requirement for additional resources around special education. Is it really what we want to do, to create a scrap heap, where we're tossing more kids out on the street without adequate support? Special education is an opportunity to recognize that they've got problems and to deal with them at an

early age. But we see that is diminishing. I have enough kids in my riding who aren't going to school. Let's make sure that those who stay in school get the help while they're there.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I want to take a minute to commend the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale for his impassioned speech on behalf of so many folks out there who are being impacted most directly in a very destructive way by the agenda that has been launched by this government, reflected in Bill 74 but certainly not started in Bill 74. I suggest that we'll probably see more as they fulfill the next three years of their mandate.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale obviously speaks from a position of knowing personally of the plight of so many of the folks who live in his constituency. He's obviously in touch with them, hears from them and is giving them voice in this place so that perhaps through some fluke of fate somebody over there who has some influence might hear and make a real difference, bring some common sense to this piece of work that is nothing more or nothing less than another attack on teachers and on a system that they've put into stress in so many significant and different and hurtful ways over the last five years.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, in his own inimitable way, relates issues of poverty, relates issues of children with challenges of mental health issues who need the services that this government isn't providing so they can participate in a classroom and learn and become all they have the potential to become. This bill doesn't add or give anything in that respect, so I commend the member for bringing that forward.

1750

**Mr O'Toole:** I'm pleased to respond. Actually, it's our responsibility to respond in this particular Bill 81. I think it's important for the record to state that Bill 81 clearly states, "Decisions to expel a pupil are subject to appeal under section 311 of the act.

"Programs, courses and services for suspended pupils and for expelled pupils are authorized by section 312 of the act.

"Transitional rules governing suspensions and expulsions are set out in sections 313 and 314 of the act, and complementary amendments are made to" other parts "of the Education Act."

But if you look at the category grants that are available, the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale clearly doesn't understand, and it's unfortunate that he hasn't spent more time on this to have a fuller understanding so he could contribute to the debate, rather than just have spurious, reckless comments of no value to anyone. The learning opportunities grant provides in excess of \$214 million for the very things you've been calling for. So don't try and beguile the people of Ontario. You've beguiled the people in your riding. They should rescind your mandate immediately, because you're not being straightforward with people.

This provides counselling, mentoring, classroom assistance, after-school programming and provisions for class size reduction. Clearly, this is long overdue. I'm just going to go to third-party endorsements here as quickly as I can: "We welcome the standardization of a code of behaviour. What we're looking for is something that will ensure the dignity, respect and well-being of all the students and staff," said Mars Bottiglia, superintendent of corporate affairs at the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board. There's a school manager with the courage to stand up.

I'm challenging the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale to stand up and have the courage to support this bill, support students and teachers. Forget the politics that your leader, Dalton McGuinty, is always looking for blame. Here's one time to set that aside, George. Do the right thing and vote for Bill 81.

**Mr Bradley:** The last thing that the member for Rosedale would need is any advice from the government on political considerations, because I must tell you that there is no government that spends more time on things political than the present administration. In fact, at this very time, at the time when a meagre \$100,000 has been allocated to Walkerton—though I suspect after this week and the pounding the government has taken there will be more—they've spent \$100,000 there already on a new ad campaign aimed at the teachers of this province, using taxpayers' dollars. This government has spent \$200,000 on that and of course spent about \$100 million on what could only be called self-serving government advertising, rather than investing that money in education or in the environment.

You will recall, Mr Speaker, because you and I were on a television program on Global television—and I must commend you for the kind of independence you demonstrated at that time, which may certainly speak to the fact of why you might be in this chair today, other than the great competence you have as Speaker. But I recall that on that occasion you indicated—I don't want to put words in your mouth—that you thought there might have been a better way of communicating, a different way of communicating. I'll put it as benignly as I can.

I do want to say that when I heard the lecture from my friend from Durham about things political—this government has spent more on what you call blatantly partisan political advertising, using taxpayers' dollars, than any government I've ever seen. In fact, they spent money to attack teachers when they were dealing with Bill 160, again taking money out of everybody's pocket to attack members of the teaching profession. If they want to spend the Conservative Party's funds on that, that's their business, but not taxpayers' funds.

**Mrs Munro:** I want to come back to some of the issues that are actually in this bill. One of those has to do with the question of school uniforms. It's an interesting debate, because many schools, for hundreds of years, have introduced and continued the practice of having school uniforms. There's clearly a great deal of evidence



to suggest that having a school uniform in fact has a positive effect.

What we have done as a government is provide the opportunity for those parents in the parent council and people within that school community to assess the value of school uniforms and to look at whether or not their particular school would benefit. I have to go back to a particular example that I think demonstrates the value to the individual. Many have commented about the importance of having a uniform because it doesn't distinguish those students who can afford a wider range of clothing than others. More importantly, a school uniform demonstrates to students the sense of identity, which is one of the most critically fragile aspects of adolescent life. The opportunity to automatically be included is a very important motive for people to consider the whole issue of school uniforms, and I think it's a demonstration of this government's ability to recognize those issues in this legislation.

**The Speaker:** Responses?

**Mr Smitherman:** I'd like to thank the member for Sault St Marie more generously than I would the member from Durham, but also the members for St Catharines and from York North, for their comments. There was a range of comments there, and you all heard them. The real point is that I know I'm doing my job when I wake the government up over there and let them know that there's a different reality than the one they see, a different reality than the one that the Minister of Education, Dr Laura of the north, chooses to tell them about. It's a

reality that under this government, in the city of Toronto there are fewer resources in the education system than there were then. Yet in the city of Toronto we're expected to pay an inordinately high burden of taxes so the province can ship those around to other places to deal with the problems—all to finance a tax cut.

We hear from members of the government, most notably the Minister of Health, Jerry Maguire II, calling for fair share, and other ministers were on their feet talking about that today. But where's the fair share for kids who live in poverty and go to school in the inner city? It is sorely lacking. Yet when I raise that, the government gets their back up, because those dollars are being funnelled out of my downtown riding and away from the needs of kids from the inner city who do not come into life and do not wake up every morning with as much as many other people in this province. We always worked hard, through an adequately funded system of public education, to try to balance that out, and in the context of the city of Toronto they put more money into inner-city schools. Because of you and because of your funding formula, it is gone, and the chance that those kids had to play catch-up is diminished. It is diminished. You can argue that it is not, but I urge you to come with me into the schools and I'll demonstrate it to you. I'll show you that.

**The Speaker:** It now being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*

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Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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