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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 11 October 2000

Mercredi 11 octobre 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 October 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 octobre 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): The Ontario Trillium Foundation is failing charitable organizations in Sarnia-Lambton. Revenue sources have been reduced by 45% with the introduction of slot machines and charity casinos, which have replaced revenue from volunteer-run bingos and Monte Carlos.

Minister Hodgson stated in 1998 that charities would receive 100% of the net revenue from table games at the charity casinos. It's ironic that the charity casinos are now detrimental to charitable organizations' ability to raise funds. The organizations in jeopardy are the Alzheimer Society, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Canadian Hearing Society, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian Red Cross, Family YMCA, Goodwill Industries, Huron House boys' home, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Sexual Assault Survivor Centre, the United Way, the VON, the Women's Interval House, Rebound and Senior VIP.

These organizations are in crisis because the Trillium Foundation's funding process is restrictive and has no provision for assistance to existing successful programs. These organizations are facing program reductions, program eliminations, cutbacks in staffing and inability to meet new community needs. In other words, the social support structure of Lambton county is in jeopardy.

The reality proves that Minister Hodgson was wrong when he stated that more dollars would go to charities. Where is all the gambling money going?

AILSA CRAIG APPRECIATION BANQUET

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Last Saturday, I had the privilege of attending an appreciation banquet for volunteers in my riding of Perth-Middlesex. The village of Ailsa Craig hosted this special evening to honour those who donate their time, talent and skills to serve their community.

Two of the individuals receiving recognition were the late Tye Barnes and Bob Hooper. Tye and Bob were great friends and were dedicated to Ailsa Craig. They worked together on many projects, including looking

after the local recreation centre, and they have a Canadian 46-cent stamp in their honour.

Another important individual to the community was Bryn Gilles. After a battle with cancer, memorial donations were made in Bryn's name and the recreation centre used the proceeds to purchase a large-screen movie projector. Now local children have the chance to watch movies and share fun in their own community.

Although I did not have the opportunity to meet these great men, I know from the kind remarks that were made in their honour that they were truly heroes.

The village of Ailsa Craig is a vibrant community located northwest of London on Highway 7 in the county of Middlesex. Ailsa Craig is famous worldwide for its annual turtle races, held every July.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the council of the village of Ailsa Craig for inviting me to attend their appreciation banquet. My thanks go to Reeve Don Shipway, councillors Lynne Burns, Ken Johnston, Gary Keays and Bob Thomson for organizing this event.

Ailsa Craig is an example of what makes our province strong and vibrant.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): Non-profit community organization volunteer groups and local neighbourhood sporting clubs no longer can provide services or operate programs due to extreme and prohibitive increases in leasing community space.

Three hundred per cent increases over last year's rate are quite common in many communities, and this spells the end of many recreational programs for after-school groups.

This can only give way to more and, in many cases, higher user fees. This is unfair to the thousands of needy and poor kids who will be affected. For the many hard-working families in my riding of York West and also throughout Ontario, it will be unbearable to come up with more money for after-school programs.

Cuts in provincial funding that affect school boards are, in effect, penalizing our children. The Mike Harris government's new funding formula is responsible for the cuts and the empty community spaces. Many volunteers and volunteer organizations are ready and willing to face the challenge, but only if affordable community space is available.

I call on you, Premier, to get involved and make a commitment to provide the necessary funding. Premier,

please support our community groups, our volunteer organizations and, above all, our kids.

BRAMPTON ECONOMY

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'm pleased today to bring more great news from Brampton. Recently the Brampton Economic Development Office was presented with both a gold and platinum award at the 32nd annual Economic Developers Association of Canada congress. The gold award was for the best among those communities with a population of 150,000 or more, and the platinum for the best community economic development program in Canada.

Brampton's submission detailed the progress the city and its many partners have made since launching the successful Small Business Enterprise Centre in 1998. At that time the economic development office moved from a location somewhere on the fifth floor of city hall to a street front.

Since then, the number of new businesses in Brampton has grown at a significant rate. Before this move the small business self-help office served about 4,500 clients and registered maybe 1,000 or so businesses per year. The new Small Business Enterprise Centre has assisted 18,000 clients and registers 4,500 new businesses per year since February of 1998.

The Small Business Enterprise Centre is dedicated to supporting small business growth by providing free business consulting, access to information, computer Internet access, accountant and lawyer referral program, site selection and many other services.

I'd like all members of the House to join me in congratulating our Brampton Economic Development Office in this tremendous achievement, an idea that I was very pleased to spawn when I was parliamentary assistant to the minister.

AGRICULTURAL FUNDING

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today is to the Premier. As everyone in this House knows, the second-largest industry in our province and in fact in Canada is agri-food. Traditionally, the only fear farmers had was bad weather. That has changed dramatically this year. This year, they've had a two-punch hit on them.

First of all, the weather was incredibly wet, causing significant numbers of farmers to not be able to get on the land to plant. When that has happened in most years, and in all previous years, although the quantity would be down, the price would be up significantly for their product. This year, for the first time, they're down 25% to 40% in the quantity of the crop and the prices are extremely low.

The answer for this low price is also very obvious to the Premier. That is that the Americans and the European countries subsidize their farmers at a far higher rate than we do. It has placed our farmers at a severe disadvantage.

Many times, Premier, you pointed your finger at the federal government and said they're the cause of the problem. You have not once, at a first ministers' conference, raised the issue of farm subsidies. Not once did it have any significance to you.

Our farmers look with envy at the support provided the agricultural community in Quebec and Alberta. Deliver on your promise of last year and five years ago to work for the farmers. Agriculture in this province is under attack. Action is needed now.

1340

HOME CARE

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): At lunch-time today I attended a demonstration of home care workers outside of the Minister of Health's office. In case she wasn't listening out the window, I want to repeat the message. Toronto's SPRINT home care workers, personal support workers, have been on strike now for five weeks. Monday night, 200 CCAC workers in Hamilton went on strike. These workers are out on the frontline delivering home care services and they know how your competitive bidding model has failed the clients they serve on an everyday basis.

The Ontario Home Support Association and Ontario Community Care Association have issued a report calling the state of human resources in the community care sector "a looming crisis." There are long waiting lists for services. We see the disparity in wages between the community sector and the hospital sector, leading to a flood of qualified workers leaving the community and going to the hospital. That means there aren't the supports there. That means the money that the minister announced this morning will not end the emergency room crisis. There's nowhere for these people to go. The money that she's announced for the community care access centres doesn't even come close to meeting their deficits, let alone funding the pay equity requirements, let alone addressing the issue of disparity.

The review of competitive bidding that the minister has announced is a backroom sham. We want you to open it up. Invite the workers to the table, invite the clients to the table, and you'll hear how your competitive bidding experiment is failing the people of Ontario.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I would like to take this opportunity to help launch Fire Prevention Week in Ontario, when fire departments throughout the province encourage Ontario families to develop and practise good fire safety strategies.

October 8 to 14 is Fire Prevention Week, and it's now well underway in Ontario. This week of special fire safety promotions and events involves the support and participation of fire services throughout the province, the fire marshal's public safety council and our private sector partners.

In 1999, Ontario recorded its lowest fire death rate ever. This year we're on target to reduce the number even further. That means our message is working. Ontarians are taking fire safety seriously; however, one fire death is still one too many.

This year's theme for Fire Prevention Week is Fire Drills: The Great Escape. Having a home escape plan is perhaps the single most important factor in surviving a home fire. I want to encourage everyone to develop and practise a home escape plan, because planning and common sense go hand in hand in avoiding and surviving home fires.

Next month will see the fire marshal's public safety council's annual fire safety awards, where we will honour the contributions of young people who took decisive action to prevent or minimize potentially dangerous fire situations.

We encourage everyone here in the House and throughout the province to join families across North America and take part in the great escape drill tomorrow night at 7 pm. I want everyone to practise their emergency escape and gain peace of mind, knowing that having a home escape plan will help you and your family better survive a home fire.

MPP BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It gives me great pleasure to rise today and speak to the people of Ontario about the MPP back to school program initiated by our leader, Dalton McGuinty, and myself, and which I'm proud to report to this chamber that a majority of members of this House have agreed to take part in. They have agreed, with their average of 30 years out of school, to go back to school.

I think it's an important message to be sending at this time to the people of this province, to the parents of this province and to the students of this province, that there is an ability, a willingness on the part of at least some of the members of this House—what we hope will eventually extend to all of the members of this House—to accept the need to be more informed, to be able to accept the responsibility.

I want to draw in contrast, however, to some of the answers the Minister of Education gave in estimates yesterday. When I asked the Minister of Education, she said that she didn't feel she had any responsibility for the teacher morale problem in this province. We heard from the minister saying that she didn't feel she had any responsibility to do anything about the chaos that's afflicted so many of the schools across the province. For example, we had in the room at estimates students from Rockland school who had come here to talk to the minister, to get some answers about how they can have what they had last year before Bill 74, supported by the members opposite—hopefully, they may change their minds once they go back to school—brought chaos into those schools.

I want to recommend that each person who goes back to school answers this simple question—as I know one of the interns at my office, Miguel, is here—are we better off for five years of changes in education? I think the answer will be very, very clear.

BOWMANVILLE APPLEFEST

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): The time has finally arrived for something that everyone's been waiting for. I want to invite my colleagues not to participate in a classroom exercise so much as to come to my riding of Durham this Saturday, October 14, for Bowmanville's annual apple festival. This popular daylong event is free, which will attract some members, and is located just 45 minutes east of Toronto in the municipality of Clarington. Applefest has grown over the past decade into a favourite, must-see event for many Ontarians, last year attracting over 30,000 people.

I want to thank Bowmanville Business Centre organizers Garth Gilpin, Ron Hooper and probably George Webster, along with the many volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the years to make Applefest a success for the entire family to enjoy.

As I have mentioned before in the House, agriculture is the second-largest industry in Durham. I'd like to take a moment to mention some of the apple growers in my riding of Durham: Charles Stevens, Kirk Kemp, Fred and Sandy Archibald, Ted Watson, Bob and Gail Simpson and Rob Shafer from the famous Tyrone Mill.

Everything from apple cider to the ever-popular hot apple fritters will be on sale, in addition to other treats and entertainment, including professional lumberjack competitions, woodcarving, a chainsaw competition and live entertainment.

The apple festival is one of the many events scheduled in my riding of Durham this fall. I encourage and invite all members to participate. You're welcome in Durham.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We have in the Speaker's gallery a delegation from Pachino in Sicily. Joining us today are some members. Dottore Reale, Marica Cirone, Professor Ignaccolo and Dottore Cimino are here with us today. If all members could join in and welcome our guests here today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr25, An Act to revive 1274187 Ontario Limited.

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

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGH-TECH CAPITAL OF ONTARIO ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LA CAPITALE ONTARIENNE DE LA HAUTE TECHNOLOGIE

Mr Coburn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to proclaim the City of Ottawa as the high-tech capital of Ontario / Projet de loi 126, Loi proclamant la ville d'Ottawa capitale ontarienne de la haute technologie

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Brian Coburn (Ottawa-Orléans): I would like to give a brief background of my bill, and I look forward to a positive debate later this month.

The Ottawa-Carleton region, soon to become the new city of Ottawa on January 1, is widely recognized, indeed virtually universally recognized, as Canada's high-tech capital.

For the first time ever, employment in the technology sector in Ottawa exceeds all other categories, including government. Based on the latest data from the Ottawa Economic Development Corp, the high-tech sector employs over 70,000 people, an increase of an incredible 754% since 1976. Indeed, high-tech companies are experiencing great difficulty in filling roles within their organizations due to the breakneck level of growth.

International powerhouses such as JDS Uniphase, Nortel Networks and Newbridge Networks, along with over 1,000 other companies in this sector—incidentally, the largest such concentration anywhere in Canada—have contributed to Ottawa's rise to the top of the global high-technology centres and earned it the popular nickname, Silicon Valley North.

This bill would recognize these facts in law and would formalize Ottawa's reputation as Ontario's high-tech capital.

I would ask that all members consider this bill, along with the facts, and I look forward to a debate in two weeks' time.

RENT FREEZE ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LE GEL DES LOYERS

Mr Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Tenant Protection Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection des locataires.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): The bill freezes the amount of residential rents for a period of two years. Notices and applications for rent increases to take effect after the bill passes will have no effect. No rent increase will be permitted on renting to a new tenant. Landlords will be required to give new tenants a statement certifying the amount of rent last charged for the unit. Landlords who give false statements or fail to give the statements will be subject to prosecution. Landlords will no longer be permitted to increase the rent charged to the maximum rent allowed when part VI of the Tenant Protection Act, 1997, came into force.

Not just me, but 3.3 million tenants are expecting a fair response from Mr Harris and the other members.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Motions? Statements by ministries? That brings us down to oral questions and the leader of the official opposition.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Speaker, I prefer to think of it as bringing us up to oral questions, rather than down to oral questions.

I want to begin with the Minister of Health today. You may not recognize it as such, but we have a full-blown crisis in our emergency rooms, especially here in the Toronto area. Our ER backlogs have risen steadily every year since 1996. The number of hours that Toronto area hospitals are locking their doors to ambulances has risen 650% in the last five years.

The reason you insist on coming up with your announcements of the month, the reason you continue to tinker around the edges is because you are refusing to admit that you are the cause of the problem. You cut 5,700 beds out of our hospitals, and the fact is quite simply that ambulances have no place to bring their patients to. There is no room inside our hospitals for our ambulance patients.

Madam Minister, when are you going to finally admit that you're the cause of this problem and that you've got to start reopening hospital beds?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): If the Leader of the Opposition would think back some period of time, he will remember that the whole issue of emergency room pressures is a

long-standing problem, not only in this province, but it was also identified last week by all the provincial and territorial health ministers as an issue they wish to address.

In 1998 we decided, for the very first time, to look for solutions to the emergency room pressures, despite the fact that the two previous governments had dealt with the problems but not looked for solutions. I'm very pleased to say that since 1998, in response to the recommendations that have come forward from the hospitals, the doctors, the nurses and the ambulance sector, we have made good progress in addressing emergency issues.

Mr McGuinty: I'm going to ask on behalf of the people of this province, but especially our patients and their families, that you once and for all come clean on this issue. I have here a chart that was presented in evidence at the Joshua Fleuelling inquest. Dr Scholl, a non-partisan, arm's-length expert in these matters, presented this evidence, and it shows quite clearly, if you take a look at this chart, what happened to our emergency department overcrowding. It says that post-restructuring—this is what happened to emergency department overcrowding post-restructuring—it has skyrocketed.

Madam Minister, when are you finally going to take some responsibility for creating the mess that is putting Ontarians at risk? There is no room—I repeat, there is no room—inside our hospitals to admit our ambulance patients because you have shut down hospital beds. What I'm asking you to do is take responsibility, put aside your pride for the moment and start to reopen hospital beds. Why don't you do that?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I said in my first comment, we have been moving forward with a very comprehensive emergency room plan since 1998, when we called the health stakeholders together. At that time, the health stakeholders indicated there was no single problem that could be identified. There were many reasons for the pressures.

But I'm very pleased to say our government has been moving forward. We have opened additional interim long-term-care beds, we have expanded community services, we have added nurses and more physicians to the system, we have increased coordination among the sector and I'm very pleased to say that this year we have added 1,200 beds to the system.

Mr McGuinty: You're not moving forward. You continue to tinker around the edges. The problem here is as clear and as plain as the solution. You cut 5,700 beds out of Ontario hospitals. The result is that when an ambulance brings a patient to the emergency ward, there is no room inside the emergency ward because there is no room upstairs in the hospital. The result is that they are sending them away. We've got ambulance patients on this endless merry-go-round, going from hospital to hospital trying to find room.

Here's another piece of very frightening information. We've now learned that in Toronto it takes an ambulance 54% longer to transport a patient with chest pains to a hospital than it did before this minister started restructuring. That means it's taking seven more minutes from

the time they pick up a patient with chest pains to get them to the hospital, at a time when you will well recognize that time is of the essence; it is critical. Will you set aside your false pride and do the right thing and start to reopen hospital beds?

Hon Mrs Witmer: If the solution were so simple, obviously the Liberals would have looked at that solution when they had the pressures in the late 1980s. But let me indicate that since 1998 our government has moved forward with more than \$620 million in initiatives to improve access to hospital emergency departments. We have added \$100 million as part of the strategy to ease pressure on emergency rooms across the province. We have added \$23 million to implement the 10-point action plan, \$93 million in alternative funding arrangements, \$97 million to fast-track the expansion of emergency rooms in 56 hospitals and \$90 million over four years for transitional relief. I am very pleased to say we are making progress. We are the first government in three—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

1400

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We believe that safe drinking water is the birthright of every Ontarian. This morning we discovered that this government is drafting secret plans that include the active consideration of selling our waterworks to the private sector. Your government is actively considering selling off to the private sector the plants that make our water safe for us to drink and the pipes that distribute that very same water to our homes.

Minister, I want to give you the opportunity, here and now, to disabuse us of this notion. Tell us it isn't so, that this is not true, that you are not in any way considering turning over the infrastructure that delivers safe and clean drinking water to our homes to the private sector at any time.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I don't know what the honourable member is talking about. Sometimes Liberal research does steer him in the wrong direction. I can assure this House that this government is not forcing municipalities to do anything. These are their assets. They have the responsibility locally to deliver the best, the safest and the most efficient services available, and that includes water.

Mr McGuinty: It's obvious from the minister's non-answer that he's not prepared to rule out—you'll have another opportunity shortly, Minister, but right now that answer tells me you are not prepared to rule out selling off waterworks to the private sector.

I understand that you had advisers in from Margaret Thatcher's regime, from England. Those are the people you should not be talking to when it comes to privatization of our water. Look at what happened there: huge increases in water bills, threats to cut off water to entire towns, water to low-income families rationed and, so far,

250 successful prosecutions of water companies since their privatizing experience began.

I'm going to give you another opportunity, Minister. Tell us your government is not now and will at no time during its mandate consider privatizing waterworks.

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member is having difficulty taking no for an answer. I said no. We don't have those plans. It is not our responsibility; it is the ownership and responsibility of municipal governments. We will certainly encourage, as we have always encouraged and as we encouraged last week, the best, the safest, the most efficient and the most accountable service delivery to the taxpayer by the municipalities, but we are not in the business of forcing those municipalities to sell their assets. That's not our responsibility; that's not our role in government. If the honourable member wants us to take part in that responsibility and somehow interfere with municipal responsibility, I would say to this House that he's flip-flopping once again.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, let's cut to the chase. You put our municipalities in a bind. Your government downloaded waterworks on to municipalities, many of which did not have the resources or expertise to deal with it. Now you've decided, "Well, since that system isn't working, we've got to find something else," and instead of taking greater responsibility for delivering safe and clean drinking water to Ontarians, you're about to wash your hands of all responsibility.

Instead of being cute with the answer, will you tell us you are not going to not permit municipalities which find themselves in a terrible bind now, in a terrible predicament into which you have put them, to privatize their water infrastructure in a desperate move?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member is grasping a bit here. In the first part of the question he said we're forcing the municipalities to do one or another thing. In the last part of his question he demands that we interfere with the municipalities' right to look after their own interests on behalf of their own taxpayers, in a way that is accountable to the taxpayers.

We are here setting rules. We have the toughest rules when it comes to water delivery, and the cleanest, safest water supply as a result of Minister Newman's announcements earlier last month. We have those rules; we have the regulatory framework here in Ontario. But it's not our role to say, "Deal with this asset one way or deal with this asset another way." That's up to the municipalities. If municipalities cannot do that on behalf of their own citizens, then why have municipalities in the first place? The honourable member should stay in his own backyard rather than trying to interfere with the municipalities' own responsibilities.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is to the acting Deputy Premier. I've just returned from a shameful scene at city hall. The risky Adams mine dump project is being pushed through. Peaceful protest-

ors, including my leader, Howard Hampton, have been forcefully removed by police, who are taking their names and addresses.

In a shocking betrayal, Mayor Lastman is now opening the door to building a giant incinerator and—get this—dumping the toxic ash in the Adams mine lake. And guess who's been given the rights to own that incinerator and the rights to that ash to dump up north. Why, it's Rail Cycle North, which is about to be bought out by WMI, one of the worst polluters in the USA. Rail Cycle North owns Toronto city council, Rail Cycle North owns Mayor Lastman, and it's pretty obvious that Rail Cycle North owns Premier Mike Harris and your government.

I ask you today, what are you going to do to stop this sellout and to stop this madness?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'm not aware of any group owning Mayor Lastman or anybody else, and as a result we won't be acting upon investigation on that.

Ms Churley: I would suggest to the Deputy Premier that he take this a little bit more seriously. What went down at city council today is absolutely out of the question and shameful. A motion was passed that Rail Cycle North would be allowed to build an incinerator and then dump the toxic ash into the Adams lake. This deal stinks, and you should get it by now. Nothing proves it better than this last-minute creation of a new option for a giant incinerator.

Let me tell you, the people of Toronto don't want a giant incinerator and the people up north do not want toxic ash dumped in a lake, and your so-called environmental assessment did not look at the dumping of toxic, extremely hazardous waste into the lake up there. I would say today that our only hope is that the federal Liberals will call an environment assessment. I have dim hopes for that, but that seems to be our only hope.

You can show leadership today. You can get us out of this mess. Will you say no to incineration and will you say no to dumping toxic waste into a lake in northern Ontario?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I can tell you that the Minister of the Environment has answered this question in various forms for the last couple of weeks, and I think he has conveyed to the member opposite that the Ministry of the Environment, on its part, has ensured that a full environmental assessment was completed in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act. The Minister of the Environment requested that the Environmental Assessment Board review the hydraulic leachate collection and the contaminant system to ensure groundwater contamination would be prevented. Hearings lasted six months and the board attached 26 conditions to the plan. A certificate of approval was issued. After further technical analysis of the project, the certificate carried 66 conditions. Eight independent peer reviews carefully analyzed the details of the plan and submitted their reviews, and the EA approved a judicial review; it went through that stage as well. It's now up to Toronto city council, as the member opposite is fully aware.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Sir, that is not acceptable. You know and I know and northerners know there has never been, at any time, an attempt by the environmental assessment people to take a look at the issue of toxic waste when it comes to what incineration is going to cause. You know it and we know it. I want to know as a northerner, along with the rest of us, what you're going to do as a government to protect the northern environment and ensure there is no toxic waste or any dumping allowed in that Adams mine.

Hon Mr Hodgson: The member opposite wants to raise his voice and yell loudly about this. They know that this is a difficult issue. Their government dealt with garbage for five years and created a tremendous mess right across the province. This project has gone through a number of approval stages in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act. Experts have looked at this, people who have looked at the facts, and the city of Toronto, as you know, is considering this matter as we speak.

1410

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. Now that it's official—farm manure runoff tainted Walkerton's water; we know that now—the ball is in your court to table farm legislation immediately, just like you promised. You promised to bring in legislation last spring, and we have discovered in fact that you've been true to your word. You had legislation ready to roll as early as last June, but you never tabled it. That legislation was rejected by your cabinet colleagues. They killed the bill, and then your government stalled and stammered through a summer of inaction. Enough stalling, Minister. Will you table that legislation, which we know exists, today?

Hon Ernie Hardeman (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): I want to thank the member for the question and I want to assure the member opposite that the quality of the water and public health is of utmost importance not only to this government but to the Ministry of Agriculture and to the farmers of this province.

As I mentioned before, we started a consultation process as early as last January on how to deal with manure management in the province coming from our farms. We did a complete process in travelling the province. My parliamentary assistant, Dr Galt, and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment consulted far and wide in the province. They had many presentations on what we should be doing. They prepared a report, which I received. With that review and report, we put forward a proposal to the stakeholders in the province as to how we should deal not only with the report but with the handling of nutrient management in the province. We are preparing that legislation and we will be bringing it

forward in the very near future for discussion in this chamber.

Ms Churley: Minister, I ask you, where is the bill? Your draft legislation made it around farming circles. We know that. People read it. They saw that you had legislation ready to go in June, but you didn't act on it. Instead, you allowed a summer of finger-pointing in a ruthless attempt to duck the blame for your government's inaction around water safety.

All people are asking you, and farmers are asking the same thing, is for simple legislation to ensure proper nutrient management practices on our farms. After yesterday's statements about the cause of what happened in Walkerton, I cannot believe your answer today. Minister, I'm baffled. Why on earth didn't you, and why won't you, stand up to your Premier and to the rest of your cabinet and push forward that legislation that could save lives? Will you tell us today that you will do that immediately?

Hon Mr Hardeman: I want to point out that this is not an issue of who stands up to whom. This is an issue of trying to get the information and to design the best possible way of handling the nutrients in our farm community.

I would like to point out for all in the chamber and for the farmers and the people of Ontario that in fact the doctor yesterday did not say that this was the fault of improper management of nutrients on the farm. What was said is that there is a problem with the security of the groundwater wells that were there.

I can assure the member opposite that we will be working with the farm community, as we have been. As recently as September 23, the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and I met with all the stakeholders, including the environmental groups, to have further discussions on what was required in order to have proper nutrient management in the province. I can assure the member opposite that as quickly as we can prepare that legislation, we will be bringing it forward for discussion in this chamber.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Mr Speaker, we were told the Minister of the Environment would be here by 2:15. I was just wondering if he has arrived yet.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock for a quick moment. Chief government whip?

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): He won't be here, Speaker.

The Speaker: You can go to the acting Deputy Premier.

Mr Ramsay: Deputy Premier, as you know, yesterday Dr Murray McQuigge, the medical officer of health of Walkerton, basically said that Walkerton was a wake-up call with respect to the water that comes from the deep-drilled wells throughout Ontario, which supply the drinking water for many Ontarians.

As you probably know, in areas such as yours, and in mine in Timiskaming district, many of the towns and rural farms derive their water from deep-water wells—thousands of people in the Timiskaming district. But you're willing and allowing Toronto to dump 20 million tonnes of their garbage over the next 20 years in our biggest and deepest well, the Adams mine. This well sits upstream of all those deep-water wells feeding those towns and individuals on those farms.

Why, after this wake-up call and this warning and the tragedy of Walkerton, are you still allowing this to happen?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I think the member opposite knows that everyone in this House and all the people of Ontario share the concern to make sure our water is absolutely safe. As a result, when any proposal comes forward, especially one of this magnitude—as you've heard from the Minister of the Environment for the last couple of weeks when you've asked these questions, this process went through an environmental assessment in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act.

The Minister of the Environment requested that the Environmental Assessment Board review the hydraulic leachate collection and containment system to ensure that groundwater contamination would be prevented. The hearings lasted six months and the board attached 26 conditions to the plan. A certificate of approval was issued after further technical analysis of the project, and the certificate carried 66 conditions. Also, eight independent peer reviews carefully analyzed the details of the plan and submitted their reviews. This also went through a judicial review, and as you know, it's before the city of Toronto as we speak.

Mr Ramsay: Minister, the actions of this government don't match your words. We're still being very cavalier with our water supply in this province. As you now have found out, Toronto city council voted this morning to send toxic ash from any future incinerator and put it in the Adams mine lake. Incineration, as you know, concentrates all the heavy metals and other toxins from household waste, thereby allowing a much greater quantity of poison to be mixed with our groundwater.

Minister, why is Toronto so confidently contracting to put toxic waste in the Adams mine when I believe the certificate of approval only allows for household waste to be put there? Or have you made some sort of side deal with Notre Development?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'll bring that up with the Minister of the Environment, but I can assure you that the this government will make sure that the certificate of approval and the Environmental Assessment Act are complied with and fulfilled.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I have a question for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In this century, Minister, we have the challenge of mak-

ing sure we have the best accommodation and service for long-term care for our seniors and for our most vulnerable, the disabled. I noted recently that the Ministry of Health and you announced a new initiative to fast-track and facilitate the requirements for long-term-care facilities across Ontario. I would like to know how this initiative is going to improve the state-of-the-art facilities of long-term care and how this initiative will ensure really effective quality of long-term care in Ontario.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member probably knows, in 1998 our government announced 20,000 new long-term-care beds to be constructed over the next six years. Those were the first long-term-care beds to be awarded in over 10 years. I'm very pleased to say that 14,500 of those are under construction and the last 5,500 to which the member refers are soon going to be awarded through an RFP process.

The new process will ensure that the beds are built two years ahead of schedule in that people will be required to have an option on land or to actually own land. They will also need to demonstrate that they have the financial resources and will be capable of undertaking that type of construction and having the project completed on time.

1420

Mr Hastings: My supplementary relates to the community care access centres which the minister has voiced some concern about recently. She has announced, I believe, a program review of these CCACs. What I would like know is, how does the program review in terms of overall objectives fit in, in a synergistically complementary way, with the announcement on the long-term care and, fundamentally, how does this government's position contrast with the so-called alleged interests—if they have positions—of the parties opposite, especially the “gliberals”?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think it's very important to appreciate that the delivery of health services throughout Canada today, and probably throughout the world, is quite different than it was 10 years ago. In fact, today many of the health problems that patients face are dealt with through the long-term care system and are dealt with through the community care access centres. Of course, we also have our hospitals and our primary care networks. So it's very important that we have an integration of these services and that they be coordinated and that there be good communication.

I'm pleased to say that if we take a look at our community care access centres, which did increase the access to these services by creating one-stop shopping, we are doing a review to make sure that the services are provided in the very best way possible. We also want to identify the program's strengths and take a look at where there may be some opportunities for improvement.

COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Attorney General. In April 1999, a

madman with a gun walked into the OC Transpo warehouse and shot and killed four people. The people of Ottawa thought that it would be appropriate and only right that, in the circumstances, through their duly elected municipal representatives, they provide some compensation to the families of these victims and so asked that the municipal council provide each family with \$100,000 as compensation for being victims of this terrible crime. They thought it would be appropriate. They might need it to help them keep their houses or send the kids off to university.

Just recently, we have learned that the Mike Harris-appointed Ottawa Transition Board has reversed this decision. They called the Ottawa council decision a "gratuitous" decision. You tell us that you and your government are going to stand up for victims of crime. I'm asking you on behalf of those four families to, first of all, condemn the decision of the transition board and second, order that board to reverse their decision.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the leader of the official opposition for the question. The incidents to which he has referred were very serious tragic incidents in Ottawa and terrible consequences, of course, for the families of the victims. As you know, we've put victims first in Ontario. We introduced the bill just last week in the Legislature to statutorily create the Office for Victims of Crime. In the bill that my colleague the Chair of the Management Board introduced on red tape last week, there is an increase in the compensation available for victims of crime to raise the maximum to in excess of \$300,000, a change that has not been made, I might add, since 1986.

These are important initiatives. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is there to compensate victims of crime in Ontario and their families, as the Leader of the Opposition knows.

Mr McGuinty: Here is a very, very specific case. Let's remove ourselves from the abstract and focus on the specific. There are four families: the families of Harry Schoenmakers, Brian Guay, Clare Davidson and David Lemay. They were promised by the people of Ottawa through their duly elected municipal council that we would help them to the extent of \$100,000 to each family.

Do you know how the widow of David Lemay found out about your transition board's decision to reverse this? She heard it on the radio. They didn't have the decency and the courtesy to pick up the phone and notify these families that they were going to undercut the will of the people of Ottawa to help out genuine victims of crime.

You say you're for victims of crime. Here's an opportunity to prove it. Stand up now and tell us that you are going to order this transition board to reverse its decision, and you can describe them for all of us as being callous and cold-hearted.

Hon Mr Flaherty: As the Leader of the Opposition will know, his question is directed to municipal affairs.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): The honourable Leader of the Opposition

has displayed a considerable amount of emotion here this afternoon. It's an emotion that I think we share on both sides of the House, in terms of the victims and their families.

It is a fact that the city council made a motion. It is a fact that the transition board weighed in on this and came to a conclusion that was different from the city council's. It is a fact that we will have municipal elections across this province on November 13 and that the new city council will take its place on January 1, and I suspect this will be a continuing issue of local concern in the new city of Ottawa as well.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr Bob Wood (London West): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. It concerns Ontario government funding for programs for people with developmental disabilities. More is being done for these people than ever before in the history of our province, but there is much more that can and should be done so that these people can participate to the fullest possible extent in the life of our province. What does the minister see is the future direction of funding for these services: up, no change or down?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): All of us in this House recognize the tremendous challenges facing people in our community with developmental disabilities, even the problems within this sector, and there is a real recognition that we, collectively as a society, have a tremendously important responsibility to provide supports to those vulnerable people in our community.

In my judgment, the future direction for this sector will require additional funds. That's why this government committed \$35 million in new funding last year and a further increase of \$50 million this year.

We've got to address the challenges of aging parents, who need some confidence that there will be care for their loved ones when they are no longer able to provide it; more services for young people leaving our school system; indeed more employment supports to allow every person with a developmental disability to deal with the challenge of finding employment; and day programming and supports.

Mr Wood: I know those involved will find that answer to be very good news indeed.

The minister is aware of the southwest regional centre and some of the concerns that have been expressed about its future. What assurance can he give the centre's residents and their families that they will continue to receive the services they need and that the province will continue to fund them?

Hon Mr Baird: Obviously, we have a tremendous responsibility to individuals living in the three remaining institutions in Ontario. All three political parties, and indeed the last four or five governments, have strongly

supported community living. But to the member opposite who may have constituents with family members, loved ones and friends at the southwest regional centre, we will obviously take the time to consult and look at the future after the last community living initiative expired in March this year. Obviously we'll want to ensure that supports continue to be in place.

I did notice in the London Free Press this week that Murray Hamilton, the executive director of Community Living London, said, "More than 1,000 people have left facilities in southwestern Ontario in the last 20 years.... In my judgment they are all doing quite well. I think their quality of life has improved very significantly. They have more independence than they've had." Indeed, that's the standard to which we'll want to strive in any reforms in this sector to provide services for these vulnerable friends, citizens, neighbours and co-workers.

HOME CARE

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, I want to ask you to put patients first and to end the competitive bidding process for homemaking services.

This is the latest example of how patient care is suffering under your failed scheme. I have recently learned that Sarnia-Lambton VON homemakers have been directed to deduct travel time from the time they spend with patients. Let me be clear about that. If it takes a half an hour to get from patient X to patient Y, they've been told to leave patient X's house 15 minutes early and to arrive at patient Y's house 15 minutes late. That means if a person is entitled to an hour of care, they're going to get 45 minutes. A real example: a homemaker who has to travel from Sarnia to Camlachie every morning to deal with helping in personal care support a teenage paraplegic get ready for the day has been instructed to take that half an hour it takes to drive from Sarnia to Camlachie off the time spent with that teenager. That teenager needs an hour to get ready to face the day. He is entitled to an hour of CCAC care funded by the government. He's getting a half an hour because the homemaker has to be covered for half an hour's travel.

You said competitive bidding would lead to innovation. Is this what you mean by innovation in health care?

1430

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The CCACs in the province of Ontario this year will be delivering care to approximately 420,000 people. I think it's important to understand that the money that is provided to the CCACs and the services they provide to the people in this province are totally funded by the province. We have certainly the most well funded system in all of Canada. It is the most generous home care system. In fact, we are one of only a few provinces that even makes this available. I can assure you that we are reviewing the system, but certainly it is a generous system.

We have recently added \$92 million to the system in order to expand the provision of services, and we will

continue to provide even more additional funding in the future.

Ms Lankin: Minister, this teenager, who happens to be a paraplegic and needs and is entitled to support, and is eligible for an hour's support, is getting half an hour under your competitive bidding scheme. Your competitive bidding scheme is driving down wages and it is driving down quality of care. Not-for-profits like the VON, like the SPRINT workers here in Toronto who are out on strike, the CCAC workers in Hamilton who are out on strike, are all underbidding to get their contracts in this new system of yours. Don't you understand that when they're up against a financial bind to deliver service, that money is coming out of the care for patients and it's coming out on the backs of workers?

This review that you've announced for competitive bidding is being exposed by everyone as a complete sham. It's closed door, it's backroom, it's between you and the service providers and the CCACs. Why don't you invite the SPRINT workers who are here today to the table to talk about this? Why don't you invite the CCAC workers in Hamilton, the VON workers in Sarnia? This crisis is spreading across the province. If you think your announcement about emergencies is going to solve the problem, you're going to have them stacked up like cord wood, because these people aren't going to be there in the community to deliver the service.

You don't need a review. You need to do the right thing: just put an end to competitive bidding in home care services.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would just remind the member opposite that in this province we do have the most generous home care system. We are funding individuals to the tune of about \$128 per capita. Our service levels are as high or higher than any other province in Canada. In fact, six of 10 jurisdictions in Canada charge a co-payment for personal care and homemaking services. I'm also pleased to say that \$488 million will be going to community services this year.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister, take a seat. I'm afraid we'll have to ask our guest to leave.

I believe the Minister of Health had the floor.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, I would just like to indicate that in this province we have a home care service we can be very proud of. It is among the most generous; in fact, it is the most generous in all of Canada. It is totally funded by the government. I would just like to indicate that this past month we have added \$92.5 million to the community services that we've made available.

COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I want to return to the Attorney General, the self-proclaimed champion of victims' rights here in Ontario. Minister, there are four families in the Ottawa area who have a loved one who is not coming home. Their parents and loved ones were shot dead in April of last year.

These are truly, sincerely and genuinely victims of a terrible crime.

You tell us you stand up for victims of crime in Ontario. I'm asking you to do that right here and now. The people of Ottawa want to turn over some of their money. We're not even talking here about the province's money; we're talking about money that the people of Ottawa want to give to our victims of crime. I'm asking you, on behalf of those families, Minister, why won't you condemn the decision of the Mike Harris transition team, and why won't you order them to reverse their terrible, cold and callous decision?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): As I indicated in my previous answer, our concern for victims in Ontario is made plain by the fact that this is the government that first created an Office for Victims of Crime in Ontario, which we're now statutorily creating if the bill before the House passes. We have also moved forward with increasing the maximum monetary jurisdiction of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which hasn't been done since 1986 under the Liberal government or under the NDP government from 1990 to 1995.

If the families to which the Leader of the Opposition refers have not applied to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, then I'd be pleased to inform them about the rights they have in that regard. If that's the member's information, I wish he'd tell me that.

Mr McGuinty: It's obvious that when the going gets tough, this minister is absolutely weak-kneed when it comes to standing up for victims of crime in Ontario.

I'm asking you, Minister, to have the intestinal fortitude to roundly criticize your transition team for reneging on a deal that was put together by the people of Ottawa. I'm asking you to stand up for victims of crime. Here is a real test of your commitment. You are all talk and no action when it comes to standing up for victims of crime. We in Ottawa decided that the right thing to do in the circumstances was to help these families by giving them each \$100,000. In the circumstances, it is nothing in the grand scheme of things, but it's the least we might do. Minister, I'm asking you to stand up for those victims, stand up to the transition board, roundly criticize them and order them to reverse their cold and callous decision.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition knows, since he's a lawyer, that the power to make that kind of order lies with the new city of Ottawa council, not with the province of Ontario. The member, being from Ottawa and being a lawyer, knows that.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition's information is that these families have not applied for or received the compensation to which they're likely entitled, through the government of Ontario, through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which I think we all support as members in this House, then I'd appreciate if he'd pass that information on to me and I'll do everything we can to make sure the families access the funds to which they're likely entitled under the criminal injuries legislation in Ontario.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for my honourable friend the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I would expect that most members of this House would agree with me that all levels of government should be examining their policies and procedures which help to ensure that our drinking water is clean and safe and that we all have a stake in making certain that there is public confidence in our water supply.

In the wake of the Walkerton tragedy, this has been a challenge for all of us. My riding of Waterloo-Wellington is less than 33 kilometres from Walkerton and, as such, I share many of the views of my colleague the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound that vigilant efforts are needed to, as much as humanly possible, make sure that this kind of catastrophe never happens again.

1440

There are many communities in Ontario, and indeed in Waterloo-Wellington, which lack the financial resources necessary to upgrade their sewer and water systems. The government recognized this reality in the summer with the announcement of the Ontario small town and rural development infrastructure program. Will the minister inform the House about this new initiative?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I would certainly thank the honourable member for Waterloo-Wellington for the question and say that of course it's our job as the provincial government to set the rules and to ensure that they are enforced. But it is the job of municipalities to deliver water and sewer services, to make sure that the facilities are up to standard and that the water in their communities is actually safe. Of course, it's everyone's responsibility to use our resources wisely and to conserve water when we can.

On August 8, I was pleased to participate, along with the Premier and Minister Newman, when our government announced Operation Clean Water. Under this program there is a new set of standards initiated to improve water quality and delivery across the province.

On August 10, I was pleased to announce that the province was committing \$240 million over the next two years through OSTAR, the Ontario small town and rural development initiative program, to help municipalities meet and comply with the new regulations under Operation Clean Water. Applications are out there. They were due October 6, and the municipalities have been very responsive to that initiative.

Mr Arnott: I want to thank the minister for his response and thank the Minister of the Environment for his support of this important program as well. However, it has been my contention for some time that a more significant investment is required in this area and that a minimum of \$500 million should be allocated for the purpose of helping small municipalities upgrade their sewer and water systems.

I have read published reports that the government is negotiating with the federal government to assist us in

this regard, largely based on the model of the joint federal-provincial-municipal infrastructure program of a few years ago. In this way, we could expect that our \$240-million provincial investment would be matched with an equal contribution from the federal government.

We know that considerable resources are needed. For example, in my riding the town of Minto alone is projecting a multi-million dollar price tag to comply with the new Ontario drinking water protection regulations.

Will the minister advise the House on the status of these negotiations with the federal government in light of today's published reports that the federal surplus may exceed \$121 billion over the next five years?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member is quite correct. Indeed, the Ontario government is fighting hard for Ontario communities to get their fair share of federal funding to match the province's OSTAR contribution.

The government has also asked the Ontario Super-Build board of directors to work with the ministries of environment, municipal affairs and housing, agriculture and rural affairs, northern development and mines, and other municipalities and public and private stakeholders to bring a long-term water and sewer investment and financing strategy.

We each have a role to play to ensure that we have reliable and safe infrastructure. We each need to show leadership, to set priorities, to be accountable for the decisions that we make. We all need to bring some new ideas to the table as we look for better, more efficient ways and safer ways to deliver our services. We each have our job to do, and if everybody does their job, we can meet this challenge head-on and indeed succeed.

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I have a question today for the Minister of Transportation, or, as he's increasingly known here in the GTA, the minister of gridlock.

Ontario Liberals believe the province of Ontario has a role to play in the development of an integrated transportation system for the GTA. In fact, Toronto is the only region in all of the industrialized world that receives no benefit from its senior level of government.

Recently, to try to address some of the problems with gridlock, GO Transit introduced an innovative bus service from Oakville to Markham. That service, Minister, as you well know, uses Highway 407. One of the impediments that our public transit system has encountered is a \$50,000 annual operating fee to use the 407.

Last week, the Greater Toronto Services Board transportation committee passed the following resolution, "The transportation committee recommends that the province of Ontario exempt GO Transit buses and all other public transportation vehicles from toll fees on all highways in the province of Ontario."

Minister, will you stop being an impediment to those who are struggling to reduce gridlock? Will you exempt the GO buses from fees on the 407?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): It's an interesting discussion as to the fact that we don't fund transit. In point of fact, during local services realignment we reallocated funding. We uploaded to the province half of the cost of residential taxes for education. That created \$2.5 billion worth of tax room for the municipalities. One of the specific areas that was to be a responsibility of the municipalities was transit. If municipalities want to renegotiate this deal, we have said we're prepared to talk, but it has to be a revenue-neutral transaction. To date, since we've signalled that, there isn't a single municipality that has come back to us and suggested how they would square that equation.

Mr Smitherman: We've heard this answer from this one-trick pony before. I'm going to go back to the Minister of Transportation and I'm going to give him a chance to focus on the question at hand. The question at hand is with respect to Highway 407 and the costs that were incurred there. Was there any attempt on the part of your ministry to defend the interests of public transit users in the greater Toronto area, who are struggling against all odds and against your government to unlock the problem with gridlock? Mr Minister, will you review the situation that sees GO Transit paying exorbitant fees to use highway 407 as they attempt to give better service to 905 residents? Will you review this, and will you commit to exempting public transit users on the 407 from these fees?

Hon Mr Turnbull: The 407 is a privately owned road. They have a 99-year operating lease. In fact, we have reserved for the province the right to put transitway in at a later date. With respect to municipal transit buses electing to use the 407, that's a decision of the operating organizations that you're speaking about. We have no ability to direct the private operator of that road, who is spending half a billion dollars in expanding that road at no cost to the taxpayer. We sold the highway at considerable profit to all of the taxpayers of this province.

GOOD NEIGHBOURS PROGRAM

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Neighbours helping neighbours is the hallmark of a strong community. In my own riding this Friday, I will be proudly honouring some unsung heroes nominated by their neighbours. They volunteered at food banks, initiated an adopt-a-grandparent program in elementary and secondary schools and developed a buddy system for seniors. What is the government doing to encourage individual Ontarians to reach out and help others in their communities?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I'd like to thank the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for the question. Let me say that this week, October 9 to October 15, is Good Neighbours Week in the province. During this week, we're celebrating all of the good deeds and generosity that Ontarians

show to one another, the helping hands that they give one another.

Let me say that this is the 10th year of the Good Neighbours awards, the Good Neighbours celebrations in Ontario. The program encourages people to lend a hand to their neighbours, to their communities, to people who are vulnerable, who may have disabilities, who have illnesses and who need help in their communities.

As of today, we have 32 active Good Neighbours councils in our communities. We have 26 community councils under development. I'm proud to say that seven new councils have been formed in northern Ontario.

1450

Mr Tascona: Government, business and individual Ontarians share in the responsibility to make Ontario's communities safe places to live, work and raise a family. How is the government working in partnership with other sectors to encourage Good Neighbours?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say that working in partnership is the short answer to that. The Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation works closely with the Good Neighbours Trust and the Good Neighbours council to encourage Good Neighbours communities. The Good Neighbours Trust is a group of private and non-profit organizations, including the Royal Bank of Canada and Enbridge Consumers Gas. They focus on fundraising for this program. The trust has generated more than \$250,000 in cash and in-kind services to help Good Neighbours communities all across this wonderful province.

Ontario's quality of life is rooted in our ability to care for one another, to be kind to one another. I believe that the Good Neighbours program and the Good Neighbours Trust and our corporate partners ensure that this happens—that we have safe communities, that we have communities that involve volunteers, that we encourage local initiatives and we strengthen our communities. Good Neighbours—please celebrate this week.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health, and it's regarding her complete mismanagement of air ambulance contracts. On September 13, your government announced it was going to privatize critical-care paramedics. On September 20, your government issued notices to all 35 paramedics that they had five days to decide if they would continue to work for a private operator, even though they don't know who that will be, or take a severance package and leave the public service altogether. All 35 decided to leave the public service.

At the same time that this was happening, Mr Derek Tupling, who is on your political staff, was saying the following: that the government will be asking for bids from the private sector over the next few weeks but it may also decide to maintain the current system.

Minister, you gave people five days to decide what to do, and they have left the public service. As a result, we

have lost the skills of 35 highly qualified advance-care paramedics. How can you possibly justify how this has been so completely mismanaged?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I think it's important to put this into perspective, and the perspective is that air ambulances and ambulances in this province have been owned and operated by private companies since the 1970s. I think it's also important to note that if we take a look at air ambulances today, 70% of all the staff presently are already employed by private operators.

So what the ministry is doing right now is taking a look at that part of the air ambulance system that involves the critical-care transport staffing. I do want to stress that no decisions have been made concerning this matter. The RFPs will require bidders to submit two proposals: one for provision of pilots, aircraft and maintenance only; and the other for pilots, aircraft and maintenance plus critical-care transport staff.

The current contract with the providers of critical-care transport, rotary-wing and fixed-wing air ambulances ends on September 30, 2001. The objective of the RFPs is to establish the highest quality, best price.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Minister, you talk about trying to put things into perspective. The reality is that air paramedics have been, for the duration of these contracts, public sector employees. You have taken the entire air paramedic system and put it completely into chaos. You went to them and said, "You have five days by which to accept either a severance package or take your chances that we will not privatize the air paramedics." They took you at your word. They've accepted, all 35 of them, that severance package, and now, as a result, we're losing all 35 highly skilled, highly devoted and motivated air paramedics. You are creating a crisis. We want to know from you simply, how can you justify your mismanagement of what is a quality air paramedic system in this province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I don't think the member opposite heard the original comment, which was to indicate that at the present time 70% of the staff that are employed by the air ambulance system are already part of the private system and they are employed by private operators. We are issuing two RFPs, and we are following through, as required under the contract.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Ontario Legislature, and it concerns northerners demanding the Harris government eliminate the health care apartheid it is presently practising.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents

per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation; and

“Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location; and

“Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding; and

“Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

“Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario.”

Of course, I proudly affix my signature to this petition.

INVESTIGATION INTO CHILD ABUSE

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

“Whereas Garry Guzzo, MPP, Ottawa West-Nepean, has brought forward Bill 103, 2000, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry to inquire into the investigations by police forces for sexual abuse against minors in the Cornwall area; and

“Whereas Bill 103, 2000, has the public support of John Cleary, member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh,

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

“To enact Bill 103, Inquiry into Police Investigations of Sexual Abuse Against Minors in the Cornwall Area Act, 2000.”

I have also signed that petition.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I have some people standing between me and the people I want to recognize and I won't have it. I can't have you standing between me and somebody who's going to speak.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition regarding this government's ongoing discrimination against northern cancer patients. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners

who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

“Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

“Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province;

“Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and to eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario.”

This petition is signed by many residents from my riding. I agree with them and I'd like to thank Gerry Loughheed Jr for all his work on this issue.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is signed by dozens more of my concerned constituents and I affix my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

1500

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Thank you very much for permitting me to read this petition. It is addressed to the Minister of Education and Training. This is probably wrong, but I have to read this into the record because it was given to me.

"We believe that the heart of education in our province is the relationship between student and teacher and that this human and relational dimension should be maintained and extended in any proposed reform. As Minister of Education you should know how strongly we oppose many of the secondary school reform recommendations being proposed by your ministry and by your government.

"We recognize and support the need to review secondary education in Ontario. The proposal for reform as put forward by your ministry, however, is substantially flawed in several key areas: (a) reduced instructional time, (b) reduction of instruction in English, (c) reduction of quality teaching personnel, (d) academic work experience credit not linked to education curriculum, and (e) devaluation of formal education.

"We therefore strongly urge your ministry to delay the implementation of secondary school reform so that all interested stakeholders—parents, students, school councils, trustees and teachers—are able to participate in a more meaningful consultation process which will help ensure that a high quality of publicly funded education is provided."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm delighted to sign my name to it.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to a pass to leave prison"—I might say for the record here that it's actually out west now—"with an escort; and

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

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

"That the government of Ontario will:

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

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

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

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

This was brought forward by Marilyn Mushinski, the MPP for Scarborough Centre. I commend her for her work.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the member for the new GM V-6 engine plant, the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you very much for mentioning that, Mr Speaker. It's very kind of you and very good news for the residents of St Catharines today.

This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I am in complete agreement.

The Deputy Speaker: Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): You've recognized the wrong person.

Mr Bradley: Mr Speaker: This is a point of order on a petition. I heard a petition the member for Durham was reading, and I wondered if he had seen this headline, which no doubt you have seen, that says, "Tories Stand by Deal with the Devil." I just wondered if you had seen this and if the member had seen this.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. Further petitions?

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and I'd like to read it in the House today.

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is a very important petition, one that has taken up much of the time of the Legislature in questions of the ministers. I wholeheartedly agree with it and I will affix my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Mr Wood, on behalf of Mr Hodgson, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to reduce red tape, to promote good government through better management of Ministries and agencies and to improve customer service by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting two new Acts / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives, à promouvoir un bon gouvernement par une meilleure gestion des ministères et organismes et à améliorer le service à la clientèle en modifiant ou abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant deux nouvelles lois.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I'll be sharing my time with the members for Scarborough Centre, Guelph-Wellington and Northumberland.

What is red tape? The Pythagorean theorem revolutionized geometry, and it's 26 words long. The Gettysburg address, in which Abraham Lincoln effectively ended slavery and transformed a nation, is 286 words long. That's not red tape. The United States Department of Agriculture regulation on how to provide a safe cabbage is 26,911 words long. That's red tape. How do you take 26,911 words to make sure people get a safe cabbage?

As a lawyer coming from a profession with some 10,000 years of experience in creating and maintaining red tape, I can explain. You ask for information not needed to provide a safe cabbage. You use 10 words when one will do. You make people do things that have nothing to do with a safe cabbage. You make the wording complicated. You repeat, repeat and repeat again.

What's the net result of red tape? Well, in France it effectively takes six weeks to incorporate a simple company. In Ontario it takes one to two days.

1510

Our definition of red tape is any process or procedure we put you through as a citizen, as a business, or put one of our public servants through, that is not absolutely required to achieve an identified public objective. That's red tape. It does not in any way weaken health, safety or environmental protections. Our goal is to eliminate everything but the absolutely essential and to make Ontario the best jurisdiction in the world for regulatory excellence. It's a difficult, time-consuming, challenging and exciting job, and it's also absolutely essential to good service for our citizens and economic growth for the province. Even our friends in France—the socialist government of France has established a red tape commission.

Since the founding of our commission in 1995, it has helped some 170 people and businesses with individual red tape problems. It has undertaken extensive consultation on red tape issues and co-ordinated the preparation and passage of 13 red tape reduction laws. It has helped to revoke 1,300 outdated regulations and helped improve many regulatory processes.

How are we going to continue this work? We're going to do it by continuing our Ombudsman function. As the House knows, when we receive a complaint, we have our civil servants deal with the civil servants in the ministry involved. If that doesn't achieve a satisfactory resolution, the commission deals with the minister's office and, if necessary, the minister directly. If that fails, we seek guidance from our boss, who is of course the Premier of Ontario.

I would like to invite everyone in the House today, or everyone who is not here but a member of the House, and every citizen of this province to let us help you where you see a red tape problem. We're also looking to get as many new red-tape-cutting ideas as possible and implement them. We need ideas from citizens, we need them

from business, we need them from other jurisdictions and we need them from our own public service.

We are working, as you may be aware, to develop a business impact test to find out what regulations cost the government and hopefully what they cost businesses and the public as well. We are hopeful of having at least one, and hopefully two, red tape bills each year in the Legislature in order to cut red tape. The bill before you today is of course one of those bills.

We also, by the way, want to make sure that our government forms and form systems are 21st-century-friendly: the clearest, simplest and most efficient possible. To that end, we have a subcommittee of the commission working with some of the bureaucrats at Management Board who are tasked with actually making this happen. They are going to work very closely with the Service Ontario and Ontario Business Connects projects in the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations in order to achieve far better service and far faster service for the people of this province.

One example, by the way, of what can be achieved in terms of better service has already happened in my county of Middlesex, which is the first place in the world to achieve full electronic land registration. That system gives us a working model of what can be achieved by processing information electronically. Not only is it providing everything we expected in terms of faster service and less cost for those operating the system and for those using the system, it also is generating some side benefits, such as even the lawyers cutting out some of the paperwork to get the job done.

This bill offers the latest legislative proposals we've received to cut red tape in some 15 ministries. If passed, it would remove two unused acts from the books and streamline 75 acts to provide improved customer service and more efficient government.

Some examples of what this bill does are:

It eliminates the requirement to apply for a change of name within 90 days of marriage.

It protects consumers by prohibiting the charging of significant upfront fees by credit repair companies for services that consumers can do for themselves at little or no cost.

It provides insurance benefits to volunteer auxiliary police officers if they are injured while providing service.

It enhances the Niagara Escarpment Commission's ability to issue stop-work orders regarding unapproved developments.

Red tape reduction is about making it easier, faster and less expensive for both business and the public when dealing with government; encouraging investment in Ontario by breaking down barriers to conduct and manage business; simplifying processes to reduce overlap with other legislation and improving overall efficiency and customer service; and finally, harmonizing and modernizing legislation among ministries.

Cutting red tape is essential to giving better service to our citizens and attracting investment and jobs to Ontario. I urge all members to support this bill.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this House today in support of continued red tape reduction. I'm very pleased to be speaking on the Red Tape Reduction Act, 2000, introduced by my colleague, Minister Chris Hodgson, just one week ago on October 4.

Since that time, I have had the opportunity to review this act, and I can honestly say that I believe it is one of the finest pieces of legislation I have had the pleasure to support in this House in the past five years.

We all know that the battle to eliminate red tape continues. We know that this act and its predecessors and other acts to follow will eliminate the red tape that has been building up in this province for over 100 years. We made some commitments going into the election in 1995, and again in 1999, that we are determined to make Ontario one of the best jurisdictions for regulatory excellence in the world.

This particular bill contains a number of minor technical and administrative amendments that will vastly improve customer service and government efficiency by improving standards and providing greater protection to consumers and other individuals.

For example, changes to the Consumer Reporting Act will improve protection for consumers from credit repair agencies who try to charge up front for fixing a credit rating but don't deliver on that promise.

Some proposals strengthen environmental protection, something that I know we all desire in this House.

Another example: the bill contains new legislation, and that's the Environmental Review Tribunal Act. This new legislation formalizes the 1997 merger of the former Environmental Assessment Board and the former Environmental Appeal Board.

Now, it shouldn't surprise you that all of this red tape that has been created over the years was largely created by the two previous governments to the point that they created all of these, some would say duplicitous as well as duplicate, agencies, which not only tripled red tape but contributed to the substantial deficit we inherited, to the tune of \$11.8 billion in 1995.

Under this new red tape reduction legislation, the boards can now share a physical location and they can share staff, resources and members as well. There has been no substantial change to the procedures of the previous boards, but what has changed is that the process has become much simpler.

Additionally, the Ministry of Natural Resources has a number of positive proposals, including changes to the Forestry Act that provide greater flexibility to respond to pest outbreaks, something that I know we on this side of the House have been looking for for a long, long time.

1520

The goal of all these red tape reduction bills is to really streamline administration so business can meet standards and spend less time jumping through administrative hoops. Business can concentrate on what to do best: fuelling the economy and creating jobs. Businesses can get started, create more jobs and operate successfully in Ontario without having to worry about excessive red

tape. Business and the public will find that it is easier, cheaper and faster to deal with government when troublesome red tape is eliminated or reduced.

Investment in Ontario will be encouraged when barriers to establishing, conducting and managing businesses are eliminated or reduced. Harmonized and modernized legislation will be created among ministries. Overlapping legislation will be reduced, and overall efficiency and customer service will improve in government.

This bill represents the cumulative effort of 15 ministries that have identified red tape within their policies and programs or have had problems identified by their stakeholders. I am particularly proud of the achievements of the Red Tape Commission, headed by the great member for London West, a good colleague. I was very pleased when the Premier appointed me to this commission in the summer of this year. I can attest to the magnificent leadership of my colleague the member for London West.

We have passed 12 red tape reduction bills since 1995. They have eliminated 33 outdated acts and amended more than 200 others.

Here are a few more of our achievements.

In 1997, the Red Tape Commission produced a report with 132 recommendations to eliminate red tape, based on consultations with business, institutions and individuals. The Red Tape Commission developed a regulatory impact and competitiveness test approved and used by cabinet to prevent the creeping introduction of new red tape. The Red Tape Commission coordinated the introduction and passage of 12 red tape reduction bills: 33 acts have been repealed and more than 200 acts amended. The commission coordinated the spring 2000 red tape reduction bill that contained an additional 300 amendments.

The commission has worked with ministries to revoke more than 1,300 regulations and has intervened on behalf of more than 150 businesses and individuals regarding specific red tape problems with ministries and agencies. In 1999 the Red Tape commission submitted the Unfinished Business report to Premier, containing yet another 40 recommendations to reduce red tape.

In the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, under the Mining Act, this amendment gives the Minister of Northern Development and Mines the authority to approve a refund due to an administrative or rounding error. The approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council will no longer be required. This will mean faster processing of refunds, something that is a completely foreign notion to the previous two governments.

There is a bunch of other stuff that I could say about good government and common sense, because that is what red tape reduction is all about.

For instance, in the Ministry of the Environment, we have the Environmental Review Tribunal Act, which I have already spoken about, which consolidates and eliminates administrative overlap and duplication.

In the Ministry of Natural Resources, there's the Conservation Land Act, where the Ministry of Natural

Resources is facilitating the conservation of Canada's natural heritage by expanding a mechanism by which US residents can make gifts of land in Ontario while both deriving the associated tax benefits against their US income and avoiding the disincentive of incurring capital gains tax in Canada.

Under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the ministry is cleaning up its legislative framework by removing references to health insurance premiums which have not existed since the creation of the employer health tax.

Responding to the needs of Ontarians, the Attorney General, through the Execution Act, is actually increasing the amount of a debtor's assets that are exempt from seizure in order to allow them to retain a subsistence living and not be thrown onto the welfare rolls. The value of the exemptions is now less than 20% of what they were when the act was passed in 1965. Trustees in bankruptcy are required to seize from bankrupts everything that the Execution Act allows to be seized on a judgment. As a result, judgment debtors and bankrupts have been forced on to social assistance despite the policy of the statute to allow them enough to support themselves.

I could go on for a while highlighting the substantial benefits that this government has made in reducing red tape and helping not just the customers and the consumers and the taxpayers of this province, but of course businesses as well, which we know are the backbone to the economy of this country.

I will without further ado pass over to the member for Northumberland, who I know is going to tell us more about the great initiatives of the red tape bill.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I appreciate being able to follow my good friend from Scarborough Centre and her excellent presentation, and the member for London West and his excellent presentation, on red tape.

Certainly this has been an area of great concern to our government. You may recall that back in the spring of 1995 we were very committed to eliminating red tape, and there's no question that a considerable amount has been reduced during the last five years.

One of the biggest areas that I see, and it's very harmful to our economy, is the hidden tax that red tape creates, a horrendous tax on our businesses, on our society, on people in our community, on volunteers. It's the kind of tax that we generally are unaware of unless we have a look at something like red tape and the red tape bill and have a look at what it's really costing us on a day-to-day basis.

There is no question that genuine, quality regulations are needed. They are needed there to protect the public, to protect their interests, whether it be for the environment—as the Minister of the Environment has recently come in with more regulations to protect drinking water even though the regulations we already had, if followed, would have protected the drinking water in this province—or regulations that protect health and safety. Certainly we are very concerned about the safety of workers in the workplace, and of course labour practices.

Many of these regulations are very admirable in their intent, but as I mentioned a little earlier, often it is a form of taxation that is imposed as an undue burden on the ability of business to operate efficiently.

1530

I remember, during the campaign in 1995, being at an all-candidates session when the Liberal, who was actually a sitting member at the time, made the comment that her government would get rid of 50% of the red tape. Fifty percent is totally unsatisfactory. If businesses and people are going to prosper in this province, we have to get rid of all the red tape that's out there. My definition of red tape is useless, unnecessary regulations that create things like an extra tax, which some might call a hidden tax. There is no question that overregulation impedes economic growth by forcing firms to spend their time doing what the government tells them, rather than actually being able to run their businesses. It's been calculated that our small businesses, typically referred to as mom-and-pop operations, have to spend six hours a week just looking after government regulations and filling out the forms that are necessary to go along with those regulations.

There has also been a study by the Conference Board of Canada. Based on the year 1994, they calculated that in this great country of ours it was costing some \$85 billion just to meet compliance costs—\$85 billion, just a horrendous amount. I hear some in the opposition saying, "Business can afford this. Business can afford that." When you start adding up some \$85 billion, guess who really ends up paying for it? Yes, they may be making the widgets, but you and I end up buying those widgets, and somebody has to pay that hidden tax, that cost.

We have laws that restrict us in everything from buying beer—where and how we may purchase it—to the length of a wooden ladder. It was all understandable, particularly in the day it came in. I wonder how many wooden ladders are still being made today. Certainly there is a tremendously different attitude to the purchase of beer than there was four or five decades ago.

Since 1997, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of regulations we have in this great country of Canada. But as those regulations have increased, across Canada a very sharp decline in productivity has been experienced. This in turn has led to slower real income growth, which has resulted in huge losses to the economy in Canada and particularly in Ontario.

Other studies have suggested that some 12%, and even 30%, of the productivity slowdown can be blamed on excessive government regulation. I was really pleased yesterday to be able to join the debate on Bill 88, on e-commerce, on how our government is moving with the times to ensure that documents sent by e-mail and fax can be recognized as having an official signature and do not necessarily need to have the paper to accompany them.

The costs of regulations are sometimes greater than the benefits they create. When that starts to occur, it impedes economic growth and fails to meet the object-

ives that were set out in the first place. Needless to say, these costs are inevitably paid by the taxpayer at both the personal and the corporate levels. Professor Wiedebaum, at the Center for the Study of American Business, concluded in a study he carried out that every dollar spent on regulations by the government costs private firms some \$20 in compliance costs: 20 times as much is being paid by companies just to match one dollar spent by government to develop the regulations. That is indeed a very hefty tax that is well concealed and well hidden.

In Ontario, the regulatory burden grew by leaps and bounds under the two previous governments. During that lost decade from 1985 to 1995, a tremendous number of new regulations appeared on the books. They were running at something like 1,000 new regulations every year, and of course no regulations were being taken off. This bill is really about getting rid of some of these regulations and getting rid of some of the acts that are no longer applicable. The longer they sit on the books and confuse lawyers as they study them and look at them, the more it costs private citizens and corporations here in the province.

We heard a lot of, "It wasn't our fault, the recessionary woes of the early 1990s," but I don't think there's any question that those regulations being laid on back in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s had a lot to do with the recession that occurred, a very serious recession. Many economists would say it was the most serious recession since the Depression back in the early 1930s. I well remember my parents describing to me the situation that Canada, particularly Ontario, was in back in the so-called Dirty Thirties. The kind of recession we were put through approached that kind of circumstance, and certainly regulations had a lot to do with that.

We look at the cousins of the Ontario NDP out on the Canadian left coast, and they couldn't even begin to compete with the number of regulations that the NDP government in Ontario brought in. They've been introducing some 500 a year, and just have a look at how their economy is doing: it's not. It's been a bit of a disaster out there. They started going downhill long before the Asian flu came along. You would ask why, when the American economy is booming. Just across the border from them, in states like Wyoming and Iowa, their unemployment is sitting at 2% or slightly under; to get under 2% I'm told is almost impossible. When I was in BC a year or two ago, people were leaving by the hundreds and moving to prosperous provinces like Alberta. That didn't happen just because of their oil; it happened because of sound economic policies that had been carried out in that province. A lot of people from BC, fed up with red tape and overregulation and over-taxation, ended up moving to Alberta and many other places in Canada. You can also identify right here in Ontario where people from BC have moved because of the kind of government they have on the Canadian left coast.

When you add the cost of the regulatory burden, the hidden tax, to the actual tax burden, you can see that Canada's economy has languished in the doldrums for so

long. It's totally unacceptable, and it's great to see this bill and to see that something is being done about it.

I'd like to share with you some of the ridiculous laws in the US as well as here in Ontario that we've been suffering from. One, I believe, comes from Utah. There's a law there that prohibits people from cleaning their donkeys in a bathtub. I can't imagine why, in the first place, anybody would want to clean their donkey in a bathtub. Consequently, why would you have a regulation that prevents people from doing it? It sounds like something the Liberals would want to bring in, and I'm sure if they formed the government they just might want to do that. In another US state, I believe California, people need to have a hunting licence to set a mousetrap. Now, I can understand that maybe the NDP might bring something like that into Ontario.

What we did have here in Ontario for a long time was that it was illegal to drink beer while sitting on your porch. If you wanted to drink beer outside you had to set a tent up, which was considered your temporary housing. We have moved a long way along and that has changed. At one time there was a requirement of a tavern to have a solid door and to have frosted windows and curtains so as not to allow children to see inside and become corrupted by the sight of people imbibing the demon rum. By today's standard we might think that's pretty silly. As cultures change and societies move along, it's important—maybe those regulations had meaning once upon a time, but today they don't, and those kind of regulations need to be changed.

1540

When we took office, I found it quite surprising. This party over here that talks so much about the environment and carries on, with members today yelling and screaming across the House over how important the environment is—the regulation we found they were still supporting was that it was illegal to recycle a pesticide container. It was legal to bury it. Now, this is a contaminated pesticide container. They allowed to go for five years that you could bury a pesticide container, but they made it illegal to recycle one.

We've been promoting recycling, the three Rs, literally since the beginning of time.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): We're a green government.

Mr Galt: As the member said, we're a green party. I don't think there's any question. Look at the environmental changes, the kind of changes we've made: a change in penalties, supporting the environment. It indeed is a very green party.

It was also interesting to note on the books after this party left after their five years, and of course the Liberals, when they thought they were such environmentalists, that if you released chlorinated drinking water, it had to be cleaned up as a hazardous substance. This is perfect drinking water, considered as a hazardous substance and had to be cleaned up as such.

Those were the kinds of regulations that were on the books when we took office. Certainly they were totally disgusting.

Some of the things we're removing I'd just like to make a little reference to in the next five minutes. One has to do with the Hunter Damage Compensation Act. This act was brought in back in 1979, a little-used act. For the last two years, there was only one inquiry on this particular act. To add to it, here's an example of duplication. Already, insurance policies that insure livestock cover hunter compensation, and then so does the government, so if the government pays for it, the insurance company doesn't. I think the most ever paid was in the neighbourhood of \$7,000 or \$8,000 for something like 10 to 15 animals. Obviously, even at its peak, this compensation was minimal, costing far more to distribute and deal with than the real loss in itself. Plus, it was being covered by the insurance policies, which it makes so much sense to me would continue.

I wanted to also make reference to the change in the Dog Owners' Liability Act and the requirement that owners have to properly restrain their dog. One of the amendments in this red tape bill will require owners to take responsible precautions to prevent their dog from biting or attacking a person or another domestic animal. It will add new penalties that will deter irresponsible dog ownership. Certainly this is something I've supported for some time. We have too many irresponsible dog owners in the province. A very large portion are responsible, but some are not. Failure to take adequate precautions could result in fines of up to \$5,000.

This act will also allow the courts to order that a dog be confined or restrained by a leash or muzzle until it is determined that the animal is indeed dangerous. Often, as I'm sure you're quite aware, Mr Speaker, living in the country, if animals are abused, they'll sometimes become violent. This is a natural reaction out of self-preservation.

For this reason and for other reasons, the minister has already specified that the act will authorize the court to prohibit a dog owner found liable under the legislation from owning another dog for a specified period of time. It will provide an automatic restraint order when a dog is order destroyed.

I believe this part of the red tape act will bring about a quick resolution when community members feel they have need to worry about a particular animal in their community. It will also provide authorities with better tools to help them in their job of protecting the public.

Also in this particular bill is compensation for victims of crime. There are changes in the Red Tape Reduction Act on that. This will bring about a high level of improvement in the level of service and funding available to victims.

This Red Tape Reduction Act will bring a serious increase in the amount of money that victims receive. In 1986, victims could receive a maximum amount of \$250,000 in compensation. Taking inflation into account, this government has raised that ceiling to some \$365,000. Victims will now receive payments for a longer period of

time, payments that will take annual rates of inflation into account. Part of this red tape bill will extend the application period of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board benefits from one year to two years. This is in response to the fact that the CICB currently receives some 1,500 requests per year to extend the application time.

All in all, I can see that this red tape bill is going to do a lot for the economy in Ontario. It will help to create more jobs. The two previous members walked through many aspects of this bill, affecting a dozen different ministries, I believe, everything from improving customer service to providing good government and common sense. I'm sure you will recall that when we campaigned in 1995 our platform was the Common Sense Revolution. It's one where the government delivers on its promises: promises made, promises kept. That is the hallmark of this government.

In conclusion, poverty rates, after-tax family incomes, real consumption and real wealth have stalled over the past two decades. I believe that's because progress is not automatic. It doesn't just happen. For too long, government has stood as a roadblock to business and investment instead of a helpmate. There's no question that government should be there as a helpmate, to assist people and corporations and businesses to get along and create jobs in Ontario. Governments have a regulatory responsibility, and that indeed is without question, but they also, as government, have a role to play in creating an environment that is welcoming to business. We went for a whole decade, from 1985 to 1995, and it was not "welcome to business" here in Ontario. I remember back in the late 1980s when they brought in the employer health tax. Small business just went berserk over that, having to keep the records for it. The Liberals should be very ashamed for bringing that in, going below \$400,000 of payroll and really putting a burden on small business, mom-and-pop operations that had to run another set of forms. Our government got rid of that, and it has certainly helped a tremendous number of small businesses here in Ontario.

We have a responsibility as government to create an environment that's welcoming to business—I got a little sidetracked there a moment ago—and also to provide the freedom to enter into any business without penalty or undue restrictions and to compete freely for customers. Without these freedoms, there is simply no incentive for people to take risks, to innovate, to invest and work long hours. Small business is based on working long hours. I hear the opposition screaming about a 60-hour workweek. I'm sure an awful lot of people in small business would think they were on holiday if they had a chance to work a 60-hour workweek. The member for Guelph-Wellington used to be in small business, in the environmental business, and I'm sure she worked a lot more than 60 hours a week.

For those who believe in freedom as a basic human right, reducing unnecessary regulations and red tape is indeed essential. That's what this bill is all about, that's

what this government is all about and, quite frankly, that's what democracy is all about.

Now I'm very pleased to let my seatmate complete the hour, the member for Guelph-Wellington.

1550

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): I would like to extend my thanks to my colleague, who actually was kind enough to take my place for a few moments and trade places in the speaking order, since I was involved in another meeting. He's a very thoughtful and considerate member and I appreciate it. Thanks so much.

I'm very pleased to add my voice in support of this particular bill. As my colleague mentioned, I come from a background of small business. I'm used to working very long hours. When I look at the red tape bills, I look at them from a point of view of customer service, because that's so essential in anything we do in business here in Ontario. That really means, when you're in business, that you must find ways to be responsive to those who are going to use your services, or you won't be in business for very long. It means looking for new and better ways of providing that service. In government, we can act no differently.

For too long here in Ontario we have allowed the practices of government to stagnate. The best practices of 15 or 20 years ago are no longer the best practices of today's business. Government tends to become very bureaucratic and that tendency must be overridden if you are going to find ways to provide effective and responsive customer service.

When the people of Ontario call the government, they are looking for help and for answers. They are not looking to be on hold, they are not appreciating bureaucratic runaround and they want action once the connection is made. For too long, government has ignored valuable lessons we could have learned from the private sector. While businesses around Ontario were re-evaluating, re-assessing and reworking their customer relations, government stood idly by as its relations with customers, who are the real people, went from being out of date in some cases to being anachronistic.

That isn't surprising because in many cases it takes work to improve government relations and customer relations. It takes new laws to change and eliminate red tape. Changing law in this House requires three readings, opposition theatrics and naysaying that goes along with debate in this House. For some governments, all that work simply wasn't worth the trouble. But as my colleague mentioned, in two elections we've come to understand that the people of Ontario expect and deserve good government, responsive government, and the work that's required to make changes in our laws to be more responsive and customer-friendly is certainly something the members of the Mike Harris government feel is worthwhile.

In 1995, we went to the people with a promise to reduce red tape. We knew that their own experiences with government told them that there was excessive bureaucracy and they had responded to our request to

make changes by supporting us in government. We have kept, yet and again, another promise.

We introduced and implemented a series of red tape reduction acts. In our first three red tape reduction bills, we repealed 28 acts and amended about 150 others. In all, we have revoked 1,300 antiquated and redundant regulations. We have managed, for instance, to eliminate more than 1,000 licences, permits and reports required of food-processing and farm businesses. We've cut the wait for registering a small business from six weeks to less than 20 minutes. But most importantly, we are reducing the frustrations of ordinary Ontarians as they deal with their government.

Speaker, like your colleagues in your constituency office, my girls in Guelph—Valerie, Lynda, Karen and Eleanor—receive calls all the time from people looking for help. We're the provincial member's office, but also calls are made to my counterpart in federal government—also named Brenda, so that makes our constituents even more confused—and city clerks looking for help. We are very pleased to do that. Quite often, we recognize that people have phoned the wrong place and we direct them to the appropriate government agency or level to get assistance.

My constituents, when they call the office, simply want help. They know the problem is related to something with government, but they want assistance; they want accurate, timely and effective results. We are, through red tape legislation, making Ontario's laws and procedures more responsive and more customer-friendly.

The Red Tape Reduction Act, if passed, will make a further 242 amendments to 75 statutes, repeal three acts and create two new acts as we continue to work to meet our commitment to reduce job-killing red tape. That's exactly what red tape does.

It will, for instance, amend the Mining Act to give the Minister of Northern Development and Mines the authority to approve a refund due to administrative or a rounding error. Today, cabinet must give such approval. That's a waste of effort and time. The bill will amend the Health Insurance Act to remove references to health insurance premiums that don't even exist any more.

It also updates the Execution Act to increase the amount of a debtor's assets that are exempt from seizure. Today trustees in a bankruptcy must seize everything the Execution Act allows upon a judgment. That means that some people who have suffered a bankruptcy have been forced on to social assistance despite the intent of the act to allow them to support themselves.

We are further protecting the people of Ontario with the proposed amendments to the Consumer Reporting Act. They will prohibit credit repair companies from charging consumers large amounts of money in advance of helping them repair bad credit ratings. We won't allow companies to charge those desperate to repair their credit ratings before providing any service, and we'll prevent companies from using false claims in their advertising, with statements such as that they can "clean bad credit."

We're also making a change that will reduce the frustrations faced by newlyweds here in Ontario. This bill

amends the Change of Name Act to eliminate the requirement to apply for a change of name within 90 days of marriage. Now, if newlyweds miss the deadline, they must go through the expensive and time-consuming process of a formal change of name. The arbitrary deadline does not reflect the pace of our busy lives, especially those of newlyweds, who are busy getting their families together and settling in to their own individual lives at work.

We were elected in 1995 on a promise to create 725,000 new jobs. Not only did we meet that goal, we exceeded it. Our 1999 election commitment is even more ambitious: to create 825,000 new jobs. The reduction of red tape is an integral element in our plan to reach that goal. I think it's important, when we talk about job numbers, to remember they're not just numbers. These are real jobs, reflecting work done by real people with real families in our own communities. Thanks to this government, they now have real opportunities to realize their dreams.

The reduction of the paper burden that governments have imposed on the small businesses of the province will allow them to redirect these resources, grow their own businesses and create more jobs for fellow Ontarians. It is about making it easier, faster and less expensive for the people and businesses of Ontario to do business. As my colleague emphasized before, it's about freeing the province's businesses from unnecessary and antiquated regulation while ensuring they remain responsible corporate citizens. That's an important point because the opposition across the way for sure will say that reducing red tape means reducing responsible activities in the marketplace, and that is not so.

I've heard that the province's regulatory framework is something like sandstone. If you can picture sandstone, one layer upon another, then upon another, there are so many layers that someone working their way through the system almost needs a jackhammer to find the answers he or she wants. Quite frankly, Ontarians should never have to resort to heavy machinery when they deal with government. Government is for the people. That is our job: to ensure that good government is available to all constituents, and that means process.

I would like to take a moment to compliment the red tape committee at this point. I could not tell you how many constituents have come forward to my office to ask advice on how to do something better if they're making a proposal or working on a project. Time and time again, I have referred them to the Red Tape Commission, and I can say to you that I have heard back many times over how pleased individuals and businesses have been with the response they received from the commission—good advice on what to do in the face of a difficult regulation and responsiveness in making changes to regulations that clearly should have been changed.

Even this morning, on a matter totally unrelated to this particular bill, I met with some constituents who were seeking advice on a matter, and they complimented the Red Tape Commission on the work they had done and

really felt that it was part of the good government they have come to expect from the Harris government.

All of the members of that committee deserve our thanks. They have been very diligent and very serious in their efforts, and quite frankly it has paid off.

1600

I'd like to take a moment to reflect on some of the pieces of the bill that are before us. In particular, I was struck by some of the pieces brought forward by the Ministry of Natural Resources. There are in fact changes affecting 15 different ministries before this bill. For instance, under the purview of the Ministry of Natural Resources the Aggregate Resources Act will be amended to facilitate changes to site plans and provide time extensions for wayside permits. Licence and permit holders must provide notification of changes in name or address and form holders may be held accountable for rehabilitation of aggregate sites—again, one more little piece of ensuring environmental protection.

The Conservation Land Act is amended to allow the definition of “conservation body” to be expanded by regulation. This change will allow for additional groups or organizations to be eligible to hold conservation easements.

In my life before I became involved in politics here in Queen's Park, I was a member of the Speed River Land Trust, and this was an important piece of regulation that affected our organization as it tried to find ways to conserve properties across Ontario.

The Forestry Act, for instance, is amended to provide greater flexibility in responding to pest outbreaks. Certainly this is a serious concern. There has been a bit of a scare lately with an Asian beetle that has been found. If passed, it will allow proceeds from certain land sales to be used for forestry purposes and allow for the adoption of qualification standards for forest technical workers.

Of course, last night in the Legislature we passed third reading of the Professional Foresters Act. Anyone who has managed forests will be interested in this sort of thing. In our government, with the Living Legacy program, we have set aside hundreds and thousands of acres of parkland—unprecedented in the history of Ontario.

As well, under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, authority is provided to enter into agreements with development permit applicants such that the conditions can be registered on land titles. Authority is also provided for the issuance of stop-work orders under certain conditions. Public meetings, for instance, on proposed amendments to the Niagara Escarpment plan and hearing processes are modified to allow for easier resolution of differences.

Those were just a few that caught my attention under the Ministry of Natural Resources heading.

Here's one, for instance, that was brought before me by constituents a year or so ago—no, I guess it would be longer than that, maybe two years ago. Then it was brought forward to the Red Tape Commission. This schedule proposes, under the Ministry of Transportation and the Highway Traffic Act, provisions dealing with the

impoundment of vehicles whose drivers are under suspension by extending the grounds for impoundment, by extending rights and responsibilities to the lessee of a leased vehicle and by allowing for early release in prescribed circumstances. There were unintended consequences in the Highway Traffic Act before when a vehicle was impounded. If it happened to be a leased vehicle, the company took an extraordinary hit, had a vehicle out of commission through no fault of their own in that the driver was to be penalized, not the lessor of the vehicle. So this is important.

A number of provisions regarding the weights and dimensions of commercial motor vehicles and trailers are proposed to be amended to permit implementation of a harmonization agreement with Quebec to establish a permit system for variances from statutory limits, to permit reductions of limits for prescribed classes of vehicles and to add an extra fine for liftable axle misuse.

Again, these are simple things but things that, for instance, in this particular case are preventative in nature, with just-in-time kinds of deliveries, with the changes to railroads, which we don't always with. They certainly put a lot of stress on our roads, and things like axle weights are important.

This particular one refers to harmonization agreements with Quebec. This is something that's often overlooked in trade with partners not only in various provinces across Canada but with the United States. Undue regulatory burden creates all kinds of difficulties for people who do business in various jurisdictions. Of course, within a couple of hours you can be in any number of different places. If red tape is not harmonized, these regulations can create all kinds of problems and time wasted—and that's money wasted, that's opportunities wasted for various different kinds of businesses.

This is one that caught my eye under the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations: the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. The Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations is amending the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to ensure that purchasers of new homes are covered by the plan, whether they bought the home from the builder or from subsequent owners. This administrative amendment will ensure that the program meets its objective of providing protection to new homebuyers in Ontario. Of course, the home warranty program is something that we're very pleased with, that has worked very well in the province. We've certainly had a number of initiatives to encourage home ownership in Ontario. This is an administrative change that just makes that entire program work better in the province of Ontario.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, when I look upon red tape initiatives, regardless of which of the 15 ministries I look at, I guess because of my background in retail, I look at them from the point of view customer service. As I said, when people phone our offices, they have no clue sometimes which level of government they should be approaching. They just know that they need some help with a law or with a regulation. Very often they don't even understand the difference between a law,

which of course has to be debated and passed through the House here, versus a regulation that can be changed in cabinet much more responsively. They simply know that something needs to be done, something is standing in their way. They don't want the law to be irresponsible—certainly I think people in Ontario appreciate the role that regulations and laws have here—but they expect it to be firm and to accomplish the objectives in the best interests of the public good. But they do expect to be able to find their way through and get to the end of it in a reasonable and fair manner.

In my term of office, from 1995, the most frustrated people are people who come to my office because they see a regulation or a law that treats them unfairly in that it's not applied appropriately, it's excessive in its requirements, it's excessive in the amount of money that's required to get through it. It has not been uncommon for some people to have visited my office who have had hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in a project and are sitting across me in complete frustration because they thought they were at the end of the process and suddenly the rules changed because another ministry became involved and they start all over. Sometimes they continue; sometimes they throw their hands up in complete frustration and, quite frankly, curse us all in government in general, no matter what level, because they see it as such an insurmountable impediment to doing business in Ontario.

I know some of my colleagues across the way say, "Doing business in Ontario; you're always thinking about business." Doing business in Ontario is what puts bread and butter on the tables of most of our constituents.

We went through 10 years—as my colleague said, we call them the lost decade—where net jobs were actually lost in the province. People could see hope and opportunity and prosperity slipping away from them. That is primarily why our government was brought to power in 1995.

We take great pride in keeping our promises, in following through on the ideas we present to the electorate prior to an election. This is just one more of the promises made and promises kept if this bill is passed in the Legislature.

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

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I will be rising later in this debate, but I wanted to say at the outset, from the government's beginning, that I feel quieted and I feel confident now, hearing the member for Northumberland say that this bill is going to prevent the next economic downturn. It may be, in their eyes, a significant bill, but to say that it's going to affect the economy in the way that the member for Northumberland spoke—I'm quite surprised it's that significant. Obviously, during debate we'll have to pay a lot more attention to it than we may have done at the outset.

Interjection: We must have missed something.

Mr Crozier: Yes, we've obviously missed something.

I also was interested in the comments from the member for Scarborough Centre. In her comments she

used the words "one of the fairest" and, I think I may be paraphrasing, "one of the finest bills that has ever been presented to this Legislature." I was about to believe her until she told us that she was a member of the commission. I just don't want the member or any others on the commission to break their arms patting themselves on the back.

As we get into this debate, I'm sure we're going to find that there's more substance than was mentioned in the leadoff today. I think there probably is more substance than just keeping our dogs on a leash and seeing that they don't run off and bite people or other domestic animals. I suspect there's more to this bill than that. That's what we look forward to in the debate as it goes on.

1610

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I don't have as much confidence in these red tape bills as the Tory backbencher does because, quite frankly, I've seen too many of them and we've seen so many people get burned by them. OK, the bills repeal acts that haven't been utilized for significant periods of time. That can be done with the stroke of a pen, quite frankly, when we undergo the RSO process for the year 2000. We know that. There's nothing new about that being included in this kind of legislation.

But inevitably in this legislation one finds provisions to provide more and greater user fees—new taxes, user fees, call it what you will. That's been the experience across the board from red tape bill number one through to this one, Bill 119.

As well, I'd like to hear from some government members, some with clout and some who are prepared to make a commitment on behalf of their cabinet, to address the concerns of the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board and the kind of folks you have down here in Niagara and down in western Ontario, down towards Pelee Island—grape growers who note in schedule P, section 3, but haven't yet heard from this government, a commitment to ensure that Canadian wine/Ontario wine really is Canadian wine/Ontario wine, not just the smallest percentage.

You see, these grape growers are being victimized, with the collaboration of this government. This government is a co-conspirator in the attack on grape growers down where I come from and down Pelee Island way too. We've got a government that's hell-bent on ensuring that cheaply produced Chilean grapes, among others, form the majority of the content of what this government still permits to be labelled as Ontario wine.

Ms Martel is going to be speaking to this shortly this afternoon and is going to be addressing the concerns of the grape growers' marketing board more specifically. I'm looking forward to her comments and I know you are too.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'm very pleased to comment on my colleague's comments. What brings me to this is a question that people ask me. They say, "Why did you run for politics?" I didn't have to.

Hon Mr Baird: I asked myself that question.

Mr Spina: The Minister of Community and Social Services asked that question. We're glad he did. I think he's doing a great job.

I was a small business-man. I had a business since 1980-81 and people wondered why I ran for politics. I became extremely frustrated. In answer to the questions that a lot of people had about government and criticisms they had about government—they criticized that government was full of taxes, government was full of red tape, government was full of bureaucracy. You know what? The interesting thing is that we came here to fix those issues.

I was very proud that during the first mandate of the Red Tape Commission, over 1,300 regulations were cleared out of the system. In response to the member from Welland-Thorold, I was proud to say that the first commissioner was Frank Sheehan; and Frank is still involved in this. The government felt that Mr Sheehan's role is still very important, and he is here. I would say to the member from Welland-Thorold that his former member probably would have got more attention to the Red Tape Commission, but his concern will not be lost on the Red Tape Commission because the co-chair who currently is in place, the member for London West, will more than address the issue.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I am pleased to respond to the member for Guelph-Wellington. First of all, this is called a red tape bill. In fact, there hasn't been much done in the way of regulation changes in red tape bills, really since the first couple of red tape bills. It's worth noting that a number of regulations that were removed in those earlier bills dealt directly with things such as water quality. We all know what happens when you take those regulations out.

We on this side of the House believe government has a role in regulating a whole range of activities, commercial and otherwise. We as a party have promulgated regulations and have talked about the need for that. They don't believe in that. They believe in unfettered markets. That's a legitimate point of view, not one I share. I believe there is a legitimate reason to have a strong regulatory environment, recognizing that you have to find balance. They're not interested in balance.

There is one piece of this bill that is not a regulation, that bill that amends the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act. Let me tell you the story about what led to this. A constituent of mine was the first in Ontario to reach the maximum benefit under the old regime. We notified the Attorney General more than a year ago that this was going to happen. We notified him here in the House; we notified him by letter. Mr Montforton's benefits ran out last May. This is the gang that talks about victims of crime. I'll remind you, he was a gentleman who was assaulted some 27 years ago and was left a quadriplegic. This year, when the Attorney General hadn't introduced a bill, we introduced a bill, and the government let it sit on the order paper. All summer they left Mr Montforton in limbo, without any undertakings or commitments. Now they move. They've raised the limit;

they haven't kept pace with inflation. I suppose it's a start. But they're really not talking about protecting victims of crime; they are just grandstanding all the time.

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

Mr Wood: I've had requests from a number of members to tell the House how Frank Sheehan is doing. The answer is, he's doing very well. He remains strongly committed to better customer service and to cutting red tape and creating jobs and investment in Ontario, and I may say has done an excellent job.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Wood: I think he deserves a lot of credit for the excellent work the commission is doing now, because he chaired it on his own for the first four years. We have developed some quite good ideas on what good regulation and good customer service are.

I would invite my friends across the way to be certain that they understand the economic significance of a good regulatory policy and a good customer service policy. If investors think we don't get it, they are going to locate in jurisdictions other than Ontario. The work the commission does, taken as a whole, is quite essential to economic development and jobs in this province.

Interjections.

Mr Wood: I'd also like to clarify for the members across the way what the commission's policy is on regulation. What we want is good regulation and effective regulation. The Liberal Party, for example, seems to be married to old ways of doing things and old ideas. Well, that's not going to cut it in the 21st century. If indeed we are going to have economic growth and jobs, we have to look at 21st-century ways of accomplishing the kinds of regulatory objectives the public has. The commission most certainly is not married to the old ways or married to what was done in the past. We want to do better, we can do better, and we're going to do better.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind the members that there is nothing in our rules that allows you to talk back and forth. If you have something to say, you say it to the Speaker and through the Speaker. I wouldn't want you to think that you might get another warning before I would take some appropriate action.

The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara Centre on a point of order.

Mr Kormos: Assuming you just spoke to me, I address the Speaker regarding the Red Tape Commission and the fact that it cuts red tape for polluters and that it's punishing grape growers and that it destroys legislation that is designed to protect consumers.

I address this to you, Speaker, as instructed.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. Further debate?

1620

Mr Crozier: I appreciate the opportunity to stand today to lead off the debate of the opposition on Bill 119. I appreciate very much that you've given instructions to the members on how we should act, because only a

moment ago the Minister of Community and Social Services was barracking at us, and that's unlike him. On the other hand, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade is sitting here very gentlemanly, so I think we should take an example from the minister of—

Hon Mr Baird: I take my example from you.

Mr Crozier: Well, someone suggested they take the example from me. You know, it's kind of interesting, because oftentimes back in the riding, and I'm sure you've experienced this too, a constituent will say, "You know, I saw you on TV the other day," and the first question I ask them is, "Was I behaving myself?" And they'll say, "Of course you were." So then I ask them what I was speaking about and that's where it becomes a little more difficult to understand.

But I'm here today to lead off this debate, to kind of put the bill in context. As has been mentioned by others, there are some 200 amendments—if those constituents of mine at home can believe that—some 200 amendments to, I'm told, 75 bills in 15 ministries. I've heard that there is the introduction of two or three new acts, in fact. So that's quite a bit go through.

Speaker, I should say at the outset too that I won't take up all the time. I'd like to share it with the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, as well as Scarborough-Rouge River and Don Valley East—that is, if I get wound up and can get unwound so that I leave them some time.

To put this bill in context, in my view it really is not a red tape reduction bill. This is in fact an omnibus bill. If it were just to get rid of some of those unused regulations, make some minor changes, no doubt you would get the support of this side of the House. In fact, there may be parts of this bill that we would like to support. The problem is, when this government presents an omnibus bill such as this, it has so many hidden things in it, so many things that a reasonable person, a reasonable constituent of mine, would object to that in the end we have to point out those areas.

The government speakers have said that this bill will be the saviour of the next economic downturn, as I mentioned earlier. We really question whether it's going to do that.

They've suggested that there are areas of this bill that will reduce red tape, for example, in the name changes of newly married couples. I agree with that. There are a couple of acts it will dispense with because they haven't been used in years. I agree with that. There are parts of this bill that we can certainly agree with and support, but what the government members didn't do in their opening remarks is point out some of those areas of the bill that are really contentious and some that shouldn't even be in a bill such as this.

Over the next few days of debate, various members of my caucus will point out those specific areas that we have to look out for, and in doing so, we'll point out that this bill shouldn't just automatically get the support that the government members suggest it should have.

I want to point out an example, for me, of red tape and something this government could step in and help with immediately. The member for Guelph was speaking about how often our offices are contacted for help, day after day, mostly in the area of health care and education and the Family Responsibility Office, which is still a mess and I'm not so sure that any constituency office can help with that. But we do get contacted a lot where constituents need help. Let me give you an example of where they're not helping when it comes to red tape: the Ministry of the Environment.

I call the Ministry of the Environment in Windsor; they have a regional office. Over the years we have contacted these offices, so we may even know the people we're dealing with. But do you know what has happened in the last couple of years with this government? Staff in the Ministry of the Environment office in Windsor can't speak to me over the phone. They have to call the minister's office, and then someone from the minister's office phones me. If that isn't red tape, I don't know what is. I know we have good staff in these regional offices. They can help us out, and they can help us out with one phone call.

But do you know what? It takes, at the very least, three phone calls and several days now. What happens is that the minister's office calls me. It may be the executive assistant, or God knows who it might be, because there are so many political staff in minister's offices these days that it's difficult to keep track; it's ballooned far and beyond what was ever in any other government previous to this. But anyway, I'll get a call back from the minister's office. I have to re-explain what it is I want. It might be some mundane little thing; it might be an interpretation. But this government is so anal-retentive that they won't let a bureaucrat answer a question like that. I think that's red tape. That's an example of red tape that this government could get rid of. All you have to do, Ministers, is tell your staff in regional offices, who are highly qualified and competent, that they are able to answer our questions.

We all acknowledge that you won the election last year. You don't have to worry about it for the next couple of years. But what I'm afraid of is that this red tape I'm speaking of is just intended to keep track of what we're doing. I don't mind if they keep track of how hard I'm working for my constituents. In the next election, the candidate opposing me on the government side will say, "That Crozier, he worked hard because he called the Ministry of the Environment this many times, and he called the Minister of Transportation this many times, and he called the Minister of Health this many times." I hope that with this record they're keeping of what we're doing, they'll also give us credit for having worked at it. But that's an example of red tape that I think they could help us with almost immediately.

In the opening remarks of the government members, I think I heard the words "easier, faster, less expensive." Again, I'll use the Ministry of the Environment as an example. Yes, maybe they have made things easier, faster

and less expensive, but for whom, and what has been the result? For close to six months now, the issue of water quality in this province has been before this Legislature, with of course the exception of the summer break, when we would have liked to have been here talking about it. But to what extent has doing things easier, faster and in a less expensive nature contributed to the problems we have with water quality in this province today? How many people are sick because we've tried to do things faster, easier, and in a less expensive way? Yes, we may find at the end of the inquiry that's going on that even some deaths may have been caused by a government that was anxious to do things easier, faster and less expensively, but we'll see how that goes, and I hope that's not the case.

1630

Another point that was raised to a great extent by the members opposite was customer service. Well, let me tell you what they've done to reduce red tape and improve customer service. They've made citizens in rural Ontario travel greater distances to have driver examinations. They've made rural Ontarians go into cities to have driver examinations. They've made students who should be in school take a day off because they have to travel further distances to have driver examinations. They have to go into cities to have driver examinations. Of course I'm speaking about the driver examination centre that was closed in my hometown. That's one issue that I get calls about, even now that I don't represent my hometown. I'm sure my colleague Pat Hoy, who represents the area of Chatham-Kent Essex, which includes Leamington, gets those calls.

That's not customer service. In fact, if I take the interpretation of some, it's increased red tape. It's made it more difficult for them to get service. It has not reduced red tape but it has reduced service.

Just recently, for example, the licensing office in Kingsville was closed. Customer service improvement? I doubt it. Could we interpret that as increased red tape? Well, it's certainly more difficult to get your licence renewed in the southeast part of Essex county. I don't think you should be able to stand there and brag about increasing customer service when you've taken service away from customers, which is what you've done, and at the same time added insult to injury by increasing the cost of the service provided.

Do you want an example of how you could increase customer service? It wouldn't mean any more red tape at all. In fact, it would make people happier. Open up a driver examination centre for the senior citizens in my riding and those in the border riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, and for that matter for all the ridings in the county of Essex, outside the city of Windsor. That will take some of the load off the one in the city. I haven't checked lately, but the last time I checked it took at least six months to get an appointment. So they could increase customer service and reduce the red tape: just open an examination centre. We know with the fees they charge, these things are profit-making centres as well.

There is another example of something this government has done which has increased red tape. It used to be in this province that good, charitable organizations like the firefighters, the Oddfellows, university students who conduct Shinerama, could go out and raise funds for needy organizations. Bill 8 was An Act to promote safety in Ontario by prohibiting aggressive solicitation, solicitation of persons in certain places and disposal of dangerous things in certain places. Do you know what I would call Bill 8, which was brought in last December? I'd call that red tape. We now have charities in this province—and I'll use muscular dystrophy as one example. They will get approximately \$750,000 a year less because the firefighters are faced with red tape. I'm calling Bill 8 red tape. Even though it has actually made it against the law, that's what it is. It's made it more difficult, just like red tape. They can't go out and raise money for muscular dystrophy the way they have for years.

What was intended by Bill 8, at least as we understood at the time, was to get squeegee kids off the street. Well, I tell you what, folks. When I come into the city on a Sunday night, it's not unusual for me to be approached by someone at a street corner to clean my windshield. But that's a Toronto problem. This government, through Bill 8, has taken a Toronto problem and made it the hugest red tape problem across the province that one could imagine. In fact, I couldn't even imagine that they did it on purpose. I think they just took one issue, looked at it and said, "We know how to solve that for the city of Toronto," and came up with what was a poorly written bill. And a poorly written bill, to me, is nothing but red tape.

What we're suggesting is, if you want a way to reduce red tape, if you want a way to help these charities out, if you want a way to allow them to continue what they've done for years on behalf of charitable organizations in this province, you can do one of two things. You can pass a private members' bill that I've presented, Bill 64, that exempts charitable organizations and that, in fact, to help the red tape for the provincial government, goes to the local level and allows municipalities to decide how, where and when these fundraising activities could be carried out.

Now, what a better way to reduce red tape than for the provincial government to aid those local charities which can simply go to their municipal government, talk to the people they know, the people who are accessible, explain what it is they want to do and, in all likelihood, particularly in small urban and rural Ontario, carry out that activity? Again, it may be a big city problem to have firefighters stand on a corner, or have the Goodfellows stand on the corner, or have college students conduct Shineramas but it wasn't a big problem in small urban and rural Ontario.

But what you've done is put this huge red tape bill in everybody's face, and you won't change it. I don't know why. If it's a matter of saving face, look, we won't even make an issue about it. With unanimous consent, I'm sure these kinds of amendments, my private member's

bill, could be carried through the House. Better still, the government could bring in its own amendments. Make it be a government bill. Show people that you want to reduce this red tape when it comes to raising money in the province of Ontario and help them out. You can do that. That's an example of how you can reduce red tape, in my view.

I've given you a couple examples of how you can help us out and how you can reduce some red tape. Now we have to get to the bill. As I said, it's my privilege to rise today to lead off the debate because the honourable Chair of the Management Board introduced this bill. I suspect he did so because it does cover a number of ministries, and Management Board, in its normal function, covers a number of ministries.

It isn't that there is any specific part of this bill that I'm involved in as critic through the Management Board, but certainly over the debate on this particular piece of legislation you will hear from many of the colleagues on my side who have a specific interest in the bill. Later this afternoon my colleague from Don Valley East I'm sure will have some comments to this. It just isn't red tape we're talking about. There are significant changes to legislation that this bill touches on. Quite frankly, I suppose a reasonable person would think you really can't touch 15 ministries, 75 acts and over 200 amendments without touching on some pretty significant areas.

We're going to be talking over the next few days about compensation for victims of crime. My colleague from Windsor-St Clair questioned the minister on this yesterday, spoke again briefly on it today. That's not a red tape issue. Compensation for victims of crime is a significant issue in this province, one that in all likelihood should be debated on its own. We should spend time talking about compensation for victims of crime and how victims of crime should be able to speak to our judicial system. It shouldn't be part of an omnibus bill like that. It's unfair, I think, to victims of crime to trivialize it by including it in a bill that eliminates some owner-dog relationship, how they should handle their animal.

1640

Under the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations we're going to be talking about the Bailiffs Act, where the minister can now give consent for a bailiff to act outside the county, rather than a judge. You know what that does, Minister? Excuse me, Speaker. That's a Freudian slip. I'd like to see that, by the way. But you know what that does, Speaker? It really gives ministers more discretionary power. I guess if we're talking about the government getting in your face, it really gives a minister more power. Should it be a judge? A bailiff has some very important functions to perform and I'm not so sure that there may be cases, and we'll get into this later, where a bailiff should be given that permission by a judge and not just by a minister.

We're going to be reviewing the Collection Agencies Act, where sales reps working for collections agencies and who do not collect debts or deal with debtors are not required to be registered with the act. A good idea on the

surface; I don't see anything wrong with that, as long as we can be sure that somebody working for a collection agency isn't going to be, from time to time, from day to day, actually collecting debts, as long as all they do is sell the services to, in this case, I assume, businesses or even government—because this government uses collection agencies—as long as we can be sure that all they're going to do is sell. Because we know there are rules covering collection agencies. And I get complaints about these at my office, the way they go outside of the law to collect debts. We all agree that a debtor is a debtor is a debtor. If you owe money, you owe someone, you should pay it back, no question, but there are laws and regulations that cover how you go about doing that. Some debt collection agencies don't act within that law. We have to be sure that they don't go outside the law under this bill as well.

We're going to be looking at the Land Titles Act. The director of titles and the examiner of surveys will be appointed by the deputy minister rather than the director of land registration. I can't say today whether that's good, bad or indifferent, but I'm sure that we will, in the forthcoming days, during debate, be looking at that to make sure that there isn't something hidden in there.

It's my understanding, and our critic will be speaking to this, that the Theatres Act, to a great extent, takes away from the regulation of the film machine operators. A couple of years ago there was a significant strike in Ontario. If this is a good move, if it will help, then that's great. If it's simply intended as an anti-labour or anti-union move to get rid of the cinema operators, that's a total other question and one that should be debated in this Legislature, no matter what side of the issue you're on. It may not simply be a case of red tape.

Under the Ministry of Finance we're going to be looking at the Insurance Act, which allows viatical settlement companies to conduct business. This is a major change and should be debated on its own as an amendment to the Insurance Act, because I'm willing to bet, and I'm not a gambling person, that the majority of people in this province don't understand what that means. If I thought I'd even get a reasonable response, I'd ask for a raise of hands here today of those of us in this Legislature who know what a viatical is. Therein lies the problem. It's not just a bit of red tape. It may be a good thing. What it is is that people who are critically ill can sell their insurance policy at a discount. That's significant. Today insurance companies, under the Insurance Act, can provide you with living benefits. What that means is that you can access your insurance policy if you're critically or terminally ill, with certain restrictions and regulations, and that you deal with the insurance company the policy is written with.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): So?

Mr Crozier: "So?" the minister says. See? That's the attitude: "So?" So, Minister, there are crooked people out there. There are people who will sell you swamp land in

Florida. There are also people who will cheat you out of your life insurance policy. That's what I mean. The response from these people is, "So?" That's a significant issue. You still own your insurance policy under living benefits; you don't when you sell the thing. It's gone. That should be debated in this Legislature, and we all should understand what it means. It's significant. That's why it shouldn't be wrapped up in an omnibus bill that's called the Red Tape Reduction Act. These are the kinds of issues we're getting at, folks. We don't mind expeditiously handling the little things, but these are life things we're talking about here.

The Ministry of Health Appeal and Review Boards Act is going to be looked at. You know what that reminds me of? When I was speaking earlier about service. This government wants to increase service in this province. What's happened under the health care system and the service they've provided? They want to privatize paramedics. They want to take professionals and privatize paramedics. These professionals have all resigned. The service may be private today—I'm referring to air ambulance. The air ambulance may be private in itself, but the paramedics work for the province.

The Wine Content Act, under consumer and commercial relations, was referred to earlier by my colleague from the Niagara Peninsula. This should be debated as a separate act. You don't reduce red tape by creating a new act. That's what we're here for. We're here to debate legislation, to debate new ideas and to debate new acts, and that's what we should be able to do with the Wine Content Act, for example.

But it goes on. There are some under northern development and mines, natural resources, colleges and universities, agriculture, labour. There are some changes in here under labour. As I say, it goes on—even education.

In concluding, I would just like to say, please don't trivialize some of the issues I've brought up by saying they're simply a reduction in red tape. It's much more than that. There are issues that should be debated in this Legislature, and that's why I feel that it will be difficult, if not impossible, for me to support this act, because we don't get a chance to say, "We like that; we don't like that."

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I'm happy to have the opportunity to make some comment on Bill 119. I have to say that I was somewhat overwhelmed when I began my review of the bill as it has been presented. It has been entitled the Red Tape Reduction Act—at least that's the short title that we in the Legislature would use—but I would suggest that a more accurate title for this bill would be that it's an omnibus bill that will deal with a variety of acts and impact a variety of ministries. This kind of legislation disturbs me somewhat, because it really begs the question, why such a blanket piece of work?

I agree with a number of the comments that have been made by my colleague the member from Essex and others of my colleagues who have had an opportunity to

speak to this bill that much of what is contained in this document, in the interests of time, we will really not have an opportunity to debate as we would like if it were introduced as separate legislation. It concerns me that we have a piece of legislation here that requires us to—and while I would suggest that there are a number of articles within the act that are reasonable, I have very serious concerns about how prudent it is to support other parts of the bill.

1650

My colleague from Essex spoke about customer service. As Ontarians, when we consider an act that will reduce red tape, who among us likes red tape? Who among us likes dealing with unnecessary paperwork? However, I would suggest that much of what I have read here—I don't know that I would say it's unnecessary. I would suggest that some of the provisions that are in law now, and perhaps should continue to be in law, are there for the protection of the people of Ontario. So in our rush to reduce the amount of paperwork, have we really considered the real impact it will have for people in our ridings? As my colleague from Essex indicated—

Interjection.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you up.

As my colleague from Essex had indicated, is it really going to mean better customer service?

Mr Kormos: Who's sleeping in the Legislature?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Gosh, I heard a yawn.

Will it mean better customer service for the people of Ontario? That's really what we're all about. That's really what we're here to ensure.

I agree with my colleague from Essex when he suggests that we need more people in the field, we need more people in offices to provide that service. I get calls in my constituency office from people who have tried to contact various government agencies and they get a phone number or a voice mail. It's very difficult to get a warm body at the end of the phone these days. When they write a letter, it takes some significant time for a response. All of that relates directly to the fact that there are fewer people now hired to do the business of the people of the province. Certainly I have the occasion, on a very regular basis, to speak with people who are engaged in the public service and who have told me very clearly and quite unequivocally that they do not have the human resources to adequately meet the demand that comes into their offices. That's something that I know the members of the government are aware of, but are not inclined, are not willing, are not of the mind to do anything about, because providing quality customer service is obviously not a part of your agenda.

There are a couple of sections of the act that I would like to address my comments to specifically, because they would relate to issues that I have had the occasion to deal with as an MPP in my riding.

One section that did catch my attention was section 77, which relates to the Tenant Protection Act. Section 77 indicates that a landlord may apply for an eviction with-

out notifying the tenant. It goes on further to explain that this would apply in the case where a tenant may have been served with an eviction notice previously. It may have been the case that the tenant has gone to the landlord and said, "I want to address this issue that has caused us some problems and would cause you to want to evict me," and the landlord would have agreed: "All right, if you're able to come to my terms and to meet my expectations, I will not pursue this eviction notice." Having done that, the tenant basically has been given the understanding that he or she has received a reprieve. This bill will now allow a landlord, if that has been a part of the history—it may have happened a month ago, a year ago, five years ago, but as long as the landlord had, at one point in the past, presented a notice to a tenant for eviction, they could initiate that process again, only this time without notifying the tenant.

I would suggest that on our side of the House we would be of the view that the person has made a mistake in the past, has made amends, perhaps has made another mistake. But that person should at least be given the courtesy of a notice to say, "Oh, by the way, I'm initiating the eviction process again." We believe that due process of the law should be respected, notwithstanding the history of a particular tenant.

Another part of this omnibus bill that is important for me to address, I believe, is with regard to the Environmental Assessment Act. It is going to be amended to provide for public notice of and public comment on proposed terms of reference for an environmental assessment. Certainly I have no problem with that; in fact, I think it is totally appropriate that when an environmental assessment on a particular environmental issue within a community is being formulated, members of that community should have notification that it is underway and should have the opportunity to make comment on it.

The interesting part of this particular amendment that I have some problem with is that the Minister of the Environment may make amendments to the terms of reference at the time of approving them. From my perspective, that gives rather inordinate powers and abilities to the Minister of the Environment. My understanding of the terms-of-reference process is really quite clear, that it is an opportunity for the proponent and the community to set the guidelines and the parameters by which an environmental assessment will be undertaken. Now we have the minister, who will be a third and outside agent, arbitrarily making some amendments to a plan that would be brought together by a community and a proponent. I'm not so sure that's a reduction of red tape. I would suggest that the minister might afford himself the same process or use the same process that would be used by members of the community or the proponent.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think it's very important that we as legislators, as elected representatives of the people—and I've had an opportunity to touch on only a couple of the myriad proposed changes to a multitude of acts that Bill 119 will represent—I think we would all do well to try to begin to absorb the significant impact that

Bill 119 will have for the people of Ontario. While the members of the government may present that it's going to reduce red tape for the people of Ontario, I think we really need to ask ourselves, what protections that we are guaranteed in law at the present time are going to be sacrificed when this bill is passed? Really, that's our responsibility and our job here, and I know that as this debate continues and unfolds, my colleagues will very capably be able to demonstrate to the people of Ontario that there will be a number of areas in which we believe that perhaps it's good to have those provisions in place to ensure that their very best interests have been guarded and protected.

I thank you very much. It has indeed been a privilege to offer my comments on Bill 119. I know that other of my colleagues have other important points to make on this bill.

1700

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): It's indeed a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 119, An Act to reduce red tape. It should more appropriately be called a Trojan Horse to remove the rights of tenants. It's very interesting. I'm going to deal with schedule K of this bill. It's one of the most significant.

I just want to give you a bit of background. I've been hearing for over a year—about a year and a half now—that there were some "housekeeping" changes to be proposed. I was very hopeful. I was hopeful because we know there were a lot of mistakes in the original Bill 96 and there's been a lot of discussion with the advocates, with the lawyers, with the people and the stakeholders who help to administer this act on a daily basis, Bill 96, the so-called Tenant Protection Act. I know, for example, that the minister has received the work and the hard evidence prepared by the Eviction Prevention Project, by the Tenant Advocacy Group, which represents all of the legal clinics here in Ontario, and their requests for change based upon hard evidence.

So it's hard for me to quantify my disappointment, because it goes way beyond any words or any feelings that I could express here in this chamber in parliamentary language, Speaker, for what's actually been proposed.

The changes contained in this act in schedule K are definitely not tenant-friendly. In fact, the changes should rightly be put in a separate bill for debate, because these changes, these amendments to the so-called Tenant Protection Act, will do one thing: they will ensure that tenants' access to justice is further restricted, instead of being further enhanced.

We in the Liberal Party, Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals, believe that access to justice is one of the most fundamental rights the people of this province enjoy. Unfortunately, it's not the view of the Harris Conservatives. They just don't believe it, and their actions in this piece of legislation speak louder than words. You would think in the atmosphere we have of a crisis in affordable housing in this province, we would, at a minimum, protect a tenant's ability to remain in their housing, that that would be a priority for this govern-

ment. These amendments are harmful, and the reality that tenants face every day of living on the edge is coming further and further to fruition.

I want to talk about two major areas of the bill and two major concerns I have. First, I'm going to talk about specific clauses. One thing you'll notice is that when the government members got up and talked about the bill, they didn't talk about what it actually contained. They referenced no clauses in this bill. I'm going to do that for some of the real concerns of Dalton McGuinty, the Ontario Liberal Party and for myself.

Second, I'd like to talk about some of the things that aren't in this bill, some of the excellent suggestions that have been made that the Harris government has failed to act upon.

There are several sections of Bill 119, the Trojan Horse to remove tenants' rights, which deal with the area of subtenancy and shared accommodation. This bill redefines the terms "landlord" and "sublet," and I have some real concerns. Previously, any person who rented a unit from a landlord, yet paid their rent to a fellow tenant, had status in a landlord-tenant relationship. I'd just like to read into the record what that change is. It's subsection 6(1): "The owner of a rental unit or any other person who permits occupancy of a rental unit, other than a tenant who occupies a rental unit in a residential complex and who permits another person to also occupy the unit or any part of the unit."

Let me highlight it with an example. For anyone who has ever shared accommodation with another party, they know that is a crucial relationship. You have, let's say, five university students. They live in a house with five bedrooms and they pay their rent to one of the students, who in turn forwards it to the landlord. They previously would have all had status as tenants. With this change, with this redefinition of what a landlord is, four of the students, who paid their money to their friend, lose their status as tenants, and by extension, their rights as tenants have been stripped—with the stroke of a legislative pen. Only the Harris government could strip the rights of tenants and call this removing red tape. What chutzpah. What nerve. I just can't believe it. My anger is just boiling over, that this kind of change would be in this bill and be called red tape.

The term "sublet" is also changed so that the previously existing notion—and this has existed for hundreds of years—that you can't sublet for more than you pay is now gone. It's gone in this legislation, in subsection (21), amending section 140 of the Tenant Protection Act. It says, and I'll read this into the record, "sublet a rental unit for a rent that is payable by one or more subtenants and that is greater than the rent that is lawfully charged by the landlord for the rental unit."

So if your rent is, let's say, \$800 per month, and you needed to sublet for two months, you could charge someone for subletting your place \$900 or \$1,000 or \$1,200. That is not unheard of, particularly in the kind of tight rental market, because of the housing policies of the Harris government, in a place like Ottawa, which has a

0.7% vacancy rate, or Kitchener or Guelph. I heard the member for Guelph-Wellington: Guelph has a 0.5% vacancy rate. So somebody looking to sublet could be paying more than the lawful rent according to the rules, according to the amendments, according to the changes brought in. This section leaves the whole area of rent control and legally allowable rent open to just terrible abuse.

I want to comment briefly on the changes regarding criminal activities, drug offences and the rights of tenants. Anyone who knows tenant issues knows that illegal activities are the least frequently cited cause for eviction. The proposed changes here in the act regarding termination of a tenancy agreement change it from 20 days to 10 days if the notice of termination is "grounded on"—that's the term used in the bill—illegal activity.

First of all, why reduce the notice time? These hearings are scheduled urgently by the tribunal. If someone is accused of doing something illegal, there should be more time between the notice and the hearing because of the seriousness of the charge. It's a criminal matter, and there's a need to prepare a proper defence. In essence, all this section does, all this change does, is accelerate the eviction process. Nobody wants drug dealing or other illegal activities occurring within rented units. However, the term "grounded on" is a loose one. I have some real concerns about how justice is being served in this process.

There's no requirement for the tenant to be formally charged. The police don't even have to lay a charge. A landlord can say, "I believe," and they can move for an eviction. The burden of proof is low. It provides potentially an unscrupulous landlord with an easy way to evict a tenant. Suspicion of activity is all that's required.

Perhaps most importantly, the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal is given far too much leniency to decide matters of criminal law. Criminal law is supposed to be decided by judges, not by political appointees such as adjudicators on the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal. These adjudicators barely have enough understanding of rental housing law. Now they're supposed to become experts in the full scope of criminal law? It's unreasonable and it virtually guarantees a disastrous outcome for those who act without the proper knowledge.

I'd like to highlight a few other sections. Section 187 is truly, truly scary and insidious: "On its own motion and on notice to the parties, amend an application if the tribunal considers it appropriate to do so and if amending the application would not be unfair to any party."

First of all, giving a tribunal the leniency to adjust applications themselves—somebody goes down and fills out a form, submits that form to a legal body, and that body's going to change or adjust it. I think this is going to have the effect of speeding up default orders. You're going to have staff at the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, adjudicators at the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, alter applications in order to expedite the process. Since 90% of the applications are landlord-initiated, it's of real concern that these will be used to expedite

evictions. Although the section states that it will only be done if it's not unfair to any party, what's the definition of "unfair"? Who's going to decide what's fair and unfair? There's no definition in this act about that. That is an incredibly subjective term. I have some real fear.

It is a leap of faith to make the assumption that tenants will not be treated unfairly, because it has been the track record of the Harris government that tenants are losing their rights, that they are being treated unfairly. That's a hallmark of this government, so it would be inconsistent to believe that this section would not be used to the detriment of Ontario's tenants.

1710

I want to talk to you about the change to section 192 of the act. Again, this is very scary stuff. It says, "The tribunal may designate one or more employees of the tribunal as default order officers for the purposes of subsection (1.2)." Defaults can only be ordered by an adjudicator, but now we're going to have a bureaucracy, we're going to have staff members, bureaucrats, deciding whether an immediate order of eviction is going to be issued.

Where's the due process? How are the rights of tenants protected? The amendment allows default orders by a new level of bureaucracy. Frankly, in a red tape bill, or a so-called red tape bill, this is an incredible contradiction, to say the least. It trivializes the judicial process if just anybody, any default order officer, can issue these kinds of orders. It also contributes to the trend of moving away from proper hearings concerning landlord and tenancy matters. Although it's being masked as a house-keeping amendment, increasing the number of default orders means an increased pace in evictions for tenants.

Appealing a default order or getting a set-aside is one of the most difficult matters, lawyers have advised me, that they face in law, more difficult in fact than getting a set-aside of a court order. So many tenants are going to be adversely affected by this particular amendment.

What's even more disturbing are the changes which aren't in the bill. There have been many options to consider. I proposed Bill 36. We've had recommendations by the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation after the eviction prevention project was released. We've had recommendations by the Tenant Advocacy Group, which has met with the minister. We've given him close to 30 proposals to give this act some teeth, to give people some rights. Virtually none of these changes is found in this bill. Although, to be fair, one of the six suggestions that I made in Bill 36 is contained in here, and I do support that and I'm happy to see that, virtually nothing else is contained in here.

So what about the suggestion by the eviction prevention project that the Ontario Rental Housing Authority communicate in writing directly with a tenant or with both parties regarding the eviction proceedings, ensuring that both parties are aware that there is a proceeding against them? At this moment in time, and after this bill, if it's passed by this House, tenants are given five calendar days—that includes weekends and

holidays—to formally respond to a notice of hearing. If a response isn't made, the hearing is waived and a default order is issued. It's terrifying that somebody could lose their right to access to justice, lose their right to defence, in five calendar days. In fact, just about every other government agency and judicial body gives notice to both parties of an action that has commenced. This one is unique.

Anyone who has tried to grapple with the notice that a tenant receives knows that it's a complicated form. It doesn't read well; it's a confusing document. This change to give written notice to both parties would protect tenants from landlords, and frankly landlords from tenants, who fail to deliver the notice. It's shocking that the onus is on one party to notify another. This is unique to Bill 96, to the so-called Tenant Protection Act. In fact, we have hard evidence. The eviction prevention project which was carried out shows that in about one third of all cases you have the case where no notice is served from one party to another. People are losing their housing without even knowing there's a proceeding against them. At a time when we have an affordable housing crisis, this should be of concern to all members of this House. I'm shocked that that kind of notion isn't contained in this bill.

What would be the problem with the tribunal doing this, with guaranteeing that the parties receive proper notice? The Harris government clearly sees no problem with access to justice or process, or they would have made the change in the bill.

What about—here's another suggestion—acting on the suggestion that where an application from a landlord follows a tenant's application—a tenant files an application, the landlord immediately follows up with an application of their own—you don't need a written dispute to be filed; it goes straight to a hearing? It would prevent this kind of retaliatory measure. How can justice be guaranteed without a full hearing of the facts?

What about the suggestion that's been made regarding the category called "persistent late payment," that applications that are being made be automatically referred to hearing? Why is this important and necessary? Partially because the tribunal and the legislation fail to define what constitutes "persistent." There's no definition of it, partially because landlords, in filling out applications, do not have to provide proof of a pattern of late payment. So "persistent" is a very subjective term.

If these changes aren't made, can't be made, then the government should seriously consider making a change to the act with this bill to call for automatic hearings. But once again they've failed to act on this most excellent suggestion.

How about the suggestion that the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal establish a procedure to dispose of eviction application files? Let me give you an example. Members should be aware that right now a record is kept of all notices that have been issued and the material is sent to credit reporting agencies. What the legislation

does not provide for is an updating of this information. Let me try to illustrate how this works.

Mr Baird is a tenant in arrears and a notice is filed against him. This information is sent to a credit reporting agency, but Mr Baird pays the money in full before the deadline. Good for Mr Baird, except these same credit agencies will not be updated with the information that he's paid his bill in full. You'll have a bad credit rating. All that remains on file is that you had a written notice of hearing on a certain date. What an easy thing to do: to have complete disclosed information that Mr Baird is paid up in full, that there is nothing outstanding on his record. This would be something simple. It's a letter from the tribunal to keep accurate records.

Those are some easy suggestions that this government could follow that they could put into a bill like this that would truly be housekeeping and that would give tenants the kinds of rights they need, particularly at a time of crisis in affordable housing.

Let me repeat concerns I brought to this House only last week. My colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Lyn McLeod, brought in a bill on care homes; a bill, I would add, that government members defeated. We have some real concerns about care homes related to the so-called Tenant Protection Act. These tenants in these care homes are the most vulnerable renters in our province. Legal clinics and other advocates tell us this section of Bill 96 is open to abuse and they've raised many, many cases of inappropriate and discriminatory treatment of tenants.

Part of the problem is that there is no benchmark for assessing whether or not a landlord is able to provide appropriate care. Without any requirement for a professional assessment, this decision is left up to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal. They have no expertise in whether care is appropriate or not, whether it can be provided or not. It's also ironic that when Mr Gilchrist was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, he gave assurance after assurance that there would be a formal role for community care access centres, but when the bill was tabled and passed, there was no formal role that exists. The changes that Lyn McLeod suggested last week would have redressed these things. They could have been in Bill 119.

It might be of interest to the drafters of these changes that these tenants are not even guaranteed the same rights as regular tenants, other tenants. Care home tenants do not receive a notice of termination; they can just be served a notice of hearing. Why not put through changes to give people real protection?

Here's another good idea: restore orders providing above-guideline rent increases where landlords are not in compliance with minimum maintenance standards.

1720

Finally, there has been a series of suggestions and recommendations from groups around the province that this act has to provide for emergency applications by tenants who have been illegally evicted or who face

urgent hazards to their health and safety. Why aren't those kinds of measures in this bill?

These are only a few of the issues. I could go on for quite some time, but let me sum up. These changes should be put in a separate bill for full debate by this Legislature. The changes that are in Bill 119 will only do one thing, which is deny access to Ontario's tenants. Let me once again express my disgust and disappointment with Bill 119.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):
Questions and comments?

Mr Kormos: Once again, Speaker, I've got to draw your attention to the betrayal of grape growers in Bill 119. Let's understand that they didn't have to repeal the Wine Content Act, because the Wine Content Act was sunset as of December 30, 2000. It becomes defunct in any event. But what they have done is betray the grape growers in Niagara region and across Ontario.

The fact is that the Wine Content Act permitted as much as over 70% of what was called Ontario wine to consist of cheap Argentinean or Chilean wine or American plonk, stuff that doesn't even warrant being drunk. The wine council, the big-bucks wineries—not the small boutique wineries that prevail in Niagara region and rely on support from this government by way of policies, but the guys who manufacture the stuff sold in the gallon collapsible containers with the little spigots—enjoy being able to use plonk from the States and to label their wine "Ontario."

This legislation gives cabinet the regulatory power to set the standard. The fact is, we don't need a standard. The legislation has to say that anything labelled Ontario wine is 100% Ontario wine. Anything less isn't acceptable, and anything less is an attack on the grape growers of Niagara, who have already been hard-strapped to make ends meet. They are already under incredible pressures.

Thank goodness for the Grape Growers' Marketing Board. Thank goodness for those hard-working vintners and grape growers who persist in their call for honesty in advertising and honesty in labelling. Mr Sheehan has driven a nail into the hearts and into the futures of these grape growers in Niagara. Shame on him and the Red Tape Commission.

Mr Wood: I'd like to thank the members opposite for their support of the parts of the bill they said they would support. I would, however, like to talk a bit about some of the complaints raised about the discretion begin given to adjudicators.

What we are, in fact, doing in the adjudicative area is streamlining the procedure, so we don't have procedures that aren't meaningful to the result. What we have in this bill are significant improvements to procedure. It's going to lead to better service in shorter periods of time. I would like for all who have a legitimate case before the tribunal—what it will not do, by the way, is involve delay that's not warranted. So those who are looking for delay from a tribunal are indeed going to be looking in the wrong place, and so they should.

I would, however, like to remind the House that any of these tribunals has to comply with both constitutional and legal requirements as a tribunal. Those basically come down to an unbiased adjudicator and procedural fairness. So this law has to be read in accordance with both the legal requirements and the constitutional requirements, which I am sure the members opposite are well aware of and understand but didn't have time to refer to in their submissions to the Legislature.

I think this is really indicative of a reluctance on the part of the Liberal Party to look at new and better ways of doing things. I urge the House to consider the proposition that if we don't do that, we are going to become uncompetitive and are going to lose investment and lose jobs. It really is important that investors understand that we do get it, we are into the 21st century and they're going to receive 21st-century service from the government of Ontario, as are all our citizens.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'd like to comment on my colleagues' presentations. Particularly I'd like to address some of the points that have been eloquently brought out by the member from Don Valley East in looking at and addressing those parts of the bill that affect housing, especially affordable housing in Ontario today. As a member from Ottawa, with 0.7% availability of rental housing, we are literally facing a major crisis, and it will worsen. This is from a government that said, "We'll just allow the private sector to deregulate this whole area of housing and allow the private sector to get into producing housing, and this will solve the problem." It obviously hasn't. As Mr Ibbitson has pointed out in his article, "Harris's strategy for housing is a flop."

I remember the days when Al Leach talked about, "Once we unleash and deregulate, the private sector will come in and provide a haven and all the housing we'll ever need in this jurisdiction." The fact remains that it's worse. I'm told that in Ottawa the housing registry has increased threefold over the last two years. Who are the people affected? It's the people in the low-income or the low areas of rental housing. They cannot find rental housing. This exacerbates the situation. You have people doubling up, you have more people on the streets, and you have more people who are suffering. At a time when we have shortages, the private sector will not build low-income housing, and there's proof of that.

My colleague suggests that you take this section dealing with the whole area of housing and put it in a separate bill. I hope you have the courage and the guts to take this to hearings or take this to committee, so we can flesh out some of these things and not try to rush this through.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In the two minutes I have, let me say the following: why don't we call this bill what it is, which is an omnibus bill? By the time we finish with it, it will have nothing or very little to do with getting rid of red tape. You see, when the government wants to hide some of the nastier things it wants to do to the public, it always goes forward with huge compen-

dioms, changes to any number of ministries through various schedules. They try to have something so big that the public doesn't have time to get through it to see what is really contained in all this.

We have seen, with the many bills the government has moved forward, bills that have any number of amendments to any number of ministries, repeals of laws, changes to try to correct mistakes made in previous laws. But what the government has tended to do is slip in, in any number of ways, shapes and forms, changes that are really negative to people: changes that have nothing to do with creating jobs, as I heard the government members try to say here today, changes that have nothing to do with getting rid of duplication, changes that have nothing to do with getting us into the 21st century, but changes that have had a really profound, direct and negative impact upon people the government is supposed to be serving.

Do you know what? I suspect that before we're finished debate on this bill, we will find that Bill 19 contains many of those things as well. Some of them have already been referred to by my colleagues in the Liberal Party. Before we're finished, we are going to find any number of changes that dramatically, negatively impact upon Ontarians and have nothing whatever to do with bringing us into the 21st century. So I look forward to the debate, and I certainly hope there are going to be public hearings on this massive bill.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Caplan: I'd like to thank the members for Niagara Centre, London West, Ottawa Centre and Nickel Belt for their comments. I would like to start with the member for Nickel Belt, who I think quite rightly points out that the changes found in this bill are not matters of red tape. In fact, changing the definition of "landlord" changes one of the tenets in landlord-tenancy common law which has existed for hundreds of years. The member for London West, who is a legal mind of some repute, would say this is somehow streamlining. Give me a break. Frankly this is nothing more than an attempt to evict people at a faster rate.

On the comment from the member for London West, as far as streamlining, right now default orders are issued at a rate of about 60%. What more do you want? You want more than 60%, six out of 10, orders being issued and getting default orders, people not defending their rights? My God, access to fundamental justice is one of the fundamental democratic rights at least for Ontario Liberals, for Dalton McGuinty—maybe not for Mike Harris, maybe not for the member for London West, but I know and I hope and I pray that there are some members on that bench over there who believe in that kind of fundamental right: the right to defend yourself, the right to have access to justice.

1730

I'd also like to comment on my colleague from Ottawa Centre, who talked about the housing problem they're experiencing in Ottawa. It is one of the tightest rental markets, not just in Ontario but in all of Canada, and it is

a serious economic and social problem. This act and the changes contained in the Trojan Horse act, Bill 119, are going to make it worse.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Martel: Speaker, at the beginning of my remarks I need to ask for unanimous consent to stand down our leadoff because our critic, the member for Sault Ste Marie, is not here this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent to stand down the lead for the New Democratic Party? Agreed.

Ms Martel: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the members of the House. I know they would have liked to hear me go for an hour. I'm sure the Minister of Community and Social Services would have appreciated it enormously. However, my colleague from Sault Ste Marie will be back later this evening and will look forward to participating in the debate when next this bill is called.

I want to do two things: I want to focus on the fact that this is an omnibus bill and that the government has tended to use omnibus bills in a way that very negatively impacts on any number of Ontarians, and I want to give some examples to show when the government has done that in the past and what the effects have been, first of all, on hundreds of thousands of people and, second, the impact on public safety. Then I want to focus on one of the schedules, in particular schedule P, which impacts on the grape growers in the province of Ontario. I'll be referring to a letter that my colleague from Niagara South has provided to me from some of his constituents.

Let me begin by saying that the government has tended to use omnibus bills—and this is one, to cover, to camouflage—to hide some really negative changes that will have enormous impacts on any number of Ontarians. Quite contrary to what the government members have tried to claim here this afternoon, that this Bill 119 is all about moving Ontario into the next century, that it's all about ensuring that we create more jobs in the province, that it's all about making sure we get rid of duplication and making sure we get rid of excessive government regulations, before we're finished we're going to see the same thing in Bill 119 that we have seen in about a dozen other of this government's omnibus bills: once you get a chance to go through the bill in any number of sections, with any number of amendments, or with any number of repeals of sections of bills or entire bills, in fact the government has slipped in many things that have nothing to do with duplication, nothing to do with jobs etc. It has everything to do with taking away rights and protections that people have had for a long time, putting their public safety at risk because the government has used some of these bills to off-load what their responsibility should be for public safety, putting at risk the ability of people to have some accountability back to their government, because any number of the changes are no longer subject to review of the Environmental Commissioner or the Ombudsman or any other officers of this assembly.

Before we're finished, after people have had time to fully review this bill, there is no doubt in my mind that

this bill as well will contain any number of sections that take away rights that people have had, that take away protections that people have had, that put public safety at risk, that probably generate more fees, which this government's Premier used to formerly describe as hidden taxes and used to condemn. All of those things will happen here, and we heard some of that referenced this afternoon.

Let me give you two examples of past government omnibus bills that have acted in that very way. The first omnibus bill this government ever dealt with was Bill 26. I believe its proper title was the Savings and Restructuring Act. It was the first major omnibus bill this government brought forward, and you will recall what it took for us to get some public hearings on that bill. Of course, the government wanted to ram it through under the guise of getting rid of duplication, under the guise of streamlining, and it took some major acts in this Legislature even to get some public hearings on that bill.

One of the things the government did through Bill 26 was to include a schedule that eliminated proxy pay equity. That had nothing to do with getting rid of red tape, it had nothing to do with getting rid of regulation and it certainly had nothing to do with creating more jobs, but it had everything to do with ensuring that 100,000 of the lowest-paid workers in the public sector, primarily women, didn't get the pay equity payments they were entitled to.

Members of this government will recall that it was our government that passed proxy pay equity, and the Liberals and the Conservatives spoke against that. The reason we passed the proxy pay equity bill was to guarantee that those people who work in the public sector, predominantly women, who are the lowest-paid, should be entitled to some fair compensation for the important work they do. Remember, the women we are talking about work in child care centres, looking after our children, whom we should be making a major investment in; they are people who work in nursing homes and homes for the aged; they are people who work in our libraries etc. They perform some of the most important public services on behalf of some of our most vulnerable Ontarians—our aged and our children—and this government through Bill 26, its omnibus bill, took away their right to get proxy pay equity. That was what was included in the bill.

Were it not for SEIU—I give them 100% credit. SEIU took the government to court over this issue after Bill 26 was passed and after many of their members lost their entitlement to proxy pay equity. SEIU convinced the Court of Appeal in Ontario that the government had discriminated against the lowest-paid workers in the public sector in this province by cancelling proxy pay equity for them. Because of the court decision, the government was forced to reinstate proxy pay equity to these 100,000 workers.

It's worth noting that the government still took a jab at these workers, because when they reinstated proxy pay equity, they put a cap on the amount of payment they

would provide to those institutions which were then making proxy pay equity payments. By putting a cap on the payments the government makes to those outfits—usually non-profit corporations—they now have put those non-profit corporations in a terrible financial mess because those non-profit corporations are now going to have to find within their own salaries the mechanism to pay proxy pay equity.

My colleague from Niagara South and I were in Sudbury on Friday and we met with representatives from the VON, Meals on Wheels and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Sudbury chapter. The three of them, all non-profit agencies that provide excellent service to people who need it in our community, made a compelling case as to the grave financial situation they have been put in because this government refuses to fully fund proxy pay equity to their workers who need it the most.

What we saw in the government's first omnibus bill, and that's just one example, was a direct attack on rights, a direct attack on money that some of the lowest-paid workers in this province were supposed to receive as a result of our government passing proxy pay equity. Again, it had nothing to do with streamlining, nothing to do with getting rid of government regulations; it had everything to do with attacking workers who perform an important public service to some of the most vulnerable people in Ontario society.

1740

Let me give you another example. In 1996, Bill 54 was passed by this government. The bill was called the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act, and through that act the responsibility for a number of safety-related statutes, including the Gasoline Handling Act, for example, was shifted, was transferred—better to say downloaded—on to an organization is called the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. Through that transfer or download, which is really what it was, there were a number of functions related to public safety that used to be administered by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations that were downloaded to what is a private, not-for-profit corporation that has a board of directors that is primarily made up of people from the very industries that are to be regulated. Some of the really important public safety functions that were downloaded from this government, that the government had assumed accountability and responsibility for, included, for example, elevator inspections, inspections of amusement devices, inspections of boilers, pressure vessels, fuels etc.

It was interesting that, when the government made that change at the time, they talked about how this bill was necessary to streamline all of these regulatory functions; that what the bill did was made it easier to deal with one single authority called the TSSA, which would deal with all of these regulations, which would do all of the inspections, which would deal with standards etc. It was described and portrayed as a bill that merely streamlined government regulations and law.

It was interesting that earlier this spring, in April 2000, there was a review done of that bill, Bill 54, and of

the authority that was established under it, this private, not-for-profit authority whose board of directors is made up primarily of people from the industry that's supposed to be regulated. It was interesting because there were three really significant conclusions that were made as a result of the review with respect to the impact the bill had, with respect to the offloading of government responsibility on to what has become, frankly, an unaccountable body, and also with respect to a conflict of interest that exists, or perceived conflict of interest, because of the makeup of the board and the industries that are regulated by it.

Three points were made: first, that the work of the authority has gone far beyond just merely the transfer or the downloading of administrative responsibilities. In fact, the transfer has resulted in almost all policy and technical expertise that used to be held with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations being downloaded to this authority. As a consequence, the ministry itself has lost any of the role it had, any of the capacity it had to really direct the authority, if it wanted to, about how standards had to be maintained, what standards had to be maintained, to ensure that those standards were being maintained, and that is especially true in the case of really serious public safety issues. So that was the first conclusion that came out of the review: by off-loading, the ministry had also off-loaded all of its responsibility, frankly, to protect the public interest.

Second, there certainly is a perception, and a real one, of a conflict of interest, and that is because the authority's board of directors is made up primarily of people who are supposed to be regulated by the very authority. What was more interesting is that neither the act itself, the bill that set up the authority, nor the operating agreement that exists between the authority and the ministry, nor the bylaws of the authority itself, make any comment about conflict of interest, do not provide any direction whatsoever to board members about how they are supposed to react and respond to decisions involving employers—their own employers—when those decisions and issues come before the board.

Clearly, when we're talking about protection of public safety, because this is what this board regulates, it's a concern that any number of board members might be in a conflict-of-interest position because they wouldn't want to take action against their employer, even though that was what their job was to be as a director on the board.

Third, and this was important as well, the offloading of this on to the authority also allowed it, as a private organization, to really escape the scrutiny of other officers of this assembly. Since the TSSA is a private, not-for-profit corporation, the Audit Act, maintained primarily by the Provincial Auditor, the Ombudsman Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Lobbyists Registration Act and the Environmental Bill of Rights do not apply to this authority. Why not? Why shouldn't they? But that is the case, so any of the officers of this assembly who would normally be looking at other applications of other provincial law

cannot provide any public scrutiny of this particular authority despite the important role it's supposed to play in protecting public safety.

So what the bill did was to transfer any number of government functions to a private, not-for-profit corporation, one that has had very serious consequences in terms of conflict of interest, accountability, scrutiny by important public officers of this Legislature. Although the government described it at the time as streamlining, getting rid of bureaucracy, getting rid of duplication, it has really turned out to have some very serious, enormous consequences.

We are going to debate Bill 42 tonight, which is kind of part 2 of Bill 54. That particular bill was a follow-up on the 1996 legislation in that it is supposed to give the authority even more ability to take advantage of what the minister has described as new innovations in safety equipment and technology. This was the same minister, frankly, who suffered some very serious consequences as a result of recommendations made as a result of the death of a young man, Mr Jerome Charron, at the Ex in August 1998 on a bungee-jumping ride. This is the same bill, this Bill 42 that we will be dealing with tonight, that came from another bill where the government off-loaded all of its responsibilities. So we see that the previous bill and its incarnate, the second one that we will be dealing with tonight, have nothing to do with streamlining but everything to do with off-loading government responsibilities, which frankly puts the public at risk.

If you look at Bill 119, I want to read into the record a letter that we've received from the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board. They have written because they are extremely concerned about schedule P in this bill. Schedule P primarily repeals the Wine Content Act, which was passed in 1988, and establishes a new act called the Wine Content and Labelling Act. It's interesting that the government has talked about jobs and how this bill is necessary to create jobs, because as you listen to my reading of this letter you can tell that this is a group that is particularly concerned about jobs. They don't see anything in this bill or in schedule P that's going to help them with respect to that.

This is written by John Neufeld, the chair of the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board. It's dated yesterday, October 10, 2000. It says as follows:

"The replacement Wine Content Act is being included in Bill 119, which had its first reading on October 4th...."

"Growers are concerned. The replacement act merely continues the provisions of the act of 1988, which were a response to free trade provisions...."

"We are concerned that wines with only 30% Ontario content will continue to be sold in the Ontario Winery Retail stores which by their nature were intended to promote Ontario agri-products. Now the practice of selling wines that are predominantly foreign and imported at surplus, distressed prices will continue to be retailed in Ontario Winery stores by the mythology of labels 'Cellared in Canada.' Does anyone know what that means?..."

"Growers have pressured for the new act"—the one we are dealing with today, schedule P—"to be patterned on federal standards with a minimum of 75% Ontario—or Canadian—content in each bottle. Bill 119 disregards the interests of growers who make a wine industry possible in this province. Bill 119 will be welcomed by vineyard owners in places like Chile and Argentina and by the major corporations who operate most of the wine retail stores with benefits of keeping LCBO markups and other charges. These benefits surpass \$50 million a year in add-on gross profits for these corporations, in addition to tax reductions on sales via their own stores.

"We seek your support in securing fair and open debate on the Wine Content and Labelling Act, 2000."

1750

I don't know if this government intends to have some public hearings on this bill. I certainly think they should. I think they should just on the basis of this letter that we received from the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board because there's nothing in this letter to suggest that Bill 119 is going to be responsible for creating more jobs in Ontario. There's nothing in this bill that suggests the duplication the government wants to get rid of is going to be a good thing for these folks. There's nothing in this bill that gives me any sense that this association and the grape growers in this province, particularly small, family-owned wineries, are going to be protected by this government through this bill. On the contrary, as far as I can tell in reading the contents of this letter, they've got some serious concerns. They're going to be affected detrimentally by this bill. There isn't anything positive in this bill for them.

That's just one of the reasons why we need public hearings on this bill. As I said earlier, there's going to be any number of sections that come back to bite us. That's why we need some public hearings to get a full airing.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Wood: I draw to the attention of the member who just spoke that labelling standards are national. I think to the extent one has concerns about labelling standards in Ontario, they should make their case at the national level. We agree that those standards should be national, not confined to one province.

When we talk about the wine industry in Ontario, it's rather interesting to note that Hugh Johnson, one of the leading experts on wine in the world, considers Ontario to be one of the three best wine-making regions in eastern North America. It's rather interesting that our VQA sales are way up. Our wine industry has made dramatic progress, both among our own consumers and among consumers outside Ontario over the past dozen years or so.

I'm rather surprised our friends in the New Democratic Party aren't listening to the citizens of Ontario who enjoy wine and the citizens of other jurisdictions who enjoy wine, because they're speaking with their money. They have confidence in our industry and they're buying our industry's products in record amounts. I'm rather

surprised to hear the lack of confidence in our industry from the NDP.

We heard some comments about self-regulation or delegated regulation. We at the Red Tape Commission think that's a very good idea in the right circumstances. The standards are set under a memorandum of understanding with the minister which governs what has to be done. It's entirely accountable through that process. We find that where it's done right, there are some great advantages. The entity gets into prevention rather than merely reacting to problems. The various concerns that have been raised are all subject of course to the legal and constitutional requirements of any tribunal. I think the idea is a good one. We're certainly enthusiastic where it's done in the right circumstances.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I note in this, and the member for Nickel Belt has noted most appropriately, that hidden inside this bill—because there are so many things that are hidden inside these omnibus bills, in this case an omnibus red tape bill—is something that is extremely concerning to farmers in the Niagara region, and I'm sure along Lake Erie, in Essex county and Elgin county, because the Wine Content Act is something they would have expected to see as an independent bill so we could hear appropriately from both sides. Farmers are concerned that the content of the wine that is found on the shelves of the LCBO is in fact not the Canadian content we want to see. The Wine Content Act is a vehicle to be used appropriately to determine how much foreign content there can be in those bottles of

wine. There are many people now who are selecting, for good reason, first of all, the high-quality wines that are made in the province of Ontario, that are from the grapes of the province of Ontario, that are made by wineries in Ontario.

I think all of us in this House are supportive both of those who are running the wineries in terms of their sales and of the farmers who produce the grapes. But if farmers are in a position of trying to sell their grapes and they have to compete with people in Chile, as an instance, because Chile is a major competitor, south of the border in the United States or in other jurisdictions, if they have to compete with those grapes and you walk into the LCBO and find wine that's in there that everybody thinks is Canadian—in other words, for an Ontarian to be parochial, a product of the province of Ontario—and it indeed is not, they're going to be very concerned.

I want to tell members of this government that over the years they have enjoyed considerable support from those farmers. One need only look at the polls at election time to see that the government has indeed enjoyed some considerable support, I think based on the fact they thought they would get at least a fair shake with the Wine Content Act. They're very concerned about it. There's no question this bill has to go to committee for public hearings so they can express those concerns themselves.

The Acting Speaker: It being six of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1756.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées et à la Condition féminine
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children) / ministre sans portefeuille (Enfance)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion		
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough South / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Brian (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Willowdale	Young, David (PC)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling, Gerard Kennedy,
Frank Mazzilli, John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters,
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Bert Johnson, Morley Kells, Tony Martin,
Joseph Spina, Bob Wood
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Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

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Brenda Elliott, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Marilyn Mushinski
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Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

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Jean-Marc Lalonde, Jerry J. Ouellette, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N.
Tasca, Wayne Wettlaufer
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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

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