



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 13 December 2000

Mercredi 13 décembre 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 13 December 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 13 décembre 2000

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I don't think anyone in this Legislature would argue that one of the most pressing issues we are facing in northern Ontario at this time is the increasing physician shortage crisis. In my hometown of Thunder Bay, as many as 20,000 people are without a family doctor right now, a reality that is both frightening and intolerable. I get calls every day from people desperate to access a family doctor.

That is why it was disturbing to hear yesterday that a provincial plan designed to ease the doctor shortage, which we expected would be made public by now, may be delayed a few more months.

If anything, this only makes it all the more important that the Premier and the Minister of Health put their support behind the establishment of a northern and rural medical school. The issue of physician recruitment and retention has been one we have grappled with for decades now. What is becoming very clear is that a northern medical school may truly prove to be a long-term solution for a problem for which we must find a solution.

Experts in the field such as Dr James Rourke, the director of rural medicine at the University of Western Ontario, tell us that the location of medical training is a major determinant of where new doctors will eventually set up practice and that we can expect more than 50% of those graduates will ultimately end up practising in northern or rural areas.

A great deal of work has been done by many people over the last year to see that a northern and rural medical school comes to fruition. Today I ask the Premier and the Minister of Health to get on board and support this exciting initiative. Everyone in this province should have a family doctor, Premier. Perhaps it can happen with your support today.

EVENTS IN DURHAM

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm very pleased to stand in the House today and talk about the many positive events taking place in my riding of Durham. For

instance, last Thursday, December 7, one of the municipality of Clarington's most active community organizations, the Clarington Older Adult Centre, was the recipient of a community grant from the Trillium Foundation. The Durham, Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge division of the foundation presented the cheque in the amount of \$75,000 over three years.

This allowed the organization to hire a program coordinator, Laura McDonald, to support the development and implementation of physical and social programs and information seminars as well as activities for seniors in Clarington.

Representing the Trillium Foundation at the ceremony was David Cook, who presented the cheque to the association's executive director, John Coffey. Also present were the mayor of Clarington, John Mutton, the president of the Older Adults Association board of directors, Don Welsh, and board members Joan and Glen Prout.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to personally thank the Clarington Older Adult Association, their staff and many, many volunteers like Annabelle Sissons and Mavis Carleton, who have put a lot of time and energy into making this a very successful, volunteer-based community organization. It's organizations like this that make Clarington, in my riding of Durham, a great place to live, to work and to raise a family.

HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): The most successful social housing is non-profit co-operative housing. Today it is in jeopardy. As you know, co-op housing is a mix of low and middle-income families housed together in the same community, giving everyone a sense of pride and ownership. Furthermore, it provides them a sense of self-governance because of the rules and regulations that they themselves develop. Co-op residents themselves are responsible for setting and enforcing rents and charges for their accommodation.

All these principles of co-op housing have been under attack for years. Most importantly, the fact that some governments do not appear to understand the difference between co-ops and other forms of social housing makes the issue more complex. They don't appear to understand that co-ops are self-governing. This separates co-ops from other non-profit housing providers.

As long as co-ops properly manage their own projects within the financial parameters of the operating agreements which govern their financial relationship with the

province, it would appear that the co-ops are free to manage themselves. However, there are many other variables that now adversely affect their ability to do so. What has happened over the last several years is that the tightening of financial parameters is evident. The withdrawing of funds from the co-ops and requiring co-ops to make up financial differences from their resources has put an upward pressure on rents to be charged for the co-ops to such an extent that availability to those in need of affordable housing is just too expensive. Rather than housing needy families and individuals, they sit empty.

The financial crisis here is evident. We want the government to address their concern. I have spoken to the minister, who allowed me to say that he will co-operate with me to address this problem.

HOLIDAY DISPLAYS

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): There is a Christmas attraction in Northumberland that brings people in by the busload. Several communities in my riding decorate their town halls and historic buildings with dazzling lights, creating a sea of colour and beauty.

Every year, the town of Campbellford-Seymour has its Showcase of Lights. More than 100 displays are erected on Old Mill Park and along the historic Trent Canal. Many of these are animated. This year, several businesses in the community have also taken part by placing extravagant displays on their property and buildings.

Other communities in Northumberland show their holiday spirit as well. Cobourg's is Christmas Magic, which includes a massive display of lights in the park, as well as bringing historic Victoria Hall to life with a festive light display. Brighton also decorates its community with many colourful lights, while Port Hope complements its historic architecture with thousands of them.

While I congratulate these communities, I also commend this government for its support through the Ontario rural jobs strategy fund. This program is providing more than \$1.6 million to Northumberland's economic renewal initiative to help promote Northumberland as a tourist destination. This, of course, includes the Northumberland lights.

I take this opportunity to encourage everyone to come and visit Northumberland and enjoy the displays, the surroundings and the wonderful seasonal hospitality.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I rise today to raise grave concerns about this government's lack of commitment to community-based mental health care. As the Harris government continues to rush to close down psych hospitals, you have failed to put the adequate community supports in place.

The Minister of Health continues to promise that not one hospital bed will close until proper community supports are in place. Assertive community treatment teams are slowly being put in place across this province. The

move away from institutional care is commendable, but the ministry must commit necessary dollars to provide true community-based care.

Unfortunately, community-based care is being sacrificed in the interest of cost-cutting. In October of this year, all call-backs for community health care program workers have ceased. If a psychiatric patient experiences a crisis, they cannot contact their worker. They must, and I am quoting here from a Ministry of Health letter dated October 6, 2000, "call the ... hospital switchboard and be transferred to the officer in charge. It is acknowledged that these individuals may not be familiar with the individual resident...."

This hypocrisy is outstanding. Either this government wants community-based mental health or they don't. They cannot have it both ways. As we move away from institutionalized care, we have to respect the trust and care relationship developed between patients and workers. You cannot say that we only want services in the community when it is convenient or not too costly just because we don't want to pay overtime. Caring for the most vulnerable in our society requires putting people first, not policy, not budgets. Elizabeth Witmer, listen, please.

1340

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Last Friday, I held a news conference with representatives from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Conservation Council of Ontario, Save the Rouge and Earthroots to talk about the need for public hearings on the NDP's Bill 71, the Oak Ridges Moraine Green Planning Act.

This is what the Federation of Ontario Naturalists had to say: "There needs to be open public discussion about the various options for how best to protect the Oak Ridges moraine's natural features and water resources from unchecked urban sprawl. An opportunity for such discussion now presents itself in Bill 71, the Oak Ridges Moraine Green Planning Act."

Save the Oak Ridges Moraine said something similar, as did the Conservation Council of Ontario and others.

The public is saying, loud and clear, that this government should hold public hearings on Bill 71. They must take place, and they must take place now. In fact, in order to avoid having to deal with Bill 71, the government spent six days on something called the Motorized Snow Vehicles Amendment Act.

Interjection: In committee.

Ms Churley: In committee, six days.

In the meantime, this bill, the Oak Ridges moraine bill, has been kicking around for six months. There is no excuse not to put it on. The agenda for the general government committee is open for next week, before this House probably prorogues.

I call on the public to call Mike Harris's office—the number is 416-325-1941—and urge the Premier to put the Oak Ridges moraine bill on the agenda next week.

HANUKKAH

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): Starting next week, on December 22, Jews all over the world will celebrate Hanukkah, the festival of lights. Hanukkah commemorates the victory of a group of Jews against the Syrian army. This victory was notable because the army was so horribly outnumbered that few could imagine them being victorious. This is the true miracle of Hanukkah, that a small group of Jews could resoundingly defeat a technologically and numerically superior Syrian army.

The second, and the more commonly acknowledged miracle, came after the fighting. As the Jews were cleaning the holy temple, they found that there only remained enough oil to burn for one day. This was a major problem, as more oil wouldn't be available for temple use for eight days. The Jews started burning the holy oil and prayed for a miracle, and another miracle did arrive. The oil that should have lasted for one day lasted for eight.

In commemoration of this Hanukkah miracle, the holiday lasts eight days. Each day of the celebration is marked by the addition of one extra candle in the menorah, a candelabra placed in Jewish windows and homes all over the world to mark this festival. Jewish children play with dreidels, small tops inscribed with the letters for the Hebrew words meaning "a great miracle happened there."

As people from all over the province gather to celebrate their winter holidays, including Christmas and Diwali, I take this opportunity to wish Ontario Jews, particularly those from Thornhill, a very happy and healthy Hanukkah. Chag Sameach.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): It was only 10 days ago that the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission board decided to break up the transportation and communications agency that has served the economy of northeastern Ontario for the past 86 years. Since then, I've twice asked the Minister of Northern Development and Mines in this House to meet with the business and municipal leaders of northeastern Ontario before he proceeded with any recommendation.

On behalf of the residents of northeastern Ontario, I have asked for the consultant's report to be released and for a series of public hearings in communities along the rail corridor before any decision was made.

Under the Harris government's direction, the ONTC board has arbitrarily decided to break up and sell off most of the transportation and telecommunication businesses that have opened up northeastern Ontario. Now the minister, two days before he was planning to meet the Northeastern Ontario Mayors Action Group, with the

board chair, has given the go-ahead to divest most of these businesses.

This is another example of the arrogance and total disdain the Harris government has for the residents of northern Ontario. This is another nail in the coffin of our economy.

This is typical of the arbitrary nature of this government, that you don't listen to the people, you try to run this whole thing as a business, and you don't consult with the people. There was still a democracy in this place the last time I looked. You don't treat this province as a democracy. It's about time you did. You're going to rue that day when the next election comes.

OPPOSITION PARTIES

Mr David Young (Willowdale):

'Twas the end of the session,
and all through the House,
The vote bells were ringing—
the members wanted out.
The Liberals had hung
their stockings with care,
In hopes that some policies
soon would be there.

The Dippers were seated
behind their nine desks,
While tax-and-spend visions
danced in their heads.
While past NDPers taxed dirt
and the weather,
Us Tories balanced the budget
in springtime together.

When up in the gallery
there arose such a bustle,
I craned my neck upward
to see what the fuss was.
The Grits and the Dippers
must have thought they were dreaming,
"Keep cutting our taxes!"
the people were screaming.

"Keep reforming our health care, our welfare—
cut crime,
"Make our young offenders
serve all of their time.
"Stand fast, Mr Harris,
you're on the right track,
"Ontario's much better,
we're not going back!"

"Point of order," screamed Dalton,
"this just isn't fair!"

"I want to be Premier,
and sit over there."

The Speaker stood up and said,
"Government members, stop laughing,

"I'm the boss of this place
and must prevent that from happening."

"But really," said Dalton,
"I really can lead,
"I've got positions on everything,
usually two, sometimes three."
Then the Premier stood up,
and the other shoe dropped.
"Dalton, you'll not have my job,
because you flip-flop."

The Premier turned to the gallery
and stated quite clearly,
"This government believes in its plan
quite sincerely.
"We'll continue reform,
spend on health care and kids,
And I know you'll be proud
of all that we did."

To conclude this brief speech,
I look forward to being able to say
We'll be back in the spring.
Enjoy the holiday!

MINISTRIES' WEB SITES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): On Monday, December 5, 2000, the member for Windsor-St Clair rose on a question of privilege in order to express his concern about information on a government Web site. In particular, the member was of the view that a press release on the Web site of the Ministry of Community and Social Services was partisan political propaganda that should not be funded by his constituents or by other taxpayers, and that the press release was also delivered to members by way of the legislative mail service instead of being mailed by the caucus.

The next day the member rose, also on a question of privilege, to indicate that the Web site of the Office of the Premier, as well as the Internet communications of the Minister of Labour, also contained partisan material. The member was of the view that the material was a violation of section 28 of the Public Service Act, that the government was trying to intimidate the opposition with taxpayer dollars, and that the material violated not only the privileges of members, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, but those of the people of Ontario. The government House leader also made a submission.

I've had an opportunity to review the member's supporting documentation, and I will address all points.

First, with respect to the allegation that members are being intimidated, the fact that the government Web site contains information that members object to does not in itself establish a prima facie case of privilege; some of the material may well be partisan in nature, but none of it suggests to me that the members are being intimidated in a manner that constitutes a breach of privilege.

Secondly, as members well know from previous rulings on the subject, it is for the courts, not the Speaker, to interpret laws like the Public Service Act, although I'm sure the Chair of Management Board will take the appropriate steps to deal with the allegations.

Thirdly, the right of members to government information is limited to what the standing orders provide. The standing orders do not provide members with the right to information, reliable or otherwise, from a government Web site.

Fourthly, as to the distribution of partisan material via the legislative mail service, I am more concerned with the content of the material than with the method of delivery.

And finally, members will know that there are many rulings to the effect that the Speaker cannot prevent the government from communicating an allegedly partisan political message using political funds.

However, I would not want to leave the impression that I am untroubled by what I read in the material submitted by the member for Windsor-St Clair. I note that previous Speakers have expressed concern about government communication. For example, on January 22, 1997, Speaker Stockwell stated, and I quote,

"At this point in my ruling, I want to express some personal concerns about the propriety of public funds being used to advocate, through advertising, a particular position on a matter that is before the House. Let me be clear," and that again is Speaker Stockwell speaking, "I am not speaking here about politically paid-for advertising, but rather about funds that are contributed to by every Ontarian, regardless of his or her political view.

"Personally, I would find it offensive if taxpayer dollars were being used to convey a political or partisan message. There is nothing wrong with members debating an issue and influencing public opinion; in fact, it is part of our parliamentary tradition to do so. But I feel that it is wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds—which, I might add, are not available to the opposition—instead of through debate in the House."

1350

My own personal concern about the information is quite simple and perhaps I am being too obvious, but I'd like to state it. Publicly funded Web sites, as opposed to politically funded Web sites, should be used to communicate with the public in a fair, reasonable and meaningful way. A line is crossed when a government uses a Web site or, for that matter, any publicly funded mechanism as a vehicle to launch a provocative attack on any member of this House.

And so, while I find a prima facie case of privilege has not been made out, in my view this is an inappropriate use of government Web sites, and I hope that all members clearly understand the difference between what is publicly funded and what is politically funded communication, and that they will use each accordingly when they communicate to Ontarians.

I'd like to thank the member for Windsor-St Clair and the government House leader for their submissions on this matter.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of Correctional Services, Government House Leader): I heard your ruling with regard to there not being a formal breach of privilege. I do want to apologize on behalf of those ministers who had Web sites which appeared to be politically motivated press releases which were reproduced on those Web sites.

This will not happen in the future. We agree with your synopsis with regard to the use of this kind of material. It should be on our party Web site and it should not be on our provincial ministry Web sites.

The Speaker: I sincerely thank the government House leader for that.

VISITORS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I beg your indulgence and the indulgence of the House. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce four of my six sisters who are visiting today: Catherine Stephenson, Jane Goodman, Ruth Ciraulo and Monica Audia. I'd like you to join in me welcoming them.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We're very pleased to have members of the family. I'm sure the member's performance today will be something that's very honourable for all of the family here to watch.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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

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

Mr Gerretsen: This is the last of six reports that the public accounts committee has presented, based on the 1999 Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor.

I would like to start off by thanking the staff who have worked on it, both Erik Peters's staff and Erik Peters himself, the clerk and the clerk's office staff and of course the legislative researcher for the work they've done for the committee this past year.

The current report had eight recommendations in it, and if I could just highlight two of them: it recommends that the Ministry of Transportation should report on its province-wide highway assessment to determine whether the maintenance program is meeting its goal of preserving and prolonging the life of the provincial highway network; and also, that the Ministry of Transportation

should report to the committee on its highway monitoring activities and their effectiveness in ensuring that minimum standards of highway safety and contractor performance expectations are achieved; and finally, that the ministry should report to the committee on the overall highway maintenance costs for the last two fiscal years, including the reductions in overhead achieved through outsourcing.

We hope that the ministry will take these recommendations and implement them as soon as possible.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Brian Coburn (Ottawa-Orléans): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill Pr33, An Act respecting Idlewyld Manor.

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

DEFERRED VOTES

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We now have a deferred vote on the motion to extend the House sitting until Thursday, December 21, 2000.

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

The division bells rang from 1356 to 1401.

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

Mr Baird has moved government order number 10. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic
Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Beaubien, Marcel
Bisson, Gilles
Boyer, Claudette
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Chudleigh, Ted
Churley, Marilyn
Clark, Brad
Cleary, John C.
Clement, Tony
Coburn, Brian
Colle, Mike

Galt, Doug
Gerretsen, John
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Gravelle, Michael
Guzzo, Garry J.
Hampton, Howard
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Kennedy, Gerard
Klees, Frank
Kwinter, Monte
Lankin, Frances
Levac, David

Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parsons, Ernie
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Ramsay, David
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Sergio, Mario
Smitherman, George
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.

Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Tilson, David
Crozier, Bruce	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cunningham, Dianne	Martel, Shelley	Turnbull, David
Curling, Alvin	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dombrowsky, Leona	Maves, Bart	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Mazzilli, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Ecker, Janet	McGuinty, Dalton	Wood, Bob
Elliott, Brenda	McLeod, Lyn	Young, David
Flaherty, Jim	McMeekin, Ted	

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

Nays

Kormos, Peter

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The eyes are 83; the nays are 1.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I request unanimous consent to reconsider the time allocation motion regarding the Employment Standards Act, Bill 147. Today we've just been tabled the amendments from the government. They constitute 24 pages, in addition to the 88 pages of the bill itself, and we have effectively one hour this afternoon to deal with this. It is totally impossible. I seek unanimous consent to reconsider the time allocation motion and allow us substantive time at the committee level to do the job that needs to be done on this bill.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. In the early 1990s, there was talk of a pedophile ring in Cornwall, so in 1992 the Cornwall police conducted an investigation. No evidence was turned up and no charges were laid. Talk persisted on the street, so in 1994 the OPP conducted an investigation. No evidence was found and no charges were laid.

As you are well aware, Premier, a citizens' committee went to work and collected evidence. They turned that evidence over to the OPP, and subsequently 115 charges were laid against 15 people. There are allegedly close to 50 victims. Some were as young as 12 years of age at the time, victims of some very terrible and horrific sexual assaults.

Premier, the people of Cornwall and the victims in particular and their families want justice in this matter. Your colleague Garry Guzzo has put forward the solution: Bill 103. He believes, as I believe, as this House believes, that we should hold a commission of inquiry. Garry Guzzo tells us the only reason we're not moving forward on this is because you are blocking it. Premier,

why do you feel that the people of Cornwall and the victims of this abuse are not entitled to justice?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the Attorney General can respond to this.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): It is the opinion of counsel involved in the prosecution of the pending cases, and there may be further cases, that there would be potential prejudice to those court proceedings were some other proceeding, such as a commission of inquiry, to take place at this time. I said so in the Legislature some weeks ago when Bill 103 was debated.

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, there are prosecutions underway. There has been a very substantial commitment of resources by the Ontario Provincial Police through Project Truth. That investigation is for the most part complete, although there may be other matters for the OPP, I'm advised, to look into, and there is the possibility of further charges.

Mr McGuinty: You'll be very much aware of the precedents in Mount Cashel and Westray and even, in our province, in the case of Walkerton, all cases where independent inquiries were conducted at the same time as criminal investigations and proceedings were underway. What you're offering is an excuse.

You must have seen the statement of claim that was issued against this government on behalf of 12 men who were victimized as boys, some as young as 12. The statement of claim describes the sexual assaults in sickening detail. They also tell us that their lives were devastated as a result.

Minister and Premier, this should not be a partisan issue. I think we all understand what is the right thing to do under these circumstances. Listen to your own colleague. I had the privilege of appearing before Judge Guzzo when he was sitting on the bench and I can tell you, regardless of what you may think of him, that he is a passionate defender of the interests of children. He has put forward a very important solution to this matter which hangs like a cloud over the community of Cornwall.

Minister, why is it that we can't proceed with the passage of his bill? Why is it that we can't proceed with a commission of inquiry into this matter which hangs over the community of Cornwall?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I'm sure the member opposite, who is a lawyer, knows that it would be inappropriate for us as a government to take action that would potentially interfere or prejudice or in some way jeopardize criminal prosecutions arising out of very serious events that are alleged to have taken place in the Cornwall area over the course of some years. Very substantial police resources have been committed to this investigation for some years, and I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition would not wish to have any of that effort jeopardized by any steps being taken which would potentially interfere with the administration of justice, with the prosecution of persons who have been charged or may be charged arising out of these events.

In terms of other inquiries, as he knows or should know, the terms of reference, for example, in the Walkerton inquiry, provide for the potential of a criminal proceeding—

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

1410

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you are continuing to make excuses. We can tailor this commission of inquiry so that it doesn't in any way unduly prejudice any criminal investigations. That can all be done. It has been done in Newfoundland, it has been done in Nova Scotia and we're doing it at this very time in our own province.

Mr Guzzo tells us that the government has vital evidence you won't release. In his letter to you he says, "Why should our government feel that we could keep this type of evidence from ... any citizen of this province?" He goes on to add, "One might also ask why it is necessary for alleged victims, such as the ones in this most recent lawsuit, to be forced to go to the expense and the difficulty of bringing forward a claim such as this when the method suggested in Bill 103 would have been less cumbersome and less complicated and less expensive to the government as well as to the plaintiffs herein."

My question is, why can't we just end this cover-up? Why can't we go ahead with a commission of inquiry, understanding that we can tailor it so it doesn't unduly prejudice criminal investigations? Do we not owe that at a minimum to the victims and the people of Cornwall?

Hon Mr Flaherty: Just to be clear, there are no charges pending in the Walkerton situation. Were that to eventuate, that situation would have to be addressed by the commissioner pursuant to the terms of reference in the Walkerton inquiry.

The Leader of the Opposition suggests that I, as Attorney General, ignore the advice I'm getting from the crown prosecutors and those responsible for the administration of criminal justice in the crown's office. I'm not going to do that. I accept their advice. I made it clear when I spoke to Bill 103 in this House precisely what the government's position is, based on the criminal prosecutions that are ongoing, and that is in Hansard for the Leader of the Opposition to read. I'm sure the last thing the people in Cornwall want would be to have criminal prosecutions thrown out because of actions taken by politicians.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Labour. Through your changes to the Employment Standards Act, you are about to impose some dramatic changes in lifestyle for five million non-unionized Ontarians and their children. Tell me, why is it you are afraid to conduct public committee hearings looking into your bill?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Previous to this bill being drafted, the Ministry of Labour and myself issued a white paper. The white paper was a

very complete and comprehensive package that talked about exactly what would be in the legislation and asked for comments. Subsequent to releasing that—it was out for a month or two months—we then went on a tour and held public consultations in about six or seven cities and met with everyone who requested to be met with. We met with the unions, the labour leaders, the authorities, the legal clinics, with all of them. As the culmination of that work, we drafted the Employment Standards Act, revised. We introduced it in this House with those comments that were put in.

As far as the public consultation process is concerned, it was also done two years ago by the then Minister of Labour, Elizabeth Witmer. On this public consultation process, we have been very open and very public, and very interested in hearing from the public. I think we've done a very good job of that.

Mr McGuinty: This Legislature has not had the opportunity to listen to people comment on your specific bill. Listen to what somebody said in this Legislature back in 1994 in the context of a debate on a labour bill:

"Opportunities for people like yourself to come forward and tell a government what you think about a piece of legislation weren't there.

"What's democratic about that? What's fair about that? Why is it you say to me this is a fair process to go through, it's equal and upfront, when people in this province don't get a chance to tell you what they think? What is more fundamentally democratic than that?"

Do you know who said that? One Chris Stockwell. There was the grand lover of democratic principles, the man who was most righteous and indignant when he stood on this side of the House.

What happened, Minister? Why is it that you no longer hold the principles of democracy in such high regard?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Quite candidly, the piece of legislation the leader of the official opposition is talking about wasn't canvassed like this bill was. We didn't travel the province. We didn't go to London, we didn't go to Windsor, we didn't go to Sudbury, we didn't go to Thunder Bay, we didn't go to Ottawa, we didn't sit in Toronto, we didn't go to Sarnia and we didn't go to Oshawa. We didn't go to those places when we were talking about that bill. With this bill, we did talk about it.

As far as the members opposite having the opportunity to sit in and hear these concerns, an invitation was given to all members of this House. The NDP took advantage of that on occasion. Your caucus didn't. Don't ask me to explain why they chose to ignore them, because the public certainly didn't.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. We're not going to have shouting across. The Minister of Labour has it.

Minister of Labour. Sorry.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Other than the member from Windsor-Essex, there wasn't another Liberal who decided to show up.

All I can tell you is that we had the public hearings; we did our job. On the bill you speak about there wasn't any public consultation. I see a very serious difference in the two.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, stop thrashing about. You drown faster when you do so much thrashing.

If you don't want to listen to what you said in the past, if you won't take your own advice, then listen to what one Michael Harris said back in 1994: "One of the fundamental rights of those who are affected by legislation is to have the matter referred to a committee and to have hearings so you can hear from those affected by it."

Minister, do you know what I think? I think you are afraid to shine the light of day on your own bill. You're afraid to take it around the province. You're afraid to allow people inside this precinct to take a close look at your bill, which is going to mean longer hours and less pay. That's what it's all about. I think you're afraid. You're ashamed of your own bill. Prove me wrong, Minister. You prove me wrong and hold public committee hearings.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't take a lot of advice from the member opposite, but I will take the advice on how not to drown so quickly, that's for certain, because if there's one guy who thrashes about and drowns, it's got to be you.

Second, I'm not ashamed of this bill. I'm proud of this bill. I took—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We need to hear. Minister of Labour.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I'm proud of this bill. Simply put, we carried this bill across the province to seven separate cities. I met with the union leaders, I met with the executives in that—

Interjections.

The Speaker: It's getting toward the end of the week. I hate to do it but I'm going to have to start warning people. It is getting too noisy. I allow a little bit of it, but we get carried away, as usual. We push it a little bit too far. I'm going to start to warn people.

The Minister of Labour. Sorry.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Simply put, this bill was out in a white paper. We addressed these issues in seven or eight cities. We also went out after and discussed it in public forums. We talked about this bill.

I have no shame. This is a good piece of legislation—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up.

Stop the clock. A point of privilege.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On a point of privilege, Speaker: Just to correct the record, I did attend the hearings in Thunder Bay, although I was not invited.

The Speaker: This is not a point of privilege.

1420

OVERTIME

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. If workers in Ontario weren't already shocked by your new employment standards law, they will be today, when they learn you're adding a further clause which would have the effect of locking them into a situation where they could not get overtime pay for overtime hours worked if they sign a document saying they agree to average their overtime. This new clause would mean that a new worker, on his first day on the job, could be pressured into signing an agreement to average their overtime, and then later, when they realized they're being screwed out of thousands of dollars of overtime pay, they would find out they can't change anything with respect to that for two years. In other words, it locks them in for two years.

It's pretty easy to understand that the people who will be affected by this are people who, for example, only speak English as a second language, people who are not represented by a union in any way, people who are new in the workforce. Premier, how can you justify putting in a clause that would essentially screw new workers out of thousands of dollars of overtime in their first two years on the job? How do you justify that?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I could never justify that. That's why it won't happen.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Further to the Premier, I would suggest there's maybe a lack of communication between you and the Minister of Labour, because that very clause is exactly what was in the list of amendments that were tabled with us, just this morning, I might add, and will become law within a matter of days. The fact of the matter is that according to your amendment, once such a document is signed it runs for up to two years, and the only way an employee can get out of this new formula that denies them overtime pay they otherwise would have been entitled to is if the employer agrees. So the fact is they're locked in for two years. We ask you again, Premier, how can you justify having workers sign off their right to overtime for up to two years and can only be let out of it if their employer agrees?

Hon Mr Harris: I think that's a silly suggestion and we're not going to follow it.

Mr Christopherson: We'll see what happens at committee this afternoon. We've got the Hansard of the Premier's remarks, and tomorrow may be a very different day in terms of the question and answer on that issue.

I want to ask you further about an amendment we proposed that's going forward this afternoon. Basically it would have put into law all this protection that you and your Minister of Labour say people have in terms of saying no to 60 hours and no to averaging the overtime whereby they would lose the overtime. We put in a clause that explained very carefully that it would indeed

be a violation of the law to coerce someone, and we spell out very specifically those areas where the coercion can take place.

I'm informed by the minister that you've chosen not to include that. Premier, my question to you is: how can you stand in this place and say that workers have the right to say no, and yet when it comes time to put it in the law, the only place it really matters, you refuse? How do you justify that?

Hon Mr Harris: I think if you show up at the committee hearing today the minister will explain the bill and how it works.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Premier. Your government today announced what is basically the ultimate demise of the Northlander train service in northeastern Ontario. You announced today a two-phase plan. The first part is that you're going to move on privatizing those money-making sections of the ONTC that helped to pay for services such as the Northlander.

In your press release you say you're going to explore, under the second part of your plan, which is going to take place this spring, alternative delivery of the Northlander, the Little Bear and the Polar Bear Express rail services. Why don't you admit it? You have already made up your mind that you're going to get rid of the Northlander. Why don't you, for once, stand up in this House and tell us exactly what you're up to when it comes to the Northlander rail service, and stop playing games with the people of northeastern Ontario?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I'm sure the minister will want to respond and I will let him through supplementary questions, but let me say something that's very different from the way you acted in government with transportation and the ONTC in northern Ontario than the way we acted. We allowed and approved a commission request to have a study, called the service improvement study, to see if we could improve the quality of service provided to the people of northeastern Ontario.

Let me tell you what your record is with the ONTC. In 1990 you reduced the subsidy of the ONTC from \$22 million to \$15.8 million. In 1994 you reduced the level of bus service, without providing any alternative, from Timmins to Chapleau and Wawa. These were cancelled, you said, to save money. Star Transfer, the trucking arm of the ONTC, was eliminated by the NDP in 1993 as a cost-saving measure. The new ferry was docked by the NDP in 1993 as a cost-saving measure. You cut the norOntair service to six communities as a cost-cutting measure.

What we have clearly indicated is we're interested in improving service. We have committed—

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

Mr Bisson: Clearly, what the leader of the government was talking about was the Tory agenda. You're the ones that got rid of the subsidies to the ONR. You're the ones that got rid of norOntair across northeastern Ontario, where communities are now without any air service whatsoever. That's the legacy of the Mike Harris government.

It's exactly for those reasons that we're saying to you, as northerners, you have to invest in the Northlander, you have to invest within the Ontario Northland, to make sure that it remains a viable service for people of northeastern Ontario.

Every government before you, including the NDP, had faith in the ONR, invested and made sure that those services were in place for people in northeastern Ontario. I'm asking you again, Premier: will you do the same, especially as a person who lives in North Bay, whose people work at that commission and who is supposed to represent northern Ontario?

Hon Mr Harris: I think you are aware that the minister made an announcement in North Bay today aimed at how we improve service to northern Ontario. Perhaps you could explain to me how the NDP government, going from \$22 million in 1990 to \$15.8 million in 1994, could slash and cut that money out of the ONTC budget. How did that improve services to northern Ontario? I wonder if you could tell me how reducing the level of bus service with no alternative from Timmins to Chapleau and Wawa helped the people of northern Ontario. I wonder if you could tell me how cutting out Star Transfer helped the people of northern Ontario. This was the record of your government.

We have clearly indicated that we are interested in improving service. To that extent, we have had a consultant give us advice. The minister reacted to that and responded. We are interested, not in saving money but in how we can improve service to those people in northern Ontario.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I have a question today for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. In regard to the ONTC, it was only 10 days ago that the commission had decided to divest most of the operating businesses that make up the commission. Twice in this House I've asked the minister to consult with the business and the municipal leaders of northeastern Ontario before he makes any decision about our telecommunications and transportation agency in the north.

On behalf of the residents of northern Ontario, I also asked the minister to release the consultant's study and to make sure that he carries on some public hearings in the communities along the rail corridor. But today the minister has arbitrarily made the decision, two days before the chair of the ONTC was to meet with the northeastern mayors' action group about this, to get rid of this agency, to divest most of the assets in it and basically to put a big hole in the economy of northeastern Ontario. Minister, why are you acting in this arbitrary manner and not talking to the people who are shareholders of this agency?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'm very pleased to respond to the member from Timiskaming on his question. As members of this House well know, this issue has been studied time and time again. In fact, in my tenure as minister, this is the second study in 18 months, among seven or eight in the past few years alone. It's time for action, to move forward, to help improve services in northeastern Ontario, whether that's rail, bus, ferries or telecommunications.

In my 18 months as minister alone, I've had many conversations with mayors, with the union representatives, with the board members, with the member opposite himself. I'll read you one of the lines from the consultations in the responses we've had: "I've proposed a casino in the train—snowmobile cars, and to really get back to the idea of providing ... a northern adventure. We have the mechanism here. It probably should be run by the private sector." That's from the member from Timiskaming before the cabinet committee, so we are pleased to take his advice in our recommendations brought forward today.

1430

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): To the same minister: as the minister would be aware, the Chi-Cheemaun service from Tobermory to South Baymouth is critical to the people I represent. In the ONTC announcement, the minister suggests this will be a spin-off corporation. I'm here to ask the minister a couple of things.

Seeing as the minister, without any advice from the people of Manitoulin or Tobermory or the Bruce Peninsula, saw fit to sell the Nindawayma, the second ship on that run, and seeing as the minister in his service improvement plan has not indicated in any way that the plan will actually improve services, would the minister commit to allowing the governance of this to have a large number of residents of the district of Manitoulin on the Owen Sound Transportation Commission board, and would the minister commit that all ferry services will be improved?

Hon Mr Hudak: That was the goal of this service improvement strategy: to look at the array of services and determine how we can improve the value customers are getting in that area. I think the member should be very pleased. The decision announced today was to separate the marine ferry services from the general corporation so it can specialize and be more independent and provide better services to the area. We're going to have the Owen Sound Transportation Commission in the Owen Sound area. I've asked them to consult with residents of the area to determine how best to improve services, and to get local residents involved in making that a better service.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is to the Minister of the Environment.

When your colleague the Minister of Energy introduced Bill 35, the Energy Competition Act, he indicated there would be provision to ensure consumers had the option to choose green power suppliers. My constituents are asking me how they can help the environment by choosing cleaner forms of electricity. Can you please update me on what we can do to support cleaner air through our electricity suppliers?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I want to thank the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for the question. Indeed this government is supportive of alternative sources of energy that reduce overall emissions to the atmosphere. As you indicated in your question, Bill 35 facilitates the development of green power by requiring disclosure of generation sources to consumers. In addition, the Ministry of the Environment introduced a regulation that requires all electricity generators to monitor their emissions and report to the public on an ongoing basis on their environmental performance. This regulation has been in effect since May of this year.

We're already reaping the benefits of these policies. Just today this government approved a declaration order to allow the development of two wind-powered turbines. This project is a partnership between the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative and Toronto Hydro, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the proponents for offering the citizens of the city of Toronto a green power alternative.

Mr Gill: Minister, does that mean you will not be conducting an environmental assessment of these kinds of wind-turbine projects, should one be proposed in my riding?

Hon Mr Newman: The ministry is currently evaluating these kinds of alternative energy sources on a case-by-case basis. In the case of this project, we felt that since the federal environmental review process had already been completed, and because it would have addressed the same concerns we would have looked at, conducting another environmental assessment would have caused undue duplication without providing any added environmental value. Based on the merits of the proposed wind turbine, such as reducing emissions of climate-change-causing greenhouse gases and smog, we felt the project deserved a green light.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues across the floor—the member for Toronto-Danforth and the member for Beaches-East York—for their support of the declaration order that will allow this very worthwhile project to go ahead. I'm very pleased, as this demonstrates once and for all that when partisan differences are set aside, the environment benefits.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier. It has to do with the shooting death of Dudley George at Ipperwash Provincial Park. We believe there is a need for a full public inquiry.

We're concerned that with the passing of time, key files will go missing. It has already happened in one case, as you probably are aware, and the Solicitor General, when asked about it, acknowledged that indeed a key file did go missing. He said at the time, "Indeed we are concerned about the loss of these files in terms of our ability to retain very important and critical files. I share your concern with respect to that. The current deputy has initiated a review of the retention policy."

We sent you a letter today, Premier, asking that you issue a directive to your cabinet and to the public service ordering a retention of all files related to Ipperwash, pending a public inquiry. My question to you is, will you do that today? Will you issue to the cabinet and to the public service a directive ensuring that all files are retained, pending a public inquiry?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Sure.

Mr Phillips: I appreciate that answer. Just a couple of details on that then. Because it is of significant importance—frankly, we haven't heard back on the investigation of the loss of those other files—will you give us a date when you will issue that, and will you assure us that that directive will be made public, Mr Premier?

Hon Mr Harris: I don't know anything more public than the Legislature right here in the province of Ontario. So let me say to all who are looking and let me say to you that absolutely no files or any memos or anything at any time ought to be destroyed that may pertain to this. If this has occurred and you have an example of that, show us who is responsible and who is involved and we'll take the appropriate action.

In the meantime, let me repeat that that has always been the direction of the government of Ontario and I'm happy to repeat that for you right here in the Legislature.

Mr Phillips: On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I'm happy to table the evidence and to say that it was the Solicitor General who—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): You can send it across. It is not a point of privilege, but you can send it across.

TIME LIMITS IN CIVIL DISPUTES

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, I've dealt with numerous calls from my constituents in the riding of Durham, both plaintiffs and defendants, who have raised questions about unclear and unfair time limits to law, specifically civil lawsuits.

I would like to ask the Attorney General what the new legislation, the Limitations Act, will mean for Durham constituents, as well as all constituents of the province of Ontario, to settle civil disputes. How will this legislation strike a balance between the rights of plaintiffs and respondents in civil court proceedings?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Durham for the question. The legislation, if it's passed, will consolidate dozens of outdated and non-cohesive

limitations legislation in Ontario into one clear, updated piece of legislation. It proposes two clear and fair time frames. In consulting widely with stakeholders, we have struck a balance, we believe, between reasonable discovery times, a reasonable time for a victim to launch a suit and the reasonable expectation of potential defendants to end uncertainties surrounding potential suits.

So, first of all, there's a two-year basic limitation period, subject to the discoverability rule, and then a 15-year ultimate limitation period, with some significant exceptions relating to children, sexual assaults, persons with a disability and environmental matters.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that, Minister, because often my constituents, and I'm sure most Ontarians, find some of the legal procedures confusing and disconnected. I was pleased to hear there was a special emphasis on protecting minors, persons who may have difficulties bringing a claim, as well as victims of sexual assault.

I wonder if you could expand upon the specific special measures which have been launched to protect victims of sexual assault and specifically protecting children in the province of Ontario.

Hon Mr Flaherty: We are, of course, concerned with protecting the interests of vulnerable persons. As a general rule, the basic limitation period does not run while the person with the claim is unable to pursue it because he or she is a minor or incapable. The legislation does provide for the appointment of a litigation guardian to provide a mechanism for defendants to start the limitation period running, and there are certain safeguards regarding court process with respect to that issue.

There's another important exception, and that is with respect to sexual assault at the hands of people who are in a position of trust to the victims. No alternate limitation period is proposed in those circumstances. This makes the strongest possible statement against this kind of sexual assault.

1440

GIFTS FOR CHILDREN

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Premier. I want to ask you about your generous offer to personally make sure that every child in Ontario gets a Christmas gift. Your phones have been ringing off the hook as desperate parents take you up on your offer. But you know what they're discovering, Premier? You've built a Harris Claus into your Santa Claus offer.

Get this: parents who call for a gift are subjected to a screening interview to make sure their kids won't get one other gift from any other possible source. Your Harris Claus offer puts children through as rigorous a screening process as your welfare program.

Premier, I've heard of Santa Claus checking his list twice, but for you to be doing this is ridiculous. What's next, Premier? Are you going to start warning Ontario's

poor children that if they get two gifts this Christmas, they'll be cut off your Santa Claus list forever?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The whole area of kids, of any kid in Ontario not getting a toy at Christmastime bothered me. So I did offer to use my office, to use the Office of the Premier of Ontario, to use my name with whatever influence we could to ensure that did not happen.

I would encourage all members of the Legislature to join in that offer to the best of our ability. We have had a number of calls. We have been able to refer them to appropriate agencies.

I can tell you there have been a number of private sector companies, which is consistent with the philosophy of Ontario's Promise, Zellers, Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire, which already run successful toy drives, a number of media outlets, both newspapers and radio stations, television stations.

Ms Churley: More downloading, Premier. Premier, you should call the North Pole and get some advice from the real Santa Claus. You see, he can tell you what it's really like.

Get this, Premier: not only do parents face this screening interview under your offer, but they won't even really receive the gift from you. As you've just said, your office is simply referring parents to charitable and volunteer organizations that are already snowed under with so many gift requests this Christmas that they can't meet them all.

You're a fake Santa Claus, Premier. You're ripping the gift tags off gifts raised through the efforts of volunteer firefighters and charitable agencies that have been raising money for months to help out. You're falsely advertising that these gifts come from you.

It's a ho-ho-hoax, Premier. Many of those organizations are already suffering from the cutbacks your government has inflicted on them during your time in office. These groups have been left holding the bag while you're playing Scrooge. Now you want to take credit for their efforts.

I've got some advice for you, Premier. If you so badly want to play Santa Claus, why don't you raise the minimum wage and raise welfare rates so parents have the dignity of going out and buying gifts for their—

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

Hon Mr Harris: Certainly no government in recent history in Ontario has done more to give people the dignity of a job than has this government.

In fact, we heard yesterday where 250,000 children dependent upon welfare under your government are no longer dependent upon welfare in the province. This is a record of accomplishment unparalleled and, I might add, being pointed to across Canada, indeed in North America, the record of success of ending that dependency. Poverty, as you know, is down. The United Nations says that. Olivia Chow says that.

In spite of all that, I have to say to the member that there still exists, as shameful as it may seem in this

prosperous province, the possibility that there is a child who will wake up on Christmas morning without even a toy. I would like your assistance, and the assistance of all members of the Legislature, to respond, as many agencies and private sector companies have responded—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The Premier's time is up. If we could stop the clock here for just a moment.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just in case he has to leave, in the members' gallery east we have the former member Mr Jack Carroll, from Chatham-Kent, a member of the 36th Parliament.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. I want to read to you clause 36(3)(h.1) from your privacy bill. It says, "A health information custodian may disclose personal health information ... to the Attorney General, if the custodian believes that the disclosure would assist in determining whether a proceeding should be commenced under the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act...."

Minister, you have said that you will take that clause out of your bill and you claimed it was a drafting error. It was not a drafting error. In my meeting with your legal advisers earlier this week it was made clear that this clause was in your bill because the Attorney General wanted it there.

Your office has now said that the clause isn't needed because it duplicates what is in the Attorney General's own bill. In other words, the Attorney General is giving himself the power to look at confidential health information and there is nothing in your bill to stop him. The Attorney General keeps referring to section 6 of your bill to try and create a smokescreen so that he can get exactly what he has wanted all along, which is access to the confidential health records that you're entrusted to hold.

Yesterday, Dalton McGuinty asked you what protections were in your bill that would prevent the Attorney General from getting confidential health records that are in your keeping. You sloughed off the question because you know there are no protections in your bill. So today I will ask you, what protections are you prepared to put into your bill to make sure that the Attorney General has no legal right to get private health records on suspicion alone?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): This is unbelievable, and I'm going to refer it to the Attorney General to answer.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I suppose what I should do, since this has been explained in the House I think three times now, is offer to the member, if you'd like to come and meet with counsel in the Ministry of the

Attorney General who will explain the bills to you, you're welcome to come over to the ministry at 720 Bay Street. I will arrange the appointment for you. They will explain it to you.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Health. I would be pleased to debate with the Attorney General on any occasion the fact that the issue he is raising is totally irrelevant because of the content of his own bill.

I say to the Minister of Health again, the fact is that your so-called health privacy bill, the one that you have tabled, is so wide open that it could be called the access to records bill. It doesn't matter what smokescreen the Attorney General puts up, because the protections that your bill is supposed to offer can be stripped away by any other act of this Legislature, including the bill that has been tabled by the Attorney General.

Minister, you know that in your bill the Ontario Disability Support Program Act takes precedence over health privacy provisions. The Ontario Works Act takes precedence over health privacy. Section 11 of your bill goes so far as to say, "In the event of a conflict ... in this act respecting confidentiality and one in any other act, this act ... " takes precedence "unless this act or the other act specifically provides otherwise"—some other act such as the Attorney General's bill.

Minister, there's no protection here at all. Your officials told me they basically put into this bill whatever people thought they needed, and we're supposed to decide what stays and what goes.

What I tell you today is that what we need is a new act that truly is a health privacy act. I ask: will you withdraw this bill and give us a new one that actually protects the privacy of confidential health records?

Hon Mr Flaherty: With the greatest respect to the member opposite, I rather doubt that any drafters of legislation would have said to you they would throw anything into a bill that they thought might be appropriate. I rather doubt that accurately reflects that discussion.

Having said that, it's quite clear from section 6 of Bill 159 what personal health information is protected. If the member doesn't understand that, is confused about it, or any other members of her caucus are confused about it, I welcome them to come and meet with the legislative drafters, with counsel informed on the issue, who will explain it to them.

1450

OVERTIME

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): My question is for the Minister of Labour. First of all, I think all would agree that labour issues are fairly intense in my riding of Oshawa, as they are for a lot of other members. After seeing the amendments this morning and hearing the comments and concerns from the third party, I'd like the Minister of Labour to maybe bring some clarification to this question regarding the overtime averaging for the

two-year period. Minister, if you could answer that question for us?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): The allegations made across the floor are absurd. The absurdity is that you're suggesting that somehow an employee would have to agree to overtime averaging for two years and they'd have no way of getting out or agreeing to anything else but. That's absurd, absolutely absurd.

What the legislation says is that there needs to be a time limit on how long these agreements can run. What we said in the legislation is that they can run no longer than two years, but the employee can sign for any duration they like. If they want to sign for one month, they can sign for one month. If they want to sign for four months, they can sign for four months. It is completely up to the employee how long they determine they want to average their overtime.

Under the old system that the NDP ran, they would issue a permit and the permit would average overtime forever. You could never get it back. We are saying that's not a good system. They need controls and abilities to govern their workweek. What we are saying is that they are best to make that decision, not the NDP.

Mr Ouellette: Before I go any further, I'd like to thank the minister personally for coming to the riding of Oshawa and giving the opportunity to answer the direct concerns and questions of my constituents and all those people who work in the labour force out there.

As well, the members of the third party brought forward some questions regarding the amendments they had put forward. Having seen those amendments, I wonder if you might give us some clarification on what is right and what is wrong in regard to their amendments.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The problem with the NDP amendment is that it is so restrictive and penalizes the employees to such a high degree that we in this caucus said, "We can't do that to the workers of Ontario. We can't restrict them to simply three issues that they would have to get the signature on." This legislation allows employees a broad opportunity on everything in the Employment Standards Act. They get to make a decision on how their workweek works, and they get to make that decision on the context of the entire bill. My poor friend from Hamilton over there would rather see workers only be allowed to make decisions on three issues that affect their workplace. I think that is shocking and absurd and I would not stand for that.

SCHOOLTEACHERS

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I want to ask today a question of the Minister of Education. The question is about the mess you've got in schools. You've got another lockout taking place in Sudbury. You've got a situation where parents send their kids to school and they don't know any longer whether or not there's a qualified teacher dealing with their kids. In fact, as memos from the Toronto District School Board show, parents are no longer even assured that the teacher to

whom they entrust their kids' education has had a criminal background check, has been qualified by anyone as being capable to stand at the front of the classroom.

On Thursday, Minister, I gave you a lot of notice to tell us how many unqualified teachers you are sending into the classroom. Your ministry has to approve them, and yet neither you nor your ministry will tell us how often you're doing it in this poisoned atmosphere, where you're scaring people out of the province who don't want to teach here any more, where new graduates are in record numbers not teaching in this province. Tell us, how many unqualified people are you foisting on young people in this province?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): If the honourable member has concerns about the hiring practices of any school board, he should take those up with the school board. As the newly elected chair of the Toronto District School Board said very recently, Ontario, as is the rest of Canada, is facing what is a worldwide problem in the teaching profession. Even the College of Teachers said recently that the near-retirement age group continues at historic high numbers. That is a challenge. We are working with the College of Teachers and the teachers' federation. It is a priority for them, as it is for this government. We've taken significant steps, and will continue to do that, to assist school boards in having teachers standing in front of our classrooms who can do the job that we all expect them to do.

I think the honourable member would want to help support school boards in doing this rather than standing up and scaring the heck out of parents that somehow or other there are people who are threatening their kids in classrooms. That is not true. The honourable member should know that.

Mr Kennedy: If you want to reassure people, then be the Minister of Education. Act under the Education Act and tell us how many people you, as the minister, and your ministry have put into the schools around this province with a letter of permission that acknowledges your failure as the minister to attract and keep qualified teachers in this province, your failure to make sure there's an environment where children can learn positively. Minister, this is your fourth opportunity in the last week of the Legislature to tell us very simply—you want to assure parents; you don't want to be scaremongering—how many letters of permission you have given out from your ministry, because otherwise you've simply got your head stuck in the sand and you're trying to ignore a problem for which you are responsible.

Hon Mrs Ecker: As the honourable member knows, of course the ministry has all kinds of data about what's happening in the school system. If he had only asked in a legitimate fashion, perhaps we could have provided a full briefing for him so he would have recognized that letters of permission are not an unusual process. It is a flexibility mechanism that was in place when his government was in power and when the NDP were in power. For example, last year we issued 801 letters of permission, but do you know what? When the NDP were in power,

they issued over 2,000; when the Liberals were in power, they issued over 1,400 letters of permission.

I think the honourable member might wish to check the research once in a while before he tries to tell parents that school boards are not exercising their responsibilities. They take them very seriously. I expect them to and parents expect them to. Even the chair of the Toronto school board, who certainly is not a fan of this government, acknowledged very clearly that the board is doing what it needs to do to make sure the classrooms are safe and that we all need to work together to solve what is a worldwide—

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

SNOWMOBILE SAFETY

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. A lot of us here in Ontario are pretty excited to see all this great snow. Certainly in my riding of Guelph-Wellington, and particularly in Guelph-Eramosa, people are already out enjoying it. We've got about two feet and we can hear snowmobiles buzzing around at night. People are having fun and enjoying our winter.

Across Ontario, people use snowmobiles for hunting and they use them for travel, trapping and angling. They are exciting vehicles and lots of fun, but they are not toys. I think all of us can think of some terrible accidents that have occurred in our ridings while people were out on their snowmobiles, and it is a serious problem that requires our attention. Would you outline for members of the House and for my own riding constituents in Guelph-Wellington what our government is doing to promote and ensure snowmobile safety?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): I thank my colleague the member for Guelph-Wellington for this important question at this time of the year. Of course any fatality on snowmobiles is a tragedy. MTO is continuing to do a great deal about snowmobile safety. This year we're flowing \$60,000 to the Ontario Snowmobile Safety Committee. As well as that, we are working with them and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to promote safe and responsible snowmobile activities.

The Ontario Snowmobile Safety Committee's public education activities this year include television and radio public service announcements, awareness activities, and distribution of educational material, with particular reference to ice thickness cards and brochures on the important issues of safety. The Ontario Snowmobile Safety Committee is also providing night riding and riding on ice information.

Mrs Elliott: I'm glad to see we're taking this seriously, but there is always room to do more. We have a bill before the House, Bill 101, the Motorized Snow Vehicles Amendment Act, and I understand this will be going before the committee on general government shortly.

What in this bill specifically will improve snowmobile safety?

Hon Mr Turnbull: MTO is certainly committed to implementing safety enforcement and enhancement through Bill 101. The changes include helmets that must be worn both on and off the trails and that meet motorcycle standards; lights must be used both on and off trails; reflective material for trailers towing snowmobiles; driving while the licence is suspended will now create a special offence and a penalty for driving the snowmobile without a driver's licence; and we are giving new provisions to help the police enforce safety.

1500

BERNARDO FILM

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Your government claims to care about victims of violent crime. You will know that an American film company proposes to come to Toronto to make a movie about Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka and the young women who were raped and murdered by Bernardo and Homolka. I've asked your Attorney General and your Minister of Culture to guarantee that no Ontario government building, no courthouse, no Ontario government facility will be made available for the making of this movie and to ensure that no taxpayers' money from the government of Ontario will go toward the financing of this movie.

Your Minister of Culture and your Attorney General say that there is nothing they can do. Premier, I've watched your government close hospitals, I've watched your government threaten school boards, all in furtherance of your agenda. How is it then, when it comes to protecting the victims who are still hurting from these horrendous crimes, that your government now, suddenly, can't do anything?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The Attorney General did not say we can't do anything. In fact, the Chair of Management Board has issued a directive to the ORC that no government buildings will be used for any film that has anything to do with Paul Bernardo. That has already been done. So I can assure you that there will certainly not be any co-operation from this government, because I think all members of the Legislature have indicated our abhorrence with this crime and any profiting from this crime by way of a movie, particularly at this time.

I think the Attorney General expressed from a legal point of view what legally we can do and cannot do to prevent such a film from taking place, either in the province of Ontario or anywhere else around the world for that matter. But there are things that we can do, and we are doing everything we can to express our concern, including not making any government facilities available.

Mr Hampton: Premier, I'm glad you clarified some of the remarks made by your Minister of Culture, but I want you to address one further issue. The other issue I raised is that no Ontario film and television tax credits be

made available to this company, that no one should be profiting in this province or in this city as a result of those horrendous crimes and no one should get taxpayers' money to make this kind of film.

I'm asking you—and we know that the budget bill is still before the House—to put a simple amendment into the budget bill before it is next dealt with by this Legislature that will ensure that this movie company will not receive any Ontario tax credits, any Ontario taxpayer money, to finance the making of this film. We can, by unanimous consent, deal with that amendment here now, today or before the House rises for Christmas. That will ensure that no taxpayers' money is used. That will ensure that your government does show some respect for those victims. I'm asking that commitment from you, Premier. Will you agree to that amendment to the budget bill which is still before the House, which already contains clauses dealing with the film and television tax credit? We can amend it before the House rises to ensure that no taxpayers' money is used. Will you do that, Premier?

Hon Mr Harris: I'm prepared to look at anything that makes sense and is constitutional. I have received preliminary indication that we cannot and that bill is not amendable in that way. You say "this company"—we don't know which company; we don't know who. There have been rumours that everybody is responding to, and I think it's maybe appropriate that we send a signal out for anybody, anywhere, at any time in the future who may be considering this movie and how they may or may not proceed, particularly in the province of Ontario.

Ultimately, all films that are considered for a credit first of all must be completed before they are considered for the tax credit, so it is difficult sometimes to prejudge. On the other hand, the guidelines say that to be considered they must not violate public policy. Such violations include inciting hatred against—

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

MANDATORY DRUG TESTING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. As you may know, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the leading addiction counselling agency in this country, recently came out very strongly opposed to your mandatory drug testing and treatment for people on social assistance. They made it very clear that such an approach would perpetrate a stigma associated with poverty and addiction and may lead to detrimental individual and social consequences. They want to get your ear on this, Minister.

They also have some suggestions for how you may approach this. Some of their recommendations are that you should be looking at having existing caseworkers in the welfare system trained to appropriately screen and identify people with addictions and mental health problems. They have asked you to provide adequate housing, child care and vocational supports. They also say you

should direct the resources designated for this mandatory testing to expanding the capacity of the current treatment system.

Minister, this is an agency you should be listening to. I trust that you will. I'd like to ask you today whether you will withdraw your plans to go forward with mandatory drug testing, listen to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and take another approach that would be far more sensitive to the needs of people.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): The answer is no. We are always prepared to listen to groups who provide support to vulnerable people in our community. I have, over the last week, had the opportunity to meet with more than four or five drug addiction treatment professionals. I had the opportunity last evening to visit one clinic here in the city of Toronto and talk to people who had in the past been drug addicts.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: I answered the question very clearly at the outset: no.

The question the member opposite asked was, will we listen? You bet we'll listen. We'll listen on how we can provide supports, on how we can provide training to our caseworkers, on how we can provide supports to people to allow them to obtain addiction treatment. The one thing we will not do is give up. The one thing we will not do is turn our backs on people who obviously need our help. We're committed to providing people with the tools to get their lives back on track.

One thing that is clear is that the Liberal Party opposes all of our welfare reforms. They oppose work for welfare; they oppose our efforts to combat welfare fraud; they oppose our efforts to provide a hand up through mandatory drug treatment, through mandatory literacy programs. They oppose all of our welfare programs, but we will continue to work hard to try to provide people the dignity that comes with a job.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

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

"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."

This is another 1,000 of the 60,000 we will be presenting to the Legislature; 30,000 more will be presented next week. I sign this and give it to Andrew to bring to the table because I am in complete agreement with it.

GREEN ENERGY

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario needs a green energy policy to protect the environment, improve health and strengthen the economy;

"Whereas the introduction of electricity sector competition in 2000 provides an excellent opportunity to implement a green energy policy;

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

"That the Premier and the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology implement renewable energy quotas for all electricity suppliers; labelling of key fossil and nuclear station pollutants on electricity bills; a fee on electricity sales toward energy conservation and efficiency programs; strict mandatory caps on all fossil-generating stations and all electricity imports; permanent shutdown of the Pickering A and Bruce A nuclear plants; and no stranded nuclear debt bailout for Ontario Power Generation, formerly Ontario Hydro."

This has been sent to me by Irene Kock of the Nuclear Awareness Project and it's signed by hundreds of individuals in the GTA.

1510

REGISTRATION OF VINTAGE CARS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Speaker, a small preamble, with your indulgence. This may be the last time I have to read this petition on Bill 99, because it will be debated tomorrow and hopefully it will be passed.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are many Ontarians who have a passion for perfection in the restoration of vintage vehicles; and

“Whereas unlike many other jurisdictions, Ontario vintage automobile enthusiasts are unable to register their vehicles using the original year of manufacture licence plates; and

“Whereas Durham MPP John R. O’Toole and former MPP John Parker have worked together to recognize the desire of vintage car collectors to register their vehicles using the year of manufacturing plates; and

“Whereas the Honourable David Turnbull as Minister of Transportation has the power to change the existing regulation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass Bill 99, amending the Highway Traffic Act to allow vintage auto enthusiasts to register their vehicles using year of manufacturing plates.”

I am pleased to give this to my page, Jared, who is from the riding of Durham, who will bring those to the table. Thank you for your service to the Legislature, Jared.

INTENSIVE LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned residents of the county of Prince Edward, petition the government of Ontario expressing our concerns relating to the uncontrolled spread of intensive livestock operations and the field application of liquid manure which poses a profound threat to our water, both ground and surface, to our air and to our quality of life; and

“Whereas under the existing laws of the province of Ontario there are no adequate controls directing the operation of such industrial farming operations; and

“Whereas municipal bylaws are inadequate or non-existent and therefore controls should be exercised at the provincial level; and

“Whereas the Ontario Environmental Commissioner recognizes in his recent report the potential for serious pollution of both our air and water from these operations;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly to expedite the passing of legislation to meaningfully regulate the operation of intensive livestock operations and the spreading of manure therefrom, and to distinguish such industrial operations from traditional farming practices and to recognize that the adverse effects of industrial livestock operations are widespread and have a deleterious effect on our environment.”

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

REGISTRATION OF VINTAGE CARS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are many Ontarians who have a passion for perfection in the restoration of vintage vehicles; and

“Whereas unlike many other jurisdictions, Ontario vintage automobile enthusiasts are unable to register their vehicles using the original year of manufacture licence plates; and

“Whereas Durham MPP John R. O’Toole and former MPP John Parker have worked together to recognize the desire of vintage car collectors to register their vehicles using vintage plates; and

“Whereas the Honourable David Turnbull as Minister of Transportation has the power to change the existing regulation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass Bill 99 or to amend the Highway Traffic Act to be used on vintage automobiles.”

I support this petition wholeheartedly.

SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I have a petition about a very good bill that will be debated tomorrow.

“Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraisers on streets, sidewalks and parking lots;

“Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999, effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

“Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

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

“We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing Bill 64, the Safe Streets Amendment Act, 2000, to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots.”

I am in total support of this petition and sign it, and I give it to Heather to deliver to the table.

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 Ontario 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; and

“Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Lougheed 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.”

This has been signed by hundreds of residents of North Bay, the Premier’s own riding. I would like to thank Gerry Lougheed Jr for all his work on this. I affix my signature to it.

REGISTRATION OF VINTAGE CARS

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I have petitions here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are many Ontarians who have a passion for perfection in the restoration of vintage vehicles; and

“Whereas unlike many other jurisdictions, Ontario vintage automobile enthusiasts are unable to register their vehicles using the original year of manufacture licence plates; and

“Whereas Durham MPP John R. O’Toole”—known by other names—“and former MPP John Parker have worked together to recognize the desire of vintage car collectors to register their vehicles using vintage plates; and

“Whereas the Honourable David Turnbull as Minister of Transportation has the power to change the existing regulation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass Bill 99 or to amend the Highway Traffic Act to be used on vintage automobiles.”

I’m pleased to submit this to the Legislature on behalf of the constituents of Mr O’Toole in Durham county.

SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition here as well on a matter that will be debated in this House tomorrow, when we’ll be debating Bill 64 put forward by the member from Essex. It deals with the Safe Streets Amendment Act. I’ll read it to you because it has been signed by a number of people both in my riding and in the riding of Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. It states as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraisers on streets, sidewalks and parking lots;

“Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999, effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

“Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

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

“We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing Bill 64, the Safe Streets Amendment Act, 2000, to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots.”

It’s signed by about 20 individuals, and I agree with it so I’ve signed it as well. I’m handing it to Tim here, our page.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have petitions forwarded to me by UAW local 251 in Wallaceburg, and the petitions read as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the proposed changes to the Employment Standards Act would take us back to the standards of the late 1800s; and

“Whereas most jurisdictions in the world are reducing the level of overtime required; and

“Whereas these changes would allow companies to force overtime up to 60 hours per week; and

“Whereas the proposed changes will allow companies the right to average overtime over three weeks to escape paying the appropriate level of overtime pay;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Ontario government implement the following improvements to the Employment Standards Act:

“Tough, proactive policing of standards.

“A living wage to ensure no one lives in poverty.

“Overtime pay after an eight-hour day, 40-hour week.

“Three weeks’ vacation after five years of service.

“More paid holidays.

“Paid breaks. We need a guarantee of rest breaks in each half-shift;

“Above all, we’re calling for the right of all non-union workers to vote to join a union.”

I’m proud to add my name to those of these petitioners.

1520

REGISTRATION OF VINTAGE CARS

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, with your permission I’d like to take a moment to introduce Mr

Peter Minnis, who is a teacher at Clarke High School in my riding, and his OAC students who are attending in the visitors' gallery.

I will also read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Hopefully, this will be the last time, as this will be part of the business tomorrow.

"Whereas there are many Ontarians who have a passion for perfection in the restoration of vintage vehicles; and

"Whereas unlike many other jurisdictions, Ontario vintage automobile enthusiasts are unable to register their vehicles using the original year of manufacture licence plates; and

"Whereas Durham MPP John R. O'Toole and former MPP John Parker have worked together to recognize the desire of vintage car collectors to register their vehicles using vintage plates; and

"Whereas the Honourable David Turnbull as Minister of Transportation has the power to change the existing regulation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass Bill 99 or to amend the Highway Traffic Act" to allow vintage auto enthusiasts to use year of manufacturing plates to register their vintage vehicles.

I'm pleased to present this to Geoff, one of my favourite pages here at the Legislature at this Christmas time of year, and it's my bill as well.

SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I have petitions signed by constituents from Timmins-James Bay, Prescott-Russell, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Huron-Bruce, Leeds-Grenville and Thunder Bay-Atikokan. It reads:

"Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraisers on streets, sidewalks and parking lots; and

"Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999, effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

"Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

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

"We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing Bill 64, the Safe Streets Amendment Act, 2000"—standing in the name of Mr Crozier—"to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots."

In support of this petition, I add my signature and give it to Rose to take to the Clerk's desk.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): That completes the time allocated for petitions. I would just

like to remind members that we're taking a little bit of liberty with the standing orders, editorializing a little bit too much on petitions. In the future, we may want not to do that.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to call orders 11 to 23, inclusive, so that they may be moved and debated simultaneously.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Klees has requested unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Klees: I move concurrence in supply for the following ministries and offices:

Ministry of the Environment

Ministry of Education and Training

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and its supplementaries

Ministry of Community and Social Services

Ministry of Tourism

Ministry of Labour

Management Board Secretariat

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Ministry of the Attorney General

Ministry of Northern Development and Mines

Ministry of the Solicitor General

Ministry of Correctional Services

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—

Interjections: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker: Dispense. Debate?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's a real pleasure to be asked to debate at this particular time of year. I hope all party members are able to express thanks to their constituents and to make positive comments about what is actually happening at this time of year. For all people, I want to put on the record that I extend season's greetings and best wishes for a safe, happy and family-oriented, prosperous Christmas and/or Hanukkah and other times being celebrated by all different faiths that make up this wonderful province of Ontario.

In concurrences and in debates with respect to that, I will not be specifically commenting on the minister's budget allocations, which basically permit ministries to pay sums of money that have been allocated within their budgets. That in itself is somewhat dry. I think there will be liberty by members on all sides of the House this afternoon to bring to the attention of this House, as well as to the people of Ontario, initiatives in their ridings that in some respects are relevant to the debate.

The very first thing I did today was to comment to the press about an event happening in my riding under the

auspices of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. There was a debate in the riding. In fact, the ministries were there meeting with the people and dealing with the very important issues. The citizens' group was known as the Protect the Ridges group. That group was getting explained to them the details of the spreading of paper sludge from Atlantic Packaging on farmland. This is an ongoing study before my constituents and it affects a great part of the riding of Durham. This study is to report to them where the findings are at this point, midway in that study. You might say the Ministry of the Environment is working—and I could mention Debbie Vice, who has been the leader of Protect the Ridges, and I noticed other members there such as Tony Pratt, another very well informed citizen. I know that there were other members of the riding of Durham there listening. Representing the Ministry of the Environment was David Beach, the York district office person who was on the scene.

Thinking through things that have happened recently in my riding, I don't want to go on too much here, but in the limited time I have I will mention a couple of important highlights. Last night on the way home from the Legislature, I had been invited to attend the annual recognition dinner for the local sea cadet corps. Mr Ray Abernathy, who, by the way, has served 20 years voluntarily for that organization, was being recognized as part of that community event. So I publicly say that I was late getting there, but I did get to the event and said thank you to Ray Abernathy and to others who are a great inspiration and leadership for the youth in the riding of Durham. Again, I thank them for that. It was a very optimistic event made up of families: Mr and Mrs Harold St Croix; I met them. They are constituents of mine who have been involved in a number of things. I think of my riding and it's a real privilege to be here speaking and, in some respects, representing my constituents. That's a very important part of this job that I take very seriously.

If I move back to earlier in the week, I was very fortunate to be invited, almost a week ago now, on behalf of the Honourable Cam Jackson, whose tourism ministry is in concurrence here, to present a cheque to the Bowmanville Zoo. That cheque was being presented—I think the amount was \$7,500—as part of the tourism partnership program. The Bowmanville Zoo is one of the oldest privately operated zoos in Ontario, if not Canada. It also puts out an important kind of recognition of Christmas: the animals of Christmas and what they bring to the season. I think it's important to recognize that.

1530

I also think of the other things going on within the riding. I want to thank people like Garth Gilpin, who put on the tree-lighting ceremony in downtown Bowmanville a couple of weeks ago. I want to thank the members of the BIAA, not just in Bowmanville, but all of the merchants in Bowmanville, Newcastle, Port Perry and Orono. I think of many of those volunteers that make the downtown so at festive this time of year. Those are just some of the glancing highlights I can recall that have

happened in the last several days that are worth mentioning, not just respectfully about my riding, but I'm certain are happening throughout the communities that make up this great province.

I think back in government terms of what's actually happening. I think that even today and yesterday in the House there were questions, and one of the ministries on concurrence here is the Ministry of Health, which brought in the initiative on health privacy. That is the whole issue of the ability to collect, use and disclose personal health information. People would know that for perhaps the last 10 years or so, there have been discussions on that, everything from mental health to other areas.

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: I was just wondering if perhaps the members next to me could move somewhere else so I don't have to hear them talking while I'm trying to speak. I think that—

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: No, no, it does interfere, it does interrupt. I hope I'm not being rude, but it was interrupting.

On that health privacy information issue that I was just speaking of, Elizabeth Witmer, as you know, has had three different consultations since, I believe, 1995 on that issue and it is controversial, there's no question about it. Mr Phillips is certainly here listening and he would say that people in Scarborough-Agincourt take the protection of their personal health information very seriously. I know our minister recognizes that. Yet, if you look at the reality today, there is exchange going on between doctors and long-term care facilities, between labs and pharmacies etc, and it would be wrong to assume that this information is totally secure today.

All we're doing is moving toward more demands in the health care system and the need to transfer information reliably and securely. These are the very fundamental issues that we're dealing with. I think that often the questions in question period don't help the people of Ontario realize that it's incumbent on the government, whichever government, of every stripe, to take steps to ensure that privacy, above all, is respected with regard to health care—and for that matter, all information.

If you want, you can expand that just one step to the whole issue of privacy in the electronic environment, in commercial transactions. During this time of year we pass our credit cards out rather liberally in some cases, and we all know that today there is a certain amount of fraud in that whole area. It's incumbent on the government to protect consumers, whether that's a health consumer or just a consumer in the commercial marketplace.

So that's something that's going on and is extremely important. We have heard questions recently about another ministry here that's under these concurrence discussion, and that is education. I believe the Ministry of Education has had a very difficult time to ensure that we focus on the students in the classroom. All of the other things we could talk about have arguably been talked about since I was a trustee in the early 1980s. I think we

can focus on the students and quality in the classroom, and I guess I publicly realize that teachers—as I say, my wife, and my middle daughter is a new high school teacher. I know it's difficult.

We, as taxpayers and as legislators, must make sure we put the resources in the classroom. I want to be on the record as saying that anything I can personally do to be positive and supportive of front-line teachers—as the EIC report that was issued just a couple of weeks ago said, we've got to sort out this difference of view and difference of ideology, if you will, between the teachers' unions on the one side and the government on the other side. I, as a member of this government, would like to be on the record as saying that if there's anything I can do to improve the respect and respectful relationships—I didn't say we'd always disagree, but we should show respect and appreciation for one another. That would be another statement I would like to have on the record this afternoon.

I really think Minister Eves in his economic outlook, his balanced-budget kind of comment here—I believe it was last week—stressed how important the fundamentals are, the importance for all members of the House to recognize that without a strong economy, many of the things we're doing, the additional money, some \$23 billion in health care—I may speak at some length about what that's doing in our riding—are all about having the economic fundamentals.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt may want to mention this, as he's a critic for the opposition in that area, and I have a lot of respect for that. The most important thing is to look at the over 800,000 net new jobs that have been created, not by the government but by creating the right environment. There'll be those who argue it's an export-based drive and recovery, but that to me is not the most important issue. Being competitive in the global economy is absolutely fundamental.

That competitiveness starts, as Jean Chrétien said at Duke University just last week, and Ontario is an example, with federal and provincial tax rates that put us at a very definite competitive advantage. It was the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, who said that at Duke University. So he's beginning to recognize—while at the same time there would be those who argue against tax cuts—that our basic mantra for some time was, "Tax cuts create jobs." I think there is a relationship between cutting taxes and creating jobs.

It's economic investment that we should be measuring and holding the private sector accountable for. There's no free ride for anyone, including them. I suspect, just dwelling on this for a moment, that the whole argument about whether tax cuts are appropriate is really a very serious question. I think that making the proper investments and having mechanisms for accountability are fundamentally more important than the semantics of the original question of whether we should cut taxes. Cutting taxes and making the proper investments, as we have—we've committed record numbers of dollars, the most dollars per capita, capital and operating, to the people of

Ontario for our health care system. I could expect just as much from the federal government.

Allan Rock, or whoever the new health minister is, needs to listen not just to Mike Harris but to all the Premiers. They made it very clear that they've got to start to put back more than 14 cents on the dollar in health care to have the finest, most successful health care system in the world, with an aging population and new technology and all the other motives at risk there, and at the same time have an education system that invests money in students and front-line teaching and some of the other things. They should be questioned. We need high standards and we need to make sure our children's future is being assured. That struggle goes on. I hope it ends as soon as possible.

Minister Eves was talking in his statement of having the fundamentals that provide a healthy economy, that provide opportunities for everyone to share in a much more prosperous economy, a much more prosperous society with fewer people, as the Premier said today—especially children and the most vulnerable in our society. The wealthier the province is, the more prosperous it is, the more it can support those who are most vulnerable. That's, I think, a difference of opinion here.

With the previous governments—we often refer to the 10 years as the lost decade—the problem was that they felt tax policies were the old thing, that governments can fix things by taking more money or resources out of the bucket. They thought they could tax and spend their way out of this economic spiral they were in. It started in 1989-90 when they had record employment, record revenue, and yet had the most number of people on welfare because they made it almost an advantage to be on welfare as opposed to getting a job.

These differences of views probably will continue to exist, because in many ways the opposition mostly has opposed all the reforms to welfare. What we said with our welfare reforms was that people deserve an opportunity for a job as opposed to a cheque. We called it a hand up instead of a handout. Let's get down to it. The most important, the most empowering thing you can do for an individual is to give them an opportunity to earn their own dignity and their own daily bread.

I think that goes beyond ideology. It's a complete difference of view, that government can do it better than the individual. I don't support that and I don't think members of this caucus do, but I think that when all is said and done, many strategic investments were made as part of Mr Eves's and Premier Harris's remarks. I'm going to mention a few of them.

1540

We would be wrong not to recognize the importance of agriculture. The diversity of agriculture is one of the fundamental strengths of this province, not just in the wines and tender fruits but in the field crops and the livestock area. Agriculture is the second-largest industry in Ontario and it is in some peril. Many of the programs, whether it is MISA or GRIP or market revenue or whole farm relief, in many cases are very complex financial

support programs. Many of them are shared by the farmer, the federal government and the provincial government. Many have insurance-based principles within them.

Minister Hardeman has met with constituents in my riding. Dr Doug Galt has been instrumental in leading consultations on rural economic development. With his background, his experience and his riding next to mine—hopefully he'll be speaking this afternoon and will fill that out a bit more—he is a person who takes it beyond just a job as an MPP. He has worked as a veterinarian all his adult life, and in a public sense as well he has a lot to offer. He will offer an awful lot. I believe in the future we will hear more from Dr Galt with respect to prioritizing this government's agenda on agriculture.

Clearly we need the federal government to get on board as well and make sure that the supports, when we are dealing with market prices that are set in Chicago, in the United States, where the subsidies under the—I call it a liberal government, soon to be changed. That may help things a bit. I think the government in the United States has been unfairly subsidizing market products to our disadvantage. We all know that trade issues, trade subsidies, trade wars, and where there's GATT agreements or whatever kinds of trade agreements, free trade and otherwise, are a federal responsibility. Mr Bradley often holds up these humorous little cards that have "(1) Blame the feds." It is an absolute failure of leadership at the national level.

We've just been through a federal election. What I saw was disdainful in terms of indifference to or ignoring the agricultural plight. There are fewer and fewer farmers. To them, that means fewer votes that really matter. They do matter, not just in my riding of Durham but they matter to this province, to Dr Galt and to Minister Ernie Hardeman.

With this Christmas message on concurrence, agriculture ranks right up there in protecting the land, the soil and the water, part of the Ministry of the Environment's responsibility, working hand in hand—I would like to hope that in the next few days they will introduce legislation that may be debated over the break after Christmas: the nutrients management plan that municipalities are looking for, not just in Durham but across the province, for guidance on standards for animal units and how much effluent and how to manage it, and have accountability in that. It is very difficult. This government has never shied away from difficult decisions.

There are some issues I've mentioned, without trying to become too heavy, in the agricultural sector. Most important is to state that the agricultural sector is the backbone of this economy. Our freedom as a province and as a country is to have our own food supply not at risk. Farmers who have bad years need to be supported. We have to look at the averaging of those income supports. That is the issue that at the current time I believe lacks some clear federal leadership.

The provincial leadership is clearly in place. I think this government has held Mr Lyle Vanclief to task, as we have Allan Rock, when he was the health minister.

As everyone knows, Ontario is about 30% of the country's population. I think it's about 50% of the country's economic plan. All we would ask for from the federal government is to keep Ontario healthy—a fair share, not one cent more than our fair share based on some per capita formula, but they always discount. Ontario is the industrial heartland of this country. It has a responsibility to our national redistribution of wealth, and that's understandable. In Ontario, if we see the economic cycle repeat, and it will, in times when our agricultural community, which has a larger gross than the rest of Canada's provinces, needs to be supported, we need to have our fair share. It was Minister Hardeman who held the federal government to the table and their feet to the fire to make sure that Ontario farmers, for the first time in years, got their fair share of that whole thing.

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: I hear the member from the other side, from Elgin-Middlesex-London, disagreeing with me. I'm not sure what his position on this is, because yesterday he was asking a question to the Minister of Health and in fact it was an agricultural issue.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): It was a health issue, a public health issue.

Mr O'Toole: It is clearly a matter of misunderstanding and not directing his interest and concerns in the right area.

Another part that was mentioned clearly is tax strategy, and the advantages in tax strategy are such that I think the government has made some provisions, in its budgetary wisdom, to provide new educational technology tax incentives. Let me expand on that for a moment. It encourages businesses to support Ontario's universities and community colleges in acquiring new equipment and technology through a tax credit system. I think this is absolutely fundamental, to have the right tools in the right place at the right time without it just being another government handout.

It's forming partnerships with our colleges and universities that allows them to have the right kinds of support and the right kinds of investments so that you've got some relationship between putting the money in and getting the outputs out. I think of Gary Polonsky, and Terry Hing, the chairman of the board of directors for Durham College and University Centre, and their enormous effort in trying to become a manufacturing centre, a technology centre, a computer and robotics centre, and training our young people for what I'd call the technology economy we're in.

Also, I believe having university access in Durham will help me and the member from Oshawa and Janet Ecker and Jim Flaherty, the other members representing Durham, so that children can go to post-secondary more affordably than having to go to McMaster or Guelph or some other university or college out of where they live.

Bringing services closer to people, fundamentally, is critical to this government.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Mr Ouellette and I were at an important investment in health care, \$17.4 million for operational—these weren't capital dollars. We made a tremendous amount of capital investment in Lakeridge Health for a new cancer treatment centre, expanded out-patient services, acute care services and dialysis just the week before. There was I think \$3 million for hip and knee replacement orthopaedics as well as the new babies, the neo-natal program. I was so impressed that the Lakeridge board—and not just Brian Lemon, but the board itself—really wants to work with the government cooperatively. That doesn't mean they're not going to be critical sometimes, but I see those volunteer board members as being committed to working with Durham region to sort out this dilemma of how to build the very latest technology and provide patient services closer to home.

There's a case where this government has provided start-up capital, and the municipality, the local government, the taxpayers have to find ways of raising some additional matching funds to make those things a reality, because we do want patient services closer to where the people live, and certainly not just in Durham, but this is happening across the province of Ontario.

I believe the time is to be shared and other members are preparing to stand in my place. With that I just wish everyone the best of the season and thank you for the privilege of addressing you this afternoon and allowing you to understand what's on my mind as we go into a new year, a new century, with optimism in this economy in Ontario.

1550

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to continue the debate on concurrence, which essentially, for the public's information, is the Legislature providing the government with the authority to spend the necessary funds to fund the government. I want to start by commenting on the way the Harris government spends our money. The public are probably used to the opposition and the government being in a dispute about this, so I'll use the Provincial Auditor's report.

As you know, the people of Ontario engage an independent auditor, the Provincial Auditor, to look at both the way we keep our books—the finances—and the way we spend our money. The auditor, among other things, produces an accountability and value-for-money report. This year's report was very damaging to the government. In fact, when the Provincial Auditor held a media availability after presenting his report, the reporters from the media said, "It looks like things are getting worse in terms of managing the finances of the province."

The auditor said he had been the Provincial Auditor for eight years now and this year's report and last year's report were the most damning reports on the government's expenditure of money since he's been the auditor. In other words, the Harris government is worse at spending the taxpayers' money than, dare I say, the NDP.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I thought we were cutters.

Mr Phillips: Mr Beaubien is choosing to yell, but I say to the public, remember what the auditor said: the worst two reports were this year and last year.

The previous member was just talking about the Minister of Agriculture. The auditor said this and the auditor took an extraordinary step. He actually went around the minister. He was forced—because the minister wouldn't do it, the minister wasn't acting—to step in and, on behalf of the taxpayers, make sure that a government agency appointed by this government, all the board appointed by it, didn't do things that were, frankly, illegal. He said among his findings were that Agricorp lost \$325,000 in a speculative investment to buy and sell bonds on a daily basis, and—this is important—this agency, Agricorp, also violated its fiduciary responsibility by attempting to transfer the loss to the Ontario Insurance Corp. The auditor had to intervene to reverse that transfer. Then it goes on to say:

"Contrary to legislation"—in other words, acting illegally—"on several occasions, Agricorp sought to remove money from the Ontario Crop Insurance Fund to pay for its administrative expenses. My office had to intervene to ensure the fund remained intact. Without a proper business case and without tender, they engaged an intermediary to place a \$14.5-million insurance coverage with a private insurance company."

That's one example where the minister was derelict in his duties and the auditor—I've never seen it here before actually—actually had to intervene around the minister to protect the taxpayers. That's not the only place. I say to the public, get a copy of this report and read it.

The auditor went on to say—and this is a total condemnation of Premier Harris's actions on the environment; this is the staff at the Ministry of the Environment that has the responsibility for monitoring and inspecting our water and our air—that since 1994, and the Premier took over in 1995, they've reduced their staff level by over 25%. "A reduction in staff of 25% over the last four years had contributed to a 34% decrease in the number of ministry-initiated inspections conducted per year." He goes on to point out that we are putting at risk the health and safety of the people of Ontario. This is the auditor.

He went on, in the health area, to point out that the government has decided to put ambulance service on to the property taxpayers. This is a move that no one except Premier Harris thinks is a good idea. As a matter of fact, the government appointed the Who Does What committee, headed up by David Crombie, to look at whether this service should be put on to property tax. This group said, "The panel"—14 hand-picked people—"strongly opposes such a move. We are unanimous in the view that it shouldn't happen." But Premier Harris, for whatever reason, has decided that ambulance services should be on property tax and should be run by municipalities.

The auditor points out and warns us—by the way, the auditor warned the government in 1996 and in 1998, and is warning the government again on the environment. On

the ambulance service, the auditor is warning us, he's saying this is a problem. He points out that the ministry estimates an additional \$40 million annually is needed just to meet the response times. He points out that the ministry estimated in the year 2000 an additional \$53 million would be needed to maintain the existing levels of service. He says that we put at risk the seamless health system that all of us believe we should have. We don't think that an ambulance should stop at a border, we don't think that a municipal border is a sensible boundary for health needs, but that's what the government has decided to do. The auditor, quite rightly, points out the problems with it.

The auditor went on to say that he's not going to sign the books of the province any more unless the government changes its ways and stops—these are my words, not his words—cooking the books, stops writing off against one year an expense that never occurred in that year. He's said, for the final time, "This is it. I am not going to sign your books any more." This year he forced the government to put on our financial statements an almost \$20-billion debt that the Premier tried to keep off the books. The auditor would not sign the books until that almost \$20 billion of stranded debt from electrical restructuring was put on the books.

The reason I go through all of this is that many of my business friends say, "Well, they're called Conservatives. They purport to be the friend of business. They must know how to manage the finances." I say, "Don't take my word for it. Look at the Provincial Auditor's report and listen to what he says. He now says these are the two most damaging, damning reports he's produced." I would also add that the credit rating agencies, whose business it is to rate the creditworthiness of companies and governments—after almost six years of Mike Harris, Ontario still has exactly the same credit rating that it had under Bob Rae. Nothing has changed. With a booming North American economy—by the way, on why Ontario's economy is doing so well, if you talked to any economist, I don't think you can find any economist who would not say the most important reason for Ontario's growth is because of our exports to the United States, driven heavily by auto and high-tech. I don't think you can find any economist who would not say that is the major reason, the number one reason. In that booming economy, we still have the same credit rating we had under Bob Rae. Nothing's changed.

Interjection.

1600

Mr Phillips: My colleague says that's terrible, and I agree.

In my last few minutes, I also say to the people of Ontario that to me the essential elements of our society in Ontario, among the most important fabrics that hold us together, are our health care system, our education system, the way we manage the environment, our social housing and our labour relations. I would just say to all of us, does anybody believe the health care system is in better shape today than when Mike Harris became

Premier? I don't. Any objective look at it by people who are on the front lines will tell you it's gotten worse. Does anybody believe that our education system is functioning better now than it did five years ago? Does anybody believe our environment's better? The auditor points out that in his opinion, and my opinion, we have made a huge mistake. We have ignored the environment for five years, cut 25% of the staff and are paying the price.

In the last few hours we passed a bill that downloads housing on to municipalities. We know that in Ontario there should be at least 15,000 rental units built each year. In the last three years there have not been 1,000 built each year. We are building up an enormous backlog of problems, and what have we done? We've downloaded it on to the municipalities, again against the advice of the very people who were appointed to look at this. So that's on housing.

On the issue of labour relations, this is a book called *Doing Business in Ontario*. It talks about why companies should invest in Ontario. It points out that one of the reasons you should come to Ontario is, "The labour-management legal framework is streamlined and balanced. Labour-management relations are constructive and stable. Bargaining is rooted in realism and a clear understanding of the competitive nature of the global economy," and "Our workforce is forward-looking, sensible, self-relevant, level, loyal and committed." Yet what have we done? As we speak right now, in another part of this building there is a committee that is making fundamental changes to the relationships between employers and employees in this province. The government has just introduced a series of additional amendments that will fundamentally shift that balance, and they fundamentally shift it toward the employer and away from the employee.

On these key issues of the environment, health, education, housing and our labour relations, with all due respect to the Premier, he's making things worse rather than better.

I just wanted to say, then, to all of us who are now being asked to vote on this motion to give the government approval to spend money, first, look at the independent auditor, who has made this conclusion that the value for money is getting worse in the province of Ontario. Ask ourselves, each of us in Ontario, is our health care system better now than in 1995 when Premier Harris got elected? I say no. Is our education system better now? It's in turmoil. He has demoralized our teachers. The thing I know from my experience and that I believe strongly is that the key to successful education is quite simple: it is having motivated teachers, well-trained and talented, as we've got, in front of classrooms. It's that simple. We now have a demoralized teaching staff.

I recently went back to my 40th reunion of my football team in high school. It was a great reunion. All three of my coaches were there, after 40 years, all three of them—Glyn Lehson, Bill Traut and Will Rice—great guys. They remembered every one of us. They remembered every number. They remembered every play. They

were our friends. They, to this day, influenced our lives. They are models for us.

Education is not a mechanical exercise; it's not a factory. Secondary school is not a factory. It's not somewhere that you get a mechanical operation; it is relationships between teachers and the students, and we're undermining that.

I'll tell you another small part of it. A few months later in Scarborough we had the Ontario basketball championships in my old school. London Central showed up. They were in the Ontario championships. Guess who the two coaches were: sons of Glyn Lehson and Will Rice. It's not unusual.

My point is that we are making a fundamental mistake in education. I think Mike Harris thinks these are plants or factories, to be run like factories. Our schools are human, living organisms, and the most important key to success in them is to have teachers motivated. I benefited enormously—I suspect everyone in this room did—from good teachers with personal relationships. As I say, we are trying to turn our education system into a factory, and we're making a huge mistake.

Health, education, the environment, housing and labour relations, instead of getting better, as they should be in a growing economy, are getting worse. So I say to Ontario, I wish we could say we're heading down the right road. For some reason or other, Harris has decided to take us down a road that I think leads to continued frustration in Ontario.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to pick up where the member for Scarborough-Agincourt left off when he talks about the building up of frustration, anxiety and worry out there among the populace who call Ontario home.

I want to say I appreciate the opportunity to put some thoughts on the record here this afternoon, particularly where this government's record is concerned, where I think it has taken us and why I think it's a bad plan that will not serve the whole of Ontario in the way we have the potential to serve all of Ontario, particularly given the tremendous amount of wealth that has been created over the last 10 years or so and that continues to be created in this province due primarily to the tremendous effort of people of all ilk across Ontario who get up every day, go to work and contribute their resources, the talent they have, so that Ontario can continue to be a good place to live and to bring up children.

It seems to me that one of the more fundamental reasons that this government gets so many of their programs wrong is that they start from the wrong place. If we look at the initiatives they have brought forward since they became government in 1995, it was clear from the start which master they were trying to serve and what motivated everything they have done: all of the thinking, all of the initiatives, all of the programs they laid out for us in the Common Sense Revolution and then began to put in place not long after they got into power.

When looking for direction, when looking at whether a program they've come up with is good for all the

people of Ontario, this government asks the question first, "Will this please the corporate elite? Will this be approved by the multinational corporations and the big business interests in this province?"—the so-called golden goose that from time to time lays the golden egg. If it is approved by them, if it's something that will be pleasing to them, they assume it will be good for everybody, that the wealth and money that is generated by that particular initiative, whether it be a tax cut or an investment of some sort, will somehow affect in a very positive, constructive and clear way all of those who call Ontario home.

1610

I don't have to go very far but to look at my own political history and remember what one of the leaders of our movement had to say about that kind of economics some 30 or 40 years ago. When we forget our past, we live the chance that we'll revisit it again, and we may not have learned from it. Tommy Douglas at one point talked about the trickle-down theory of economics, where those at the top, if they're pleased, if they're getting enough return on their investment, if they're making ever-increasing profits with each year that goes by, continue to stay in the jurisdiction and do their work, and some of that creation works its way down, but in diminishing amounts as you get further and further away from the centre and the seat of power.

I think—and I believe I'm speaking on behalf of my own caucus—it would benefit us more, when we look at some of the initiatives we want to do as government, as we give leadership in a jurisdiction, to be asking the question, how does this affect the ordinary men and women who live in communities in our jurisdiction, places like Ottawa, Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury, Chapleau and Wawa? How does it affect those people? How are they going to benefit from this particular program?

It takes time; it takes effort. It's a lot of work sometimes to do that, but I think over a long period of time now we've built up government and given it the resources to do that work. This government doesn't seem to think it has that responsibility. If you'll remember, on a number of occasions they've come before this place to say that they weren't government and that they were here to change government. I suspect what they meant by that was that government was no longer going to make the effort necessary to understand what communities out there across this province need by way of leadership and programs from them. They have turned it around now and said, "OK, we'll turn it over to the corporate sector. We'll privatize those things that government has always done, and in the end it will work out so that all of us will benefit, and benefit more equally than if government was doing the job it was set up to do in the first place."

What leads me to believe that what this government is doing is not working out for the normal and regular folks who get up and go to work or look after their families from one day to the next in this province? Well, let me just look at one area. It's an area we've been highlighting lately in this caucus. It's an area that our critic for

community and social services, the member from Nickel Belt, has done a lot of work in. It's the area of child poverty, an indicator that I think we would all do well to have a really close look at. If we're not looking after our children, if we're not putting in place programs that support our children and present them with an opportunity to grow and learn and be healthy so they can take over when we get old and weak and not able to run the shop any more, what are we leaving for posterity?

We have reports that have been tabled around this place over the last couple of months that indicate to us that child poverty is still rampant in this province of plenty, this province where from one day to the next we read in the financial papers that big corporations make historically record-high profits one year over the next; some would say not only historically record-high profits but obscenely record-high profits, particularly when you consider the effect of taking that kind of money out of the system. That's how corporations make money: they take it out of communities by selling services or convincing people to invest in things. By not having a government in place that believes you should take some of the money that has been generated by the effort of everybody and return it in the way of programs that particularly serve young people and children, this is what you end up with.

In 1998, Ontario's economy grew by 4.5%, but 17.5% of Ontario's children lived in poor families. The number of poor children in Ontario grew by 91% between 1989 and 1998. The number of children in working-poor families grew by 103% between 1989 and 1998. The number of poor children, living in poverty, in families with full-time, year-round jobs—lest we get caught in that argument of families on assistance versus families who are working—grew by 48% between 1989 and 1998. Since 1989, Ontario had the biggest increase in the average depth of poverty in Canada. The depth of poverty grew from \$8,846 in 1989 to \$9,832 in 1998. Since 1996, Ontario and Newfoundland were the only provinces where the depth of poverty increased.

This is not something to be proud of. This is not something that should indicate to anybody looking at the indicators across this province that we are in fact doing well where giving leadership is concerned, where working with the corporations and people who work in communities and others are concerned, that we're delivering programs and operating as a government in a way that is benefiting everybody who calls Ontario home.

Yet what is it that this government does by way of a proposal to respond to the very difficult issue of child poverty in this province? Well, you know, another public relations exercise: Ontario's Promise. Harris and his henchmen have launched a children and youth initiative patterned after General Colin Powell's America's Promise in the US, which he says will help kids get off to the best start in life. But if you look at it close enough, you will realize that Powell's initiative in the States looks more promising to corporate Canada than it does to kids. That shouldn't surprise us, because that's the track record, that's the pattern of this government. It's been a

great public relations vehicle for ad agencies, hotels and other business ventures in the US. But has it reduced child poverty? Has it put more food in hungry children's mouths? Has it created a single extra licensed childcare space?

No, not one. These are the challenges we face in Ontario and we don't need to invest in a public relations vehicle for business to do it. In reality, Ontario's promise is just one more notch in the Harris government's real agenda to download responsibility for our children and youth on to business and not-for-profit community organizations.

Our children, we believe in this caucus, deserve a stronger promise than that. They deserve real government investment in things like expanded licensed childcare spaces, family resource centres, longer parental leave and an increase in the minimum wage, rent freezes, an increase in social assistance payments, as well as an end to the targeted attack on our teachers.

There is just so much more that we could do and there is so much more that I would like to talk about here, and hopefully we will have some opportunity to do, as my two or three years that I have left here unfold. But unfortunately in these last few months here we haven't had that opportunity to speak to almost anything of any real concern to this province.

Since September every piece of legislation that has been brought before this House has been rammed through by way of time allocation—every piece. Nothing that this government has brought before this House has been allowed to run its course in terms of dialogue and debate and input from both sides of this House. Minimal public hearings in some instances, for a couple of hours downstairs while the House is sitting, and then back into the House for third reading, banged through and done. That's it, take or leave it.

That doesn't provide for good public policy. It certainly doesn't reflect a government that's interested in looking at the issues that we've put on the table here where child poverty is concerned. There are so many other things: the issue of poverty itself never arrives at this table. We never have a debate on it; we never talk about it. It's out there, it's broader and it's deeper than it's ever been before. It seems in this place we have no appetite for a debate or a discussion about it or to do anything about it. It's rule by edict where poverty is concerned; it's rule by edict by this government where child poverty is concerned in particular.

I believe, for one, that it needs to come to an end, that we need to get our priorities straight. I suggest to this government, when you're looking at whatever you decide to do next, that you less ask yourselves, "What would the corporate world think about this? How would this play out for the big barons of industry?" and more and more ask, "How will this affect and improve the life of the ordinary man and woman in this province?" You will do better by all of us in the long run and Ontario will be a better place to live.

1620

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's a privilege to speak here this afternoon for a few moments on the concurrences.

I was fortunate enough earlier today, after the bills and regulations meeting, to participate at the county of Simcoe inaugural, which was the 159th inaugural they've had since the formation of the county of Simcoe back in 1843. It was interesting to hear the member from Sault Ste Marie speak just previous to my comments. I remember that last year, before we adjourned for the winter recess, he talked about the great skiing conditions and so on they had in the Soo, and I'm really pleased that our winter season in Simcoe county is off to just a phenomenal start. They've received almost 30 inches of new snow. The ski resorts are all open, the snowmobile trails are open, and the cross-country trails are open.

Mr Beaubien: What about the hockey rink outside? Has it been shovelled?

Mr Dunlop: I'm hoping they'll have a very successful winter season, because the last three winters haven't been great for any of the businesses. And, yes, as I heard the member for Lambton say a few moments ago about the hockey rink, we have a number of hockey arenas open as well, so it should be a great winter. We've just come through a very successful summer as well.

On the way up the road today, what with all the snow—I want to acknowledge the fact that we have a private contractor, a company called Southfork Aggregates, and I want to pay a compliment to them on the condition they are keeping the 400 in. It's the first time I've been able to follow five plows at one time up the highway. I think they're doing a phenomenal job. They do slow the traffic down while they are looking after the road, but it was great to see them out clearing the road and putting a little bit of calcium on it this morning.

I just want to make a few comments on the county of Simcoe. As I've said many times in this House, it's my home riding, north Simcoe, and I've had a long history in municipal politics. I share that area with the members for Simcoe-Grey, Jim Wilson, and Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Joe Tascona. Neither Joe nor Jim was able to attend the inaugural, but I wanted to congratulate a number of the members from the county of Simcoe.

Today is the first time, I believe, in over 100 years that we've elected a warden for the second time, two consecutive years. Usually it's a one-year term.

I want to congratulate Robert Davis, the mayor of the township of Essa. He's done a great job for the past year, and he put his name forth for the second year and was successful in beating Mayor Ian Beard for the position today. Ian Beard is from the township of Oro-Medonte.

I also wanted to say that I heard a few comments today in the warden's address about some of the concerns the county has had. Certainly they are prepared to take on the ambulance delivery on January 1. They've had some concerns with the level of delivery of the service, and I myself have been working with the county over the last year on that. I'm hoping that will turn out to be very

successful, because most of the programs that the county of Simcoe does run, they do a very good job at.

I should say also that with the economy that we've had here in Ontario, the welfare rates have dropped in the last five years from 11,000 cases to 3,800 cases, so the economy in Simcoe is doing very well. As well, I think in every municipality the building permits have reached an all-time high in the last year.

I'd like to compliment a few of the returning members of county council. As you know, we restructured in 1994, and a number of the members have come back as mayors and deputy mayors, as well as a few new ones; for example, in the township of Adjala-Tosorontio, where there's a proposed landfill site going in that has been very controversial in that part of the riding. There is a lot of opposition to the landfill, but Mayor Tom Walsh is returning, along with newcomer Doug Little as the deputy mayor.

Back over in Clearview township, at the north end of Jim Wilson's riding, Mayor Bob McKee has returned as well. He also has a newcomer, Deputy Mayor Henry Versteegen, a resident of Creemore. As I said, Henry will be sitting as deputy mayor, and in Essa, Bob Davis and David Guergis have both returned.

I wanted to make a few comments about some of the other members as well. I know I have some time to share with the member for Northumberland; he'd like to make a few comments as well. But one of the things that was pointed out today, and again I think it's because of our strong economy—the county of Simcoe, as I have said on a number of occasions, has about 30,000 acres of forest that they harvest on a regular basis, and they keep a small staff on at the county. The warden announced today that they have taken in again, for this year, over \$1 million in revenues from the sale of forestry products. I thought that was exceptional. That money goes into reserves for specialty items. I know they have used it in the past for a number of different programs, but usually they try to purchase a bit more property with that on a year-to-year basis. I'm glad to see that once again they've had a successful year. Because of the economy and the demand for forestry products, it's important that we look at programs like the county of Simcoe's forestry program. I believe it's the only one of its kind in Ontario. Certainly there are other counties and regions that have some forestry products but nothing similar to what the county of Simcoe has.

I was glad to see as well today representatives from the city of Orillia and the city of Barrie: Mayor Stevens from the city of Orillia and Mayor Jim Perri, both of whom are newly elected. They were both at the inaugural and talked very briefly about the strong economy that we're working in and the number of building permits and the need for good planning and solid environmental policies. I was glad to hear their comments.

Certainly everyone we talk to as members has concerns about local services realignment, but with the economy that we have grown here in Ontario, with the growth of assessment because of building permits, with the

reduction in welfare cases throughout almost all of our regions, most of our municipalities have actually seen declines in their taxation rates. I'm very pleased to hear that. We're always worried about a decline in the economy, and we're hoping that the type of economy we have here in Ontario is more recession-proof than some of the economies we've seen across the rest of the country.

It was interesting today—in fact, the whip just told me a few minutes ago—that Paul Martin, my understanding is, has made an announcement on a \$250 rebate for heating homes this winter. I think that's a good move. I think it's an exceptional move, but I wonder where he got the idea. I wonder where the idea came from. Has anybody got any ideas on that? Where do you think the idea really came from? Of course, the \$200 dividend cheques that we gave out to five million Ontarians was a phenomenal idea. It was very successful. The money was used in a number of areas. Again, like tax cuts, like everything we do in our province under the leadership of Mike Harris and Finance Minister Eves, I'm glad to see that Minister Martin has taken a lead from us and is going to use this \$250 rebate.

I think it's good. I know that home heating costs have gone up because of the increase in energy prices, and I believe that it's strong leadership on Paul Martin's part to introduce this. I'm pleased to see it for people right across our country. Again, I thank Ernie Eves, our finance minister, for his leadership in showing Paul Martin that this type of program can work.

I want to say very briefly that it was a pleasure to attend the inaugural at the county of Simcoe today. I believe that part of Ontario is in good condition. They've got strong leadership from all the municipal politicians up there.

Mr Speaker, I know you left the House after your speech, and I want to say, with the snow-making and the winter sports, we're already off to a good start in my part of Ontario. I hope the same thing is happening in the Soo, because we need all those revenues coming into this province from those Americans who want to come skiing and snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. I hope we're off to a great winter for all our tourism operators.

With that, I don't know, is Mr Galt here yet? I don't see the member from Northumberland.

Interjection.

Mr Dunlop: That's right. He's not speaking right after me.

With that I'll sit down, and again I compliment the county of Simcoe for their great inaugural, their 159th inaugural, and for the fact that they keep going as a strong municipality in our province.

1630

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Since we're talking about festivals in our communities, I would invite everyone to the Festival of Lights at Fort Henry this year, which is a new event. They've lit up all of Fort Henry in festive Christmas decorations. It's a festival that will go on for a total of six weeks. I would encourage all of the people in eastern Ontario who would

like to take a look at the fort in the wintertime, which isn't the usual way in which the fort is presented, to do that.

Having said that, let me quickly turn to something the member who spoke just before I got up mentioned, dealing with the \$250 rebate the federal government is giving to individual taxpayers for heating costs. The main difference is that the blame for the skyrocketing electricity costs and the skyrocketing energy costs can all be laid at the feet of one person and one government, and that's the government sitting right across the aisle. It's a totally different situation than the \$200 rebate that was just given out to everybody, when the provincial government would have been much better off to put it strictly on the debt of the province and thereby reduce the debt by \$1 billion. There's quite a difference between the \$250 that Martin is now giving to people who really need the money to pay for the escalating energy costs and the other situation we talked about earlier.

Let's admit the economy is doing good for a lot of people, but I found it very fascinating yesterday sitting in the House here when a question was asked of the Premier about the 100,000 children who are still on social assistance, who are living well below the poverty level, and what the Premier was prepared to do for those children by way of a cost-of-living increase in the social assistance payments. He didn't even address the issue. He basically said there are fewer people on social assistance and therefore there's no need to do anything by way of a cost-of-living increase, which of course completely discounts the notion that there are still 100,000 children in this province who are living below the poverty level, who are still on social assistance. He didn't even answer that question.

Speaker, those children, you and I know, are a lot worse off than they were five or six years ago. They've suffered the 21% decrease in social assistance payments that occurred in 1995, and there has been absolutely no cost-of-living increase for them. As you so aptly pointed out when you spoke to this bill earlier, since 1989, over the last 10 years, I believe you said there was a 48% to 50% increase in the number of children living in poverty in this province. That, surely to goodness, in a country and in a province that has as much to offer as we have here in Ontario, is totally and completely unacceptable.

I say to the government, do all these things you want for your business friends. You've done it for the last five years. Continue to do that. But also think about the most needy in our community, particularly at this time of year. Surely a society ultimately will be judged by what it does for or how it affects the most needy in that society. Those people, Speaker, as you and I know, have been completely and totally ignored by this government. That I find totally unacceptable. If we've got such a great economy, and if the money is just rolling into the provincial coffers, why do we have chaos in education, why do we have chaos in the health care system?

When I take a look at my own community, we've always had a good medical health science complex. It's

the fifth-largest one in Ontario. It's attached to a quality medical school that has been operating for the last 100 to 125 or 150 years. It's something we're extremely proud of in our community. But let there be no doubt about it: over the last five years, on an annual operating basis, the hospitals in my community have lost anywhere from \$25 million to \$40 million per year, depending on whose figures you want to believe. A minimum of \$25 million per year has in effect been taken out of my community in the hospital care that people demand on an ongoing basis. How is that \$25 million translated? What does that translate into? It translates into jobs and services. There are fewer nurses, there are fewer health care workers, there are fewer doctors, requiring longer waiting periods for people to be treated and shorter stays in hospital, and they are sent home a lot quicker than ever used to be the case. When they do go home, quite often there isn't community care available for them, as had been promised under the CCACs.

I feel particularly sorry for and have sympathy with those individuals who get sent home and don't have anybody to look after them in their home environment. Yes, theoretically in a perfect world we would want all of these people who are sent home quickly and early out of the hospital to go back to a home environment where somebody could look after them, whether it's a spouse, whether it's a parent, whether it's a child. But a lot of people aren't that fortunate, and the most they can get from the CCACs is maybe one or two hours of care either per day or per week, depending upon their circumstances.

So I say to the government, if you really want to get through with all of your health restructuring, and it looks now as if it's certainly going to happen—it's already happened in a lot of communities—then at least do the right thing, what Duncan Sinclair told you right from the very beginning. You cannot restructure the hospital system, you cannot close hospitals, you cannot cut down the number of hospital beds in particular areas in communities without making sure the community nursing and home care is available for people. We all realize that it may very well be a lot less expensive for people to take care of them as they are recuperating in their home rather than the hospital. I'm all for that, provided the services are available for these individuals. That's where this government continues to fail the people of Ontario.

As a matter of fact, in the Kingston area they're all talking about the one new hospital that's going to be built, probably on the psychiatric hospital grounds, although it may be located somewhere else, at a cost of \$180 million. That will then take the place of the current Hotel Dieu Hospital, which will be shut down after serving our local community for over 150 years, and St Mary's of the Lake Hospital. Right now there is a survey going on by a consulting firm as to how the local community can raise the \$60 million that, as you know, under the health restructuring guidelines is the local component that people in effect have to put into it. I'll tell you, it's going to be extremely rough and tough for a community the size of the Kingston area and the larger surrounding

area to raise \$60 million. The national foundations and the provincial foundations won't be available to the same extent they were before, because just about every community in Ontario is going through exactly the same thing.

I know what will happen eventually, and I talk about this at just about every opportunity in my local community because I think the people of my community have to understand that an awful lot of the local dollar component will probably end up on the property tax rolls, because appeals will be made to councils, in effect, to commit to \$20 million, \$30 million or \$40 million to be raised by the local property taxpayers. It's been done before. It was done during the time when I was mayor, but then we were talking about amounts that were much smaller than what we're talking about now. I believe in those days we were talking in terms of \$10 million. Now we're talking about \$60 million that has to be raised from the local community.

So there are some major concerns there. Many people in my community are still asking, "Why do we need a new hospital? Wouldn't it be a lot better to put this money back into the operating budgets of the hospitals so we can hire the nurses, hire the doctors, hire the health care workers so that there aren't excessive waiting times for people to get treatment in the hospital? Shouldn't that be the first priority before we start talking about new facilities?"

So I say to this government, yes, things may be looking up for some people and, yes, some people are benefiting from your new budget, but never forget the people who are at the bottom end of the economic scale, because we ultimately will be judged by how we treat the least fortunate in our society.

1640

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate today, which deals with the spending of this government in a number of ministries across a number of areas that affect thousands and thousands of Ontarians. I think I will spend the time I have today focusing particularly on kids.

I do that because, in the face of what has been quite substantial and prolonged prosperity in this province, our kids are being left behind. We leave Ontario's children behind at our peril. I am really concerned, when I look at the cuts that this government has made to children since it has been the government, that we are losing an entire generation of children. When kids go to school hungry because their moms can't afford to feed them because of social assistance cuts, they can't learn very well at school; and when they go to school hungry or when they are just generally hungry, they are going to have to use the health care system all that much more frequently; and when they aren't doing well in school and are ill and can't attend school, we're much more likely to have children drop out of school, and then we're going to increase the incidents we have, I think, with the criminal justice system. We certainly aren't going to give them a

good head start when it comes to being productive in the economy.

But you see, the problem is that in spite of the incredible prosperity, this government couldn't care less about the generation of children that I am convinced we are losing right now. If the government really cared at all, even cared a little bit, about some of the kids who are living on social assistance or some of the kids who are living in working poor families in this province, then this government would have a strategy to respond to that poverty, to bring those kids and their working families out of that poverty, or to respond to the fact that so many moms on social assistance are having to take their kids to food banks in this province in order just to feed them. If the government cared at all, even a little bit, then the government would have a strategy to deal with the poorest kids in our community. But the government doesn't have any kind of strategy to deal with the poorest kids. Frankly, the government doesn't have much of a strategy to deal with kids at all, but in terms of the poorest, the most vulnerable, the group that the government has an enormous responsibility for, this government is doing nothing.

I want to use the time I have today to focus on some of what the government has done with respect to kids—clearly that means cuts to service levels and to programs—and then what the government hasn't done, despite all of its rhetoric especially from the Premier in the last little while about how they care so much about kids. Frankly, what the government hasn't done to deal specifically and particularly with the incredible poverty that we are seeing in this province has been well documented.

Let me begin with the cuts. What did the government do? One of the first things the government did when it was elected—it was just a couple of months after it was elected in October 1995—was to cut social assistance rates by almost 22%—21.7% to be exact. In doing that, in getting at those moms on welfare, the government got at 400,000 children who belonged to those moms on welfare. Some 400,000 children were affected by those particular cuts. Those cuts were very deep, and frankly they were pretty vicious, because the government, in trying to get welfare moms off the system, forgot that those very same moms are also responsible for all of those children. So the government attacked them too.

We have seen since that time—and it has been well documented both by the Daily Bread Food Bank and all of its associated food banks—that throughout this whole period since the time of those cuts, there has been an increase in users of food banks represented by moms and kids on social assistance. That has been very clearly documented. That has come specifically from the period when the government cut those rates. We see in the last two reports that now not only are women and children overwhelmingly using the food banks—women and children who are on assistance and who, even if with the assistance, don't have enough money to feed their kids. Now you see any number of seniors who are using food

banks as well because in light of their meagre pensions, all the things the government has downloaded to municipalities that have resulted in increased user fees and increased property taxes have really affected that category of people in our communities too.

What was really disturbing in the last report that was released, just in the last two months, by the Daily Bread Food Bank and all of its associated food banks across the province was the dramatic increase in the use of food banks in northern Ontario, in our part of the province—a 15% increase in the number of moms and kids coming to food banks in northern Ontario. For all of the talk about boom, in the last year in our part of the province that boom certainly hasn't resulted in less kids being less hungry. In fact, we've seen quite a dramatic increase; an increase in northern Ontario that Sue Cox, when she was interviewed, couldn't even begin to explain as to why such a dramatic increase over a one-year period in a part of the province that allegedly is doing so well economically.

Very early on the government also decided it knew best how to run the then family support plan. Overnight, the Attorney General decided that he would close all of the regional offices of the family support plan, lay off 85% of the staff and somehow women and kids were still going to get the support payments that they were owed. You'll remember that fiasco in the fall of 1996 when the then-Attorney General made such a precipitous decision that was so negative and so detrimental. You remember the people coming into your office, Speaker, people coming into mine; women and kids who regularly got their support payments without a problem suddenly not knowing where those payments were. The payments were still being deducted from the payers' cheques but they were going into the black hole and that black hole was that office up at Downsview. The office up at Downsview that my good friend and colleague Mr Kormos and I visited early one morning in November to discover that in fact there was nothing working, nothing in operation, nothing functioning. We had a whole space there that the government was claiming support payments were moving in and out of, when there wasn't even a computer set up, a telephone set up, there certainly weren't any staff working, and boxes and boxes of files from right across the province, stacked from the floor to the ceiling, clearly all having to do with recipients who should have been receiving money and weren't because of a precipitous action made by the then-Attorney General, who never cared to listen to anyone, much less his own management staff at the senior level who told him not to do this and he did anyway; all to find some savings at the family support plan to help the government finance the tax cuts.

You know what? The closing of those regional offices has meant that system has never worked the same. Before the government took that action, we used to get, on average, five calls a month with respect to the family support plan. Now, we are still usually averaging 25 to 30 calls—FRO cases, continuing problems, problems of

access—specifically because in Sudbury we used to have a regional office and now we don't, courtesy of this government. You can't go to Downsview to get over-the-counter service. The best you can do is fax or phone and hope someone might actually pick up the phone or fax you back, which doesn't normally happen. During that whole period of time, just to save some money at the family support plan, the government caused thousands and thousands of women and children to be placed in a desperate financial situation by not receiving the support payments that they were due and entitled to. It's the responsibility of this government to guarantee that those support payments are made, and it was this government—directly—which was responsible for ensuring that didn't happen. And still today we see the consequences of that with respect to service that is nowhere near the level that it used to be, especially in those regions that used to have regional offices.

This government made cuts to counselling at second-stage housing. Can you imagine? You've got families who have suffered once at the hands of their abuser, perhaps a father, perhaps a common-law spouse, perhaps just someone who lived in the house along with kids. They have suffered that abuse, and then when they flee with their mom to a shelter and get through that initial period of being in a shelter and try and move on to second-stage housing in a sheltered and protected environment so they can make the transition back into the community, this government decides to cut all funding for counselling at that second-stage housing. Now, isn't there anything more ridiculous than that? More vicious? I don't know what purpose it serves. I just can't figure it out.

We should be doing everything we can to support women who are finally in a position to escape, take their kids out of that dangerous situation, take themselves out of that dangerous situation, try to make a new life for themselves in the community. They need ongoing support at all levels to be able to make that transition, and what did this government do? It cancelled all of the funding for that counselling and has yet to replace it, and I don't think it ever will, despite the fact it is one of the measures that the emergency measures task force, representing a coalition of over 100 women's organization, has requested this government specifically to do, I don't think they will.

1650

With respect to social assistance or the working poor, this government took away the drug cards for working poor families. There you have families probably working at minimum wage, probably working two and three part-time jobs trying to make ends meet, trying to stay off social assistance. They could at least count on that drug card to know that the meagre wage they were earning was not going to be eaten up by prescription drug costs and by costs for expensive medication for their kids. What did this government do? It took away the drug card for working families. What point that serve? Who does that help? The government surely can't tell me that it

costs oh, so much to provide a drug card to working poor families in this province that they had to cut it as an expenditure measure. The government just can't tell me that, especially in light of the prosperity that we've seen. It was just a nasty, vicious, mean-spirited thing to do, especially to families that were actually trying to make ends meet and trying to stay off assistance, who required a little extra help for medication for their kids—and God knows how expensive medication is. The government took that away too.

The government claws back, for example, the national child benefit from families on social assistance in this province. This is a benefit that was established by the federal government to help those neediest families in our province. This government made a conscious decision that instead of allowing the neediest, the poorest families in our community, primarily those on social assistance, to actually receive this national child benefit—this government claws it back if you're on social assistance. How pathetic is that? How much more can you just kick in the head people on social assistance, and why? What does it buy this government to go after women and kids? I can't figure this out. I can't figure out what it is that gives this government such a thrill to take money from the lowest, in terms of income level group, in the province; to take a benefit that they were not paying for. The federal government was paying for it; it wasn't even Ontario's money. But no, they made a decision that for those on social assistance, "We'll go at them one more time, yet again. We're going to claw that money back."

Do you know what I think they did, which is even more pathetic? They used the money that they clawed back from social assistance recipients, federal money, and a little bit of money they had in the Ontario child tax credit, and they made a new program which they call the Ontario child care supplement for working families. That supplement that goes out to working poor families, one notch above the really poor on social assistance—part of the money that goes to those working poor families actually was stolen from, ripped off from those people on social assistance who should have got that money from the federal government. Talk about working your way up the food chain in terms of attacking those on the very bottom and then moving up from there.

What is it that's progressive about taking child care money that's destined for social assistance recipients, stealing it from them, and then creating a new program to give that money to those folks in the working poor who are one notch up above social assistance recipients? You would think this government, given the economic prosperity, certainly would have the money to do both, to allow those on social assistance to keep the benefit that the federal government was giving to them and to create, if they wanted to, a child care benefit for other working families with the funds it already had, funds that it took from the child care benefit that it already had.

The government as well cut the \$37 monthly supplement for pregnant moms to help them buy fruit and vegetables. I remember when the Premier did that, he

said, "We're taking away pregnant moms' beer money." You remember that, Speaker; that nasty, mean-spirited comment that he made in the paper about why the government was doing it: "We're taking away their beer money." You just look at that and you listen to that and you listen to this Premier who says he cares so much about kids, and you have to shake your head. You have to shake your head at how mean and nasty that action was—and from the Premier of the province. To just categorize all moms on social assistance who were getting 37 lousy dollars more a month for fruit and vegetables as all they were using that money to do was to buy beer was just so low and so disgusting. The problem is, though, it's typical of how this government has reacted to people on social assistance since they have been the government. I think that's a really sad state of affairs, when the government, that's supposed to look after those who are poorest and most vulnerable have that kind of sick attitude toward them.

The government has done any number of things. Those are just a few that I've highlighted. The government made cuts to any number of youth programs that were run by the John Howard Society, the Little Beavers program that was in place for aboriginal kids in our community. The government made all those cuts within the first six months they were in government, really demonstrating how much they care about kids.

All these things come home to roost because here we are, five and six years later, after the government has been making some of these cuts, and clearly in the last two months there have been at least three different reports that have showed very clearly that there has been a huge negative, detrimental impact on kids as a result. One of those reports was released by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. They looked specifically at native urban poverty, off-reserve kids, and what supports there were or weren't for those kids.

I had a chance to meet with the executive director, Sylvia Maracle, and other representatives from the friendship centre, those involved in the study, and listened with profound dismay to the results of the work they did—direct interviews with moms on social assistance, direct interviews with native organizations and agencies providing services to aboriginal kids in urban settings—and it was frankly very disturbing, about the level, because if we think kids on social assistance in white communities are poor, it's even worse in native communities.

They made it very clear that moms on social assistance didn't have the money they needed to feed their kids and were trying to access support from food banks all over this city and many others. Kids were having any number of difficulties in school and parents were having trouble keeping their kids in school. Some of the programs that used to be there to support kids, like the Little Beavers program, have been cut by this government, and on and on.

The level of poverty among native children is something we have to deal with. It is not solely a federal gov-

ernment responsibility. There are many areas where we could and should be providing support to native families off-reserve and we aren't doing that, and that level of poverty is just going to grow as a result.

A couple of weeks ago Campaign 2000 and any number of its associated agencies were here to release its report on child poverty. You know, Speaker, because you were there, that they used the most recent statistics from Statistics Canada to talk about the level of child poverty. Now maybe the government wants to get up and say that Statistics Canada doesn't know what it's talking about—I invite the government to do so—but that's the work they used. That's the basis upon which they made the statements they did, that was the body of evidence, the body of work they worked with to release their report. They said the following:

"Using the most recent statistics from Statistics Canada, we know that 470,000 children in this province live in poverty; one of every five children in this province remains poor, despite the good economic times; one in three of those poor children comes from a working family; and since 1996, only Newfoundland and Ontario have been the two provinces in Canada where families are sinking deeper into poverty."

Some 470,000 children in this province are still living in poverty; one of every three of those kids is from a working family, not a family on social assistance but a working family, one of those same families that have had their drug cards cut by this government. Only in Newfoundland and Ontario—isn't that a record to be proud of? With Newfoundland we are the only other province in this great country where working families and families generally are sinking into even deeper poverty.

How is it that we find ourselves in the company of Newfoundland in terms of dealing with child poverty? Surely the economic situation in this province is a bit better than that of Newfoundland, and yet we are one of but two provinces where families are sinking deeper and deeper into that hole, despite the economic times.

As I said to you, the Premier pooh-poohed the results that came forward from Campaign 2000, except he really isn't in a position to do that because the statistics come directly from Statistics Canada. They're not something Campaign 2000 made up. They're not something they thought about one night when they were all sitting at a table discussing child poverty. The body of evidence they used to make their declarations came from statistics they obtained from Statistics Canada. The evidence is clear: in incredible economic times here, our kids are moving deeper into poverty. How is that? Why is it we're allowing it to happen?

You were at a press conference, Speaker, two weeks ago, downstairs in the media studio, where yet another coalition of poverty activists came to this assembly and also talked about all of their results with respect to poverty and how this government's deregulation of rent controls, this government's cuts to social assistance etc, were driving families deeper and deeper into poverty.

1700

I know, Speaker, you had a chance to speak to a number of the people who were here to express their concerns. In the last two months at least three different groups of people, using different sets of information, came to the same conclusion: that in the midst of really good economic times, our kids in this province are moving deeper and deeper into poverty, and the government doesn't seem to want to do anything about that. In fact, a lot of what the government does is contributing to that poverty.

I said earlier I wanted to talk about what the government is doing; it's better to say what the government is not doing, because clearly that is the problem. A couple of weeks ago the Premier in a big public relations display down at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre announced Ontario's Promise—this is an idea he has stolen from the United States—whereby he is going to urge more people in the community to do more for children. I was at the launch. As I said, it was quite a public relations exercise. It was really an exercise in this government offloading its responsibility for kids on to someone else. That's really at the heart of it.

The government, through this PR exercise, is going to try and encourage businesses, the faith community, volunteer organizations and service clubs in our communities to do more with respect to our kids. Well, the partner that's been missing in action for the last five years in this effort is the Ontario government. That's the group that's been missing in action in the last five years with respect to kids. I'm convinced—because I know my own community—that as this government has made cuts in services to kids, it is businesses in our community, it is the faith community, it is volunteer groups and service organizations that have been picking up the pieces over the last five years to fill in where this government has offloaded. They don't need to be told by this government what they should be doing. They are already doing what they should be doing. Frankly, they're doing more than what they should be doing, and they're doing it because this government has been nowhere to be seen on any number of fronts with respect to kids, especially poor kids.

I understand the Speaker was at the Royal Bank—was it yesterday or on Monday?—making an announcement with respect to his partner and how much the Royal Bank was doing. I wish the Premier would get up in this House and tell us what his government is doing with respect to kids, not what he's asking everyone else to do, which is his responsibility to assume.

The government ought to be careful about some of the partners it pulls in to do some of this work. What is interesting about America's Promise is that immediately after this launch was made, they got some information about one of the corporate partners in America's Promise in the United States. One of them, a telecommunications company called Verizon long distance, had 37,000 workers on strike this summer, primarily women. They were on strike because they were refusing to do the man-

datory overtime hours every week that the company demanded, over and above their regular hours of work. I think it was 15 extra hours of mandatory overtime every week.

They were refusing to do that because, as they are primarily female workers, they wanted to spend some time with their kids. They had to go on strike this summer against Verizon so they could beat back the company's demands with respect to even more overtime. This is one of the partners in America's Promise, a corporation that's supposed to be so concerned about kids. Look at that family policy in the workplace. Imagine your workers having to go on strike to try and beat back demands on overtime so they can spend some time with their kids.

We want to be really careful with this exercise from two perspectives: (1) we continue to point out that the government's exercise in Ontario's Promise is really nothing more than offloading the Ontario government's responsibility when it comes to children and letting someone else in the community pick that up; (2) I'd advise this government to be very careful about some of its corporate partners that are involved. What the government doesn't want is to find itself embarrassed, as I think Colin Powell was, by finding out that some of its corporate partners didn't have, oh, so very friendly workplace policies when it came to families and kids, despite all their rhetoric about caring for kids.

That's a public relations exercise and I'm sure we'll hear a lot more about that and see the Premier at a number of other photo opportunities with some of his corporate partners. It will be nice to see when the Premier is actually going to make some kind of specific announcement himself about funding for children instead of expecting everyone else to do that for him.

This government had Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain do a very important report on early childhood development and early childhood initiatives. What is so regrettable is that after that very important work, which I have no doubt those two individuals took great care to complete, that report sits on the shelf. The government has not responded to the recommendations that were in it.

The government has established a working group that is supposed to make some kind of recommendations next May, about 18 months after the report was initially tabled with this government. Why would it take at least 18 months for the government to respond to some very important points and recommendations that were made by experts in the field of early childhood development? How could the government possibly defend a delay of that magnitude when the two made very clear what was needed, what had to be done?

We know the government has the money to fund these initiatives. Instead of actually taking some action in response to this important report, the government lets it sit on the shelf while they have a working group doing some things on the side that may or may not report by May 2001. I hope they do, but if the government were seriously committed to kids, it would have acted

immediately on the recommendations made by these two very fine individuals. The length of the delay, the magnitude of it, undermines any credibility the government might think it has with respect to really caring for kids. If you care about kids, you get on with recommendations made to you by the experts on how to support kids, especially kids aged 0 to 6, in their early years. The government hasn't done that.

I've heard the minister responsible for children's issues talk about her early years challenge fund. She used it again last week in defence of doing nothing on behalf of kids, in a question I raised about whether or not the government would follow through on recommendations made by the Education Improvement Commission with respect to early childhood development. The minister talked about the early years challenge fund and everything that was being done with it. Do you know what the fact is about the early years challenge fund? It was announced in the May 1999 budget—not a penny was spent. It was reannounced in the May 2000 budget—not a penny was spent. Last week, on the very same day the Education Improvement Commission released its report and said the government should finally stop the rhetoric and act on early childhood development—imagine this, Speaker—the government reannounced for the third time the early years challenge fund. This time they announced that the application forms for this fund might soon be ready and they might actually fund something in the year 2001, a full two years after it was first announced.

There is the poor minister responsible for children's issues trying to defend herself, using that as an example. How pathetic. Poor minister. If that's the only thing she's got to rely on, she's got a serious problem. Not a single penny has been spent on this fund that was supposed to fund proposals to help kids in their early years. It was announced in 1999, reannounced, and last week they said application forms might soon be ready. The government is doing nothing with this fund and nothing on any kind of new initiatives with respect to children.

Look at regulated child care. One of the recommendations the Education Improvement Commission made last week was for this government to give a good start, not only to kids in the education system itself but to those kids coming into the education system, to make sure the supports were in place so they had a good start when they started school. They made a very specific recommendation, that access should be available to high-quality child care at a very affordable rate.

Do you know what's interesting? If you look at the actual expenditures of this government on regulated child care, you will see that between 1995 and 1998, actual government expenditures on regulated child care decreased by 15%. So in the first three years this government was in office, those expenditures on regulated child care, something the government's own Education Improvement Commission called on the government to expand, those expenditures in that important area actually decreased by 15%.

What's also interesting to note is that there was no mention of any new funding for regulated child care in the May 2000 budget. Despite recommendations made by McCain-Mustard, despite these recommendations that have now come out by the Education Improvement Commission, recommendations that really followed on the commissions we established in 1994 that reported, there was no new money for regulated child care in the May 2000 budget.

What's more interesting is that the government now has an opportunity to do something about regulated child care, and we have heard nothing from this government in this respect. There has been silence.

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Earlier this summer, in August, I believe, or early September, the ministers across this country, the Prime Minister and the Premiers, made an announcement that they were all committed to early childhood development initiatives. They announced that, over a five-year period, \$2.2 billion would be spent by the federal government on early childhood initiatives. Ontario stands to gain about \$900 million of those dollars over the next five years.

We certainly know that the Coalition for Better Child Care has called on this government to spend a significant portion of that money on regulated child care to increase the number of spaces in this province for parents who are in need. But to date—and the minister is here in this House—we've heard nothing about how this government intends to spend this money that's coming from the federal government. Frankly, I'd like to hear how the government's going to spend it. I'd like to hear how they're going to match it, how they're going to match what the feds have provided us, and provide significant early childhood development initiatives in this province, be it in regulated child care spaces, which I certainly hope it will be, be it in early learning centres, which I certainly hope it would be, be it in any number of the things that the ministers when they made the agreement said they were going to fund. But we have heard nothing from this government, in spite of the fact that the money is sitting there.

Now this, from a government that is very quick to criticize the federal government on health care—they have a right to do so—very quick and very prompt to criticize that the federal government isn't anteing up, isn't providing money for health care and in fact has cut health care spending. But when the government has an opportunity at its disposal, in its hands right now, this Conservative government has been silent on what it wants to do to take that federal money in order to benefit children. It certainly has been silent on any suggestion that it, itself, during this great economic time might actually put its money on the table, match the federal contribution, do something really important, really big and really serious for our children in this province. There has been nothing. So we wait some more.

I want to end in the time that I have by saying that I focused on kids because of the evidence that we have seen in the last two months from reputable organizations,

from people who care, from front-line workers, from people who are dealing with poor children every day, that things are getting worse, not better, for children on social assistance and for children in working poor families in this province, and this is happening despite the fact that this government has experienced economic times that have been very good, economic times that have been very significant. We know this government has the money to deal with these problems, and the government refuses to do so.

If the government wanted to do something to help poor kids, they would raise the shelter allowance for social assistance recipients; they would raise the minimum wage; they would give back the health care cards for families who are working poor; they would stop the clawback of the national child benefit; they would re-regulate rent controls in this province so families aren't losing where they live and a shelter; they would provide money for counselling at second-stage housing. There are any number of these things this government can do if they really care about kids. The problem is, they don't care. That's the real problem.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I certainly appreciate the opportunity to be able to join in the debate on concurrence. Today I want to really focus on some of the major initiatives that our government has brought forward, initiatives particularly in rural Ontario.

Before I really get into that, I'd like to compliment the member for Durham for his very kind remarks about what's happening in agriculture in rural Ontario and particularly about my riding and myself. It's certainly great to hear somebody like that recognizing the importance of rural Ontario and what our government is indeed doing for rural Ontario and for agriculture in particular.

In the current economic boom, large urban centres like Toronto are growing and prospering. Rural Ontario is also doing well, but not to the same extent. This growth is not consistent in rural Ontario, as it is in urban areas. We need to make sure that the barriers to rural economic renewal and job creation are indeed being tackled. We're already doing this. The initiatives that I will talk about today underline the fact that we are doing our part in rural Ontario.

I'd like to draw your attention first to the editorial in this month's issue put out by the corn producers. Although I give them credit for praising some of our initiatives since we first came to office back in 1995, it also makes some non-factual and misguided arguments about our efforts in rural Ontario. As a government member who represents a rural riding and also chairs the Premier's Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal, I can assure you that we take pride in our record for rural Ontario. Compliments to the Premier in demonstrating his concern for small-town and rural Ontario and developing a task force to review this issue. Obviously he has the foresight to see ahead and look after small-town and rural Ontario.

I would like to spend a few minutes highlighting 18 initiatives that have happened since 1995 and sort of

draw a comparison with when an insurance company asks you to have a look at your house and identify some of your assets. You go around with a video camera or a regular camera and you take pictures of various rooms and write down the values, and it's quite a surprise to you when you really find out how much you have in that home.

Talking about some of the initiatives that have happened here in Ontario to help small-town and rural Ontario, the first one I think of is the \$15 million invested in Grow Ontario. That came out back in the 1996 budget. It was all about the competitiveness of Ontario products, developing markets for these products that result in new agri-food products being brought to market. Some 150 projects were undertaken as a result of this funding initiative.

Another one that comes to mind is the northern Ontario infrastructure program. A total of \$138 million was allocated back in 1996 to the repaving and repairing of roads in northern Ontario. I think of a road from Dryden to Sioux Lookout, some hour's drive, just a disastrous road, left by the previous administration in this province. That road is now just a beautiful road to drive on. That's just one example that I'm familiar with.

Another one that our government brought in, a third one, is rural youth employment program support. In 1997, some \$3 million was allocated to the creation of 3,000 summer jobs for our young people.

Again in 1997 in that budget, an additional \$2.5 million was dedicated to covering the costs of business start-up loans for our youth. Another approximately 3,000 jobs were created because of that.

In the spring of 2000, the government of Ontario extended its support to rural youth by providing wage supplements to employers in rural Ontario who were willing to hire students.

Just looking along, a fourth one was the whole farm relief program. This was some \$182 million in disaster relief back in 1999, and that was over a five-year period. When joined with the federal government, that means some \$455 million to recognize disaster relief for our Ontario farmers.

A fifth one we might talk about is agriculture and rural research in agri-food lab services. On an annual basis, some \$65 million goes into this. Most definitely, the agriculture sector and rural communities benefited as a result of this investment.

The sixth one would be a food safety program. Our government has made a commitment to invest some \$50 million over three years in the area of food safety and food research and those related areas. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is working with several other provincial ministries to continue strengthening Ontario's food safety program. This involves the planning and implementation of enhancements to ensure a seamless, science-based, field-to-port system that protects public health and supports the agri-food industry and the rural economy.

There's also a tremendous investment in telecommunications infrastructure. In the 1999 budget, the province and Bell Canada invested \$7.3 million and \$8 million respectively to extend high-speed data service to rural and small-town Ontario communities. This initiative has meant telecommunications services for some 270 more rural communities. I believe this is indeed positive news for our rural communities, as it contributes greatly to breaking down the barriers of isolation that many have been facing.

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There's another one that a lot of us in this House are interested in, and that's the horse racing industry. Some 20% of provincial revenue generated from slot machines at racetracks now goes back to the racetrack industry. The 2000 budget committed an estimated \$138 million for the horse racing sector. The slot machine initiative is expected to preserve some 45,000 jobs in the Ontario horse racing sector, with as many as 7,000 new jobs created. It is worth noting that the horse racing sector constitutes the province's third-largest agricultural industry.

Looking at the northern Ontario heritage fund, in the 2000 budget we committed some \$300 million over five years as part of a renewed mandate for the northern Ontario heritage fund. This funding commitment is intended to ensure that northern Ontario communities become full participants in Ontario's strong economy.

One that I was quite excited about in the last budget was the rural school transportation, some \$23 million that was set aside. In my own board, they were not spending all the dollars that were set aside in the previous budget. In my own board, another \$750,000 approximately came out, so they had roughly another \$1 million to spend on transportation this year over what was spent last year.

There's also the rural youth job strategy over a four-year period, some \$35 million, and that came out in the 1998 budget. Applications are continuing to be accepted up until March 31, 2001, with payments going as long as March 31, 2002.

The 12th one I'd like to speak on is the rural job strategy fund. This is a three-year program. Some \$30 million on rural job strategy was announced back in the 1997 budget, and it was designed to invest in projects that deal with quality enhancement, marketing and information technology to create jobs and increase exports, lead to investment, contribute to rural economic development and create alliances and other partnerships. The total value of the approved projects is some \$163 million, of which the RJSF contribution is approximately \$28.6 million.

Another special project was healthy futures, an investment of some \$90 million. That was announced in December 1999, with the goal of providing funding assistance to projects that will enhance the quality and safety of food supplies and safeguard rural water quality and increase access to domestic and international markets.

The 14th one is a very, very special one for me, the Ontario small town and rural program, otherwise known as OSTAR. This is a result of the Premier's task force that I chair, the Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal. You will remember back in August the announcement of some \$240 million out of that OSTAR funding for health and safety issues, essentially going for water and sewage treatment plants, as well as for bridges in rural Ontario. Also, \$104,000 was set aside recently for Women and Rural Economic Development, and this came through the Ontario Women's Directorate. This is certainly going to be very helpful for rural economic development. This Women and Rural Economic Development is an organization which often partners with other economic development organizations in implementing projects.

There's also, you will recall, the retail sales tax exemption for farm building construction materials that we made permanent in the last budget. There's also the agri-food and rural business bill that we passed way back in 1996 to get rid of some of the barriers in agriculture and also to set up Agricorp at that time.

Last but certainly not least is the business community economic development support, a number of federal departments and provincial ministries that recognize the importance of economic development, certainly OMAFRA staff at field offices throughout rural Ontario.

In conclusion, I'm extremely pleased with the initiatives that our government has set aside for rural Ontario and really pleased that the Premier has recognized its importance through the Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal. This is certainly going to be of tremendous assistance to our rural economy and to small-town Ontario. Many thanks to the Premier for recognizing the importance of rural and small-town Ontario. Indeed we are investing extensively in rural Ontario.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): We saw something this afternoon from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly that was a very interesting ruling, to say the least.

I like to be fair to people on the other side when I think they've done something right, and I was pleased that the new Minister of Correctional Services and government House leader stated in the House that it was wrong for operatives within the government to use the Web pages of individual ministries—that is, the civil service—for partisan reasons, and that it was going to stop. I want to compliment him, and it's not a backhand compliment. It's hard to do when you're in this House, to admit that something that government has done is wrong and that you're going to cease and desist. The government House leader did so, and I want to commend him for what he said in the House today.

I thought the Speaker's ruling was correct. As I think government members know and as individual elected members know, there are always smart people, very clever people—more clever than the people who are elected to this House, of course—who advise ministers about these things, and, "Wouldn't it be smart if we attacked the Leader of the Opposition on the Web site of

a ministry?" If any one of us wants to use the Web site of our political party to do so, as Norm Sterling said and as the Speaker said, that's quite appropriate. That's where we are to be partisan, and people expect that. So when I read something from the Liberal Web site or the NDP or the Conservative Web site, I know it is from the viewpoint of our political parties, and it should be looked at as that.

There is a good tradition in Ontario, and I learned this when I became a minister when we took over in 1985, because I was suspicious that everybody in the civil service must be a bunch of Conservatives. I found out soon that we had a very professional civil service, that in fact they were there to serve the people of Ontario. There may have been some people who particularly favoured the previous government, but there were other people who had different points of view. I think one of the strengths of our system is always when we can detach the partisan political end of it from the civil service end of it. The government House leader today indicated his view that that should be the case, and I was pleased to see that. I want to commend him and those he spoke for, and criticize those who were responsible for doing it in the first place. I suspect it isn't elected members of the assembly who do that; it's overzealous advisers who tend to do that.

I wanted to say that to begin with, because I think it's important in this House to give credit when credit is due.

I want to also mention about the allocation of funding for various things, because we're dealing with a number of ministries.

I want to say how dismayed I was—I mentioned this in a statement in the House the other day—that the company called Norstar Entertainment was contemplating a film based on the exploits—infamous exploits, I might add—of Paul Bernardo and his assistant, or his wife in this particular case, Karla Homolka, that they had to make a movie out of it. As I look around, I don't know anybody in this House who wants to see that happen. It's not a partisan issue. I don't look across the floor at the government and say, "They're not prepared to do anything about it." The government is going to do everything it can to prevent that from happening, within its power, and we recognize the government has certain limited powers. But I'm sure the people of this province don't want to see that happen.

It's one thing when a production company produces something that's fictitious; in other words, someone in their mind has created a story, the story is converted to a film, and it is totally fictitious, or it may be based vaguely on something that's happened out there. But to look at people who have caused so much personal pain to the family and friends of the victims, and certainly I know from a personal case—I know Donna and Doug French very well. They've been through an awful lot. They go to the high school graduations and give out the Kristen French Memorial Award. Every time they come up to that stage it has to be very, very trying on their part.

There's always a hush in the audience and a special round of applause, knowing what they've gone through.

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But it hasn't simply been the trial of Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka that has been a problem for them. There are other trials that have come out of this—the lawyers involved and now someone who wrote a book about it. There's always that fear that they're going to drag out the infamous tapes and have those shown in court again. They're not unrealistic enough not to know that if there's evidence that has to be presented in an appeal some time, the tapes may have to be used. What they ask is that the world doesn't have to hear or see the tapes, that only the jury and court officers would have to be involved in those tapes. In the best of all worlds, they'd love to see those tapes gotten rid of completely; we all would.

Again, I'm not here to be critical in that particular instance because I happen to believe that whether a person is a New Democrat, a Liberal or a Conservative, they don't want to see that film made. I wrote to the president of the company today to ask that he not proceed with this, that it wasn't necessary to produce this particular movie, that it would cause additional anguish and pain.

We understand the news media must cover events of this kind. Much of what we see in the news media is negative because it is the unusual. That's what is news. It's not news when the usual thing happens. So we understand; we may not like it, but we understand when we see that coverage in the newspaper, on television, on radio and in magazines.

But it's not necessary to glorify and dignify Paul Bernardo with some kind of movie about him. I would hope the company would not proceed with that. I know the government, within its jurisdiction, will ensure that there is not funding for it or that there is not any encouragement in any way, directly or indirectly, of this film being made; in fact, that there is discouragement of that.

I want to deal with a couple of other issues that come within the purview of the concurrences this afternoon. One is the continuing issue of doctor shortages. I'm not the only one who suffers from this. People in any rural area or smaller town area or anywhere outside of the major metropolitan centres in this province know what it's like not to have doctors.

People call us as MPPs. I was looking though my notes coming from my constituency office today. Someone was annoyed at me because I didn't get them a doctor. I guess I'm overstating it. This person's doctor died a couple of years ago. "When have you ever raised this, Mr Bradley?" People in this House know we all try to raise these issues, and do raise them, but unless somebody gets the provincial Hansard of what goes on in here, we don't see that happening.

We have to find a way to get more doctors into the field. One is that we have to graduate more of them. I know the thinking a number of years ago was, "We've got too many doctors graduating and it's going to cost the

system too much.” I think one of the things we didn’t look at as a society—and I’ll zero in on Ontario because that’s what we represent—is the age of the present doctors. What we’re finding out is that a lot of them are nearing retirement now. Just think, for instance, of the age of doctors in many communities outside of the greater Toronto area. Are the doctors older than you are? For a lot of people they are, and that means some day they’re going to have to retire. We can’t ask them to go on forever, although many do work beyond the so-called normal retirement age of 65.

You’ve heard me mention ophthalmologists. I’m told that one third of the ophthalmologists are over the age of 65, one third between 55 and 65, and one third under 55. As all of us get older we have some problems with our eyes. We need glasses and we need other treatments for our eyes. We’re going to need those people.

It’s going to be a matter of graduating more, but it’s also getting them to the right area. That will partially be incentives to get them there. Often we don’t like to have to offer those incentives, but we have to find ways to get people to those areas and do it soon.

General practitioners in the Niagara Peninsula have practices that are overflowing. When there’s an announcement that somebody’s retiring or moving or somebody’s died or someone’s ill in the medical profession, there’s a crisis created in our area.

I do want to see this Legislature address that issue, and the government address that issue, and I will support any initiative by the government—if it involves the expenditure of additional funds to do so, I’ll support the government in that, and defend the government if it is to do that.

The last issue I want to talk about, because I want to leave 10 minutes at least for my colleague from Pembroke to speak, is the one of the chief election officer. I understand we have to appoint a chief election officer to replace the retiring chief election officer. I simply want to caution the House that’s a very important position. It has to be somebody who’s acceptable to the three political parties represented in this House, and indeed to the population at large. You can’t simply plunk somebody the government thinks is going to be favourable to the government in that position.

You have the right to appoint the other positions; I understand that. I understand the patronage system out there. This is an independent officer, and I hope we choose very carefully the person for that position, because I think we have to engage in some electoral reforms that are going to make the system much fairer than it is today, though heaven knows our system can’t be as bad as it is in the United States, when the Supreme Court, on what I would call a partisan basis, has made a ruling which has made George Bush the President. If the people of the US chose George Bush as President and that’s how they voted, that’s fine with me; that’s their choice. But I observed today something I hope doesn’t happen in our system, and that is a very strong politicization of a Supreme Court on a political issue. I hope we don’t see that happen in this country.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I’d like to take a few moments tonight to talk about the electricity issue. I honestly believe there is nothing that we will have done in the past seven to eight years that will be more important for the intermediate-term future of the province of Ontario than the so-called deregulation of the electricity marketplace. This, I want to say, is a subject upon which we have not spent nearly enough time as a Legislature. It is very complicated and confusing, and my sense is that about a half-dozen people in government—the current Deputy Minister of Energy, the Deputy Minister of Finance and a couple of other people—are seized of this, but very few of the politicians in the cabinet and most members of the Legislature have not a very good sense of what is happening in one of the areas of greatest sensitivity for both the economic and the social well-being of the province.

Last week the Ontario auditor, Erik Peters, tabled before the House a report which indicated that there is not just risk to the Ontario electrical ratepayer but, as the Provincial Auditor indicated, he has looked at the plan of the government to defease or to retire the over \$20 billion worth of stranded debt and he tells us that there are additional risks to the Ontario government and to the Ontario taxpayer.

I’m not here to grind some kind of a partisan axe; this is not easy stuff. But make no mistake about it: it is stuff that is going to touch every resident, whether he or she be a residential consumer, a farmer or an owner-operator of a business, large or small. There are few issues that touch more centrally to the economic and social well-being of a province like Ontario than the availability and the price of electricity. It’s no secret to anyone who knows anything about the economic history of Ontario in the last 100 years that the fact that we’ve had relatively cheap, very available and quite reliable electricity has been a cornerstone of our economic prosperity.

The world has changed. I will say again: the government of Mike Harris embarked on some change five years ago that I honestly believed had to be undertaken. The cornerstone of the policy announced five years ago was, “There shall be competition in the generation of electricity.” That was a right direction. My concern today is, we have retreated from that. I say to the House that if you are looking at the electricity sector, 70% of the cost of your electricity bill is generation; 15% is transmission and 15% is distribution, but 70% of your bill is the commodity cost. We are doing very little in the early days of this new policy to create an environment where we will get new generators in the marketplace. In fact, the government is pursuing a policy where we are re-monopolizing a part of the sector, particularly in the distribution area.

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I say again to my colleagues, particularly in the government, when we have over \$20 billion worth of stranded debt that is going to have to be paid by the Ontario electricity ratepayer and the Ontario taxpayer, why on earth are we allowing our retail company, Hydro

One, to go out and spend hundreds of millions of dollars that they have to borrow to buy utilities large and small? That was no part of the plan three and four years ago. If you go back and look at the Macdonald panel, struck by the Harris government to advise on this matter, no one in that group—and that group included Macdonald, a former federal Minister of Finance, and McKeough, an able Minister of Finance provincially—none of those people recommended to the Ontario government and to the Ontario Legislature that we needed to have a bigger Ontario Hydro Retail. That's what we're getting.

There are academics like Professor Joe Kushner over at Brock University who've looked at some of these purchases being made by Hydro One. Professor Kushner is telling us, as are others, that Hydro One, still a company that the Ontario government largely controls, is paying, according to these experts, 30% and 40% above market to buy. The auditor told us last week that the first year of the operations of the holding company, that the debt of Ontario Electricity Financial Corp—it's an acceptance corporation for all of the stranded and related debt of the successor companies—after the first year, has gone up by hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Minister of Finance railed at me last week and said I didn't know what I was talking about. Well, I have checked not just with financial people but I've talked to people like Tom Adams over at Energy Probe. He's looked at the numbers and he agrees that the numbers are worrisome. They're not nearly as positive as the Minister of Finance has indicated and would like us to believe.

I note that today we have these gargantuan companies, the Ontario Power Generation company, which is the successor company to the generating side of the old Hydro, and Hydro One, the retail company—multi-billion dollar corporations—operating in the dark. We have no idea what they're doing. We can find out after the fact, but they're out there spending your money, your ratepayers' money, and spending money for which the Ontario government will be ultimately responsible in a way that provides precious little oversight.

The energy board, our provincial regulator, in a judgment just two months ago, said that in a hearing held this summer they have concluded that once the market opens up and the rate freeze is lifted—and presumably that will happen in the next two weeks to six months—the energy board tells us that if you're an Ontario Hydro One customer your electricity bill is going up to go up minimally 13%. Make no mistake about it, hydro rates are going to be going up for all classes of customers in this province.

And as we have seen in places like Alberta and the Pacific northwest and California, there are a number of issues in this so-called decontrol and deregulation that are very complicated. Does this Legislature understand that deregulation essentially means that the price of not just natural gas but electricity will be established not in Toronto, not in Winnipeg, not in Montreal, not in Edmonton, but in New York and Dallas and Seattle and Los Angeles? Do you also understand that the vast majority, 90%, of the new electricity plants being

planned or built in the United States today, for example, plan to use natural gas as a feedstock? You wonder why natural gas is going up? I can tell you one of the reasons: virtually all of the new power plants contemplate natural gas as a feedstock. There is a very real correlation between the two. So if natural gas prices have doubled and tripled and quadrupled, as they have in the last 18 months, make no mistake about it, that alone is going to put significant upward pressure on your electricity bill as well as your natural gas bill.

This Legislature is a bit like a referee in one of those professional wrestling matches, distracted by some inanity, some obscure diversion in the upper reaches of the stadium, while some very nasty things appear to be going on down in the ring. I just want to say we had better, both as government and as a Legislature, start turning our minds to this electricity issue. We've got all kinds of markers out today in the marketplace, and the poor consumer is basically at sea. The government was told two years ago that there is an obligation to provide good and clear, consumer-friendly information to the consumer and do it before the market opens. That's not happening. I say to anyone watching tonight, be very careful before you sign any new deal, particularly for electricity. Be very careful. Read the fine print. Sad to say, your electricity bill is going up, not down as Mike Harris promised very glibly a few years ago.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Environment. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education and Training. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Tourism. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Labour. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for Management Board Secretariat. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it.

This will be a stacked vote and will occur at the end.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Attorney General. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it.

This will be a stacked vote.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it. Carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Correctional Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

This will be a stacked vote as well.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, supplementaries only. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my view, the ayes have it.

This will also be a stacked vote.

We will now have the votes. Call in the members; this will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker: Would members take their seats.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 49; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley

Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 49; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Correctional Services.

Same vote? I heard a no.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 49; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr Klees has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, supplementaries only.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Jackson, Cameron	Sterling, Norman W.
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
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Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John	Young, David
Guzzo, Garry J.		

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

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 49; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning, Thursday, December 14, at 10 of the clock,.

The House adjourned at 1811.

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