



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 4 June 2001

Lundi 4 juin 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Monday 4 June 2001

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Lundi 4 juin 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): The doctor shortages in my home community of Thunder Bay have never been as critical as they are now. We are losing one of only two gastroenterologists, and his patients have nowhere to go. These are people who are ill, and they are put on waiting lists to be seen sometime in the year 2002. We're in danger of losing two of our four radiologists. If that happens, it will not be possible to provide MRI diagnosis in northwestern Ontario's regional hospital.

Thunder Bay already has vacancies for 62 specialists. That means we are 42% short of the numbers of specialists that are needed to provide care in northwestern Ontario's only regional centre. This creates enormous workload pressures for the remaining physicians, which is why more and more doctors are leaving our community. Emergency room physicians cannot continue to work all the overtime shifts that are required to keep our emergency room doors open, and there are not enough family doctors to provide backup coverage to the emergency room specialists.

The ability of our community to provide medical care is barely being sustained, and patients' lives will truly be at risk if this government does not recognize the urgency of the situation. Announcements of good intent to do something two years from now or four years from now will not avoid the full-blown crisis that's just around the corner.

The minister announced that they're prepared to move ahead with the accelerated licensing of foreign-trained physicians, but they haven't actually done anything to make that happen. The expert panel on doctor shortages said that \$11 million for recruitment and retention initiatives is needed immediately. The minister hasn't even mentioned that recommendation. Even the new medical school spaces are not to be in place for another year and a half, and those doctors won't be out in communities until 2008 at the earliest.

If patient care and people's lives count for anything at all, surely something more can be done.

AMERICREDIT CORP

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I rise in this House to welcome a new business to my riding of Peterborough, AmeriCredit Corp. AmeriCredit Corp, a Texas-based financial services company, recently announced its plans to open a call centre in Peterborough. This means jobs and a boost to our business community. Fortune magazine calls AmeriCredit Corp one of the 100 fastest-growing companies in America. Founded in 1992, it has grown from a handful of employees to its current complement of 3,600, based in 202 branch offices in the US and Canada.

Already a multi-billion dollar player in the area of purchasing and servicing of automotive loans, AmeriCredit is dedicated to running a tight ship with integrity as its rudder while aggressively pursuing future growth. AmeriCredit has a mission statement encompassing integrity, investment, innovation and information, both within the company and outside of its walls.

As the MPP for Peterborough, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to AmeriCredit and thank them for choosing Peterborough for the new call centre. I know they will be happy with their choice. Where else can one have a university, a college, a proposed new hospital, beautiful waterways and countryside, all within the very community where they work and live?

CONTAMINATED SOIL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): With the news that testing done by a consulting firm hired by the lawyer acting for some Port Colborne residents affected by nickel contamination has shown levels significantly above provincial safety guidelines inside two homes near the Inco plant, it is essential that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the Niagara health unit, with the assistance of the Ontario Ministry of Health, move rapidly to conduct their own comprehensive tests for nickel and any other toxic metals inside homes in this neighbourhood. It is important that the Ministry of the Environment, even with its vastly reduced staff and financial resources, devote additional human and financial resources to proceed quickly to deal with the results that are now in and gather further data.

As was the case in the Niagara neighbourhood of Toronto and south Riverdale, extensive removal of contaminated soil should take place and the cleaning of homes with the latest and best equipment—industrial cleaning, if you will—must take place at the earliest

opportunity. Residents living adjacent to the plant should be relocated temporarily while cleaning takes place, and permanently if necessary. Compensation should be paid if costs have been incurred by the residents and if their homes are declared to be uninhabitable.

The lead cleanup in the Toronto neighbourhoods which were located next to old smelters that smelted lead provide, perhaps, a model to follow. Government action is essential, and I urge the minister and support the minister in any efforts to do so.

FIREFIGHTERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Today, I would like to draw attention to the efforts of the firefighters, both professional and volunteer, in my riding of Northumberland. On Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the opening of a new state-of-the-art fire hall in Harwood, Ontario, on the shores of Rice Lake. I commend the township of Hamilton for providing the best infrastructure possible to support the efforts of our local firefighting teams.

Unlike larger municipal areas, rural areas depend on volunteer firefighters to assist in the efforts of professionals to respond to local emergencies. These volunteer contributions are critical to the success of small departments, and I take my hat off to those volunteers.

Supporting those efforts are the community members. No greater example of this is the contribution of the Harris Boat Works, who have provided half the cost of a \$20,000 emergency services boat for the use of local firefighters at the new Harwood station. Another \$5,000 was provided by the local Rotary Club, and the balance will be covered through additional public fundraising. What a tremendous gift to the community in recognition of the important role our firefighting personnel play in protecting lives and property.

Again, I would like to commend these generous contributions and offer congratulations to the township of Hamilton for these improvements to their emergency response infrastructure.

CLOSURE OF OUR LADY OF MERCY SCHOOL

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): We closed yet another school in Sarnia-Lambton. The cuts have forced the closure of Our Lady of Mercy, whose current enrolment is at about 80% capacity. There's no room in the province under Mike Harris for small schools.

Yesterday I attended the ceremonies in tribute to the contributions made to the community by Our Lady of Mercy school. As I walked through this school, which I attended for all of my elementary years, I felt as if there had been a death. Any time a school closes, a part of the community is left empty. Why is it that this phenomenon of closing schools has become so commonplace around this province?

This school has been existence since 1888 and it was renovated at a cost of \$500,000 in 1986. I have great difficulty with the decision to close a school that is at almost 80% capacity. There is something fundamentally wrong here. This is the result of an extreme form of government such as we see here at Queen's Park these days. This government has forgotten the human impact of decisions made only on the basis of money.

The ceremony at Our Lady of Mercy school lasted a few hours, the struggle to save the school lasted a year, but the loss will have consequences on the community for a long time into the future.

CONTAMINATED SOIL

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I rise today to urge the Minister of the Environment, and indeed the entire Harris government, to take seriously the contamination of not just the soil but some of the houses in Port Colborne by nickel nitrate, I believe, or sulphate, it's called.

I was quoted in the Hamilton Spectator today, and in other news releases, demanding that the government relocate some of the people who are living in the houses where we now know there actually are contaminants that could cause and are known to cause cancer. The local member of parliament there disputed what I said and said, "Well, she's not a medical officer of health. What does she know?"

1340

I would say that no, I'm not a medical officer of health, but I want to say to that member and to the entire caucus and government that I lived through a period in south Riverdale where there was land contaminated with lead, and for years the governments of the day said there was not a problem. It took years for members of the NDP, David Reville, Jim Renwick and others, to convince this government that there was a problem.

By the time they did the tests and took remedial action, many of the children in my riding were contaminated with lead and have learning disabilities to this day. We cannot fool around with people's health. The government should act now and should act swiftly.

PAUL ROSEN

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): As the Stanley Cup final is coming to a close and many Canadians eagerly await its outcome, a Thornhill resident is preparing for next year's Paralympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. Paul Rosen is one of 15 players recently chosen to don the red-and-white uniform as a member of the Canadian national sled hockey team.

Hockey as always been an integral part of Mr Rosen's life in many different aspects. He has always been a player but he has also been an assistant coach, trainer and general manager of a club team in Israel. His achievement in making the Canadian national sled hockey team is truly remarkable, especially with the adversity that Mr

Rosen endured recently. He lost his leg in June 1999 and he started playing sled hockey only eight months later.

Sled hockey has been a medal sport at the Paralympic Games since 1991. In the last Paralympic Games Canada reached the final, to come second only the Sweden. But at last year's world championship in Salt Lake City, Canada skated off with the title. With the final roster being chosen, Team Canada will have a training camp in November in preparation for next year's Paralympic Games and will participate in a three-nations tournament in Nagano, Japan, in November.

On behalf of the residents of Thornhill I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr Rosen and the other Canadian sled hockey team members. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish them well in the years to come in the Paralympic Games.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Sadly, the carnage continues and the people of Ontario are beginning to see a common theme with this government. Once again they are being forced to ask, "How many people must die before the Harris government takes action?" This weekend, Highway 69 claimed the lives of six Ontario residents and six more left in serious condition in two separate vehicle accidents.

For the last six years I have been urging the Harris government to take immediate action and four-lane Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound. Exactly one year ago I stood in my place, again after a tragedy, and pleaded with the then minister to begin the four-laning. In the last year and a half alone the carnage on this stretch of highway is staggering. Seventeen accidents have resulted in the loss of 26 lives.

I am horrified at this irresponsible and negligent government's attitude toward the loss of lives simply because the north doesn't fall into the political priority of this Conservative government. I am horrified that Ontarians die needlessly on an unsafe, winding and treacherous highway. I am horrified at seeing these horrific accidents and the pain they cause.

This government's blatant disregard for people's lives, its political posturing, its inexcusable contempt for the north, its lack of a plan and its inaction are sentencing Ontarians to death road.

Begin the four-laning now. Stop the carnage. Do it before death road claims more victims.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have in my hand a letter that I received from Yvonne Iza, one of my constituents, and I would like to take the time to read some of it.

"Dear Wayne Wettlaufer,

"Recently, our son's school informed us of the announcement by the Ontario government with regard to tax credits for independent school tuition.

"We write to support this announcement because we presently support the idea of independent schools, where we feel we are giving our son the best education possible.

"It is not because we have lots of money to spend. In fact, we have downsized our house to spend more time with the children. What's more, the tuition to send our child to this school uses up my personal part-time income. I believe our position and responsibility is to raise children to be responsible adults within their communities. We thank the government for upholding and recognizing their responsibility to all the children in the province.

"Sincerely yours,

"Yvonne Iza."

Much to the surprise of the opposition, Ontario's parents are thanking us for giving them the right to have choice in their own children's education. There is nothing that is more important to a parent than his or her child. I don't see why the opposition, particularly the Liberals, can be opposed to letting parents have the right to choose where their children should go to school. At least one of my constituents supports this move, and considering that it's optional and it helps to represent more of Ontario, frankly, I don't see why the Liberals are telling those parents that they should not have that right, a right that no one should take away from them.

VISITORS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): On a point of order, Speaker: I'm sure that everyone in the Legislature will want to join me in welcoming 20 students and five staff from St Martin school in the beautiful community of Terrace Bay in my riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North. Thank you, Principal Barb Spadoni. They raised a lot of money to get here. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That's not a point of order, but we welcome our guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD
AMENDMENT ACT
(ELECTRICITY RATES), 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA COMMISSION
DE L'ÉNERGIE DE L'ONTARIO
(TARIFS D'ÉLECTRICITÉ)

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 to provide for protection against increases in the rates charged for the distribution of electricity / *Projet de loi 67, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario de façon à prévoir une*

protection contre les augmentations des tarifs exigés pour la distribution d'électricité.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): This bill amends the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, to limit increases that the Ontario Energy Board can approve or affix in the rates that distributors charge for distributing electricity to consumers after section 26(1) of the Electricity Act.

VISITOR

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the members' gallery today we have Mr Jagtar Singh Kang, past member of the state Legislature of Rajasthan, land of my birthplace. He was also minister of industry and irrigation.

I ask all members, please, to join me in welcoming him to the Ontario Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We welcome our honoured guest.

1072550 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2001

Mr Smitherman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr8, An Act to revive 1072550 Ontario Limited.

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

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

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, June 4, and Tuesday, June 5, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

The Speaker: Would the members kindly take their seats, please?

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	Parsons, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Patten, Richard
Beaubien, Marcel	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hardeman, Ernie	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Sampson, Rob
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Smitherman, George
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kwinter, Monte	Sterling, Norman W.
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Stewart, R. Gary
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Curling, Alvin	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Ecker, Janet	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Marchese, Rosario
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Martel, Shelley
Hampton, Howard		

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 77; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

VISITORS

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know that the members of this House will wish to welcome Mr Wayne Barnes, who is the president and CEO of Goodyear, one of our leading Canadian companies; and Mr Glenn Maidment, who is the president-elect of the Rubber Association of Canada. They are in our members' gallery. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That's not a point of order, but while we're welcoming special guests, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the legislative interns from the province of British Columbia. Please join me in welcoming our guests, who are just arriving.

1400

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): This morning I participated in the launch of Pollution Probe's clean air campaign and commute. For

nine consecutive years this campaign has created awareness and inspired the people of Ontario to make clean air choices in their everyday lives. Last year, more than 380 tonnes of air pollution were kept out of the air as a result of Pollution Probe's campaign. I would like to thank Pollution Probe for their efforts, and I am pleased that our ministry was the lead sponsor again of this important campaign.

I also want to acknowledge that June 3 to June 9 is Canadian Environment Week. This week began 30 years ago to celebrate activities that care for and nurture our shared environmental legacy. Canadian Environment Week promotes the need for each and every one of us to recognize our roles in preserving our fragile environment. It reminds us that by making small changes in the way we live our lives, we can all take steps toward a cleaner and healthier environment.

There is a government-wide commitment to forge a new approach to protecting the environment. By shifting our focus to make the environment a broad responsibility across all ministries and beyond, we will ensure that Ontario is prepared to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

But even with a commitment across all ministries, we cannot do it alone. This government continues to create partnerships with community groups, industry, businesses, academics, other levels of government and individuals to ensure that the vital responsibility of environmental protection is shared by everyone. Through this shared responsibility, we will create an atmosphere of continuous improvement.

As the summer season is gearing up across Ontario, I'd like to take this opportunity during Canadian Environment Week to remind my colleagues and citizens of Ontario of the many things we can personally do to protect our environment. The cottage and the backyard are where many Ontarians relax, enjoy summer and get back in touch with nature, but they may not be aware of the impact they have on the environment.

For example, running a typical gas lawn mower for two hours can create about the same amount of air emissions as driving a car from Ontario to the Maritimes. Other gas-powered motor tools like trimmers and chainsaws can be even more polluting than gas lawn mowers. This is why we are proud to have supported the Mow Down Pollution program, an innovative environmental partnership between government and non-government groups. The pilot program offered people a cash rebate to turn in their old, air-polluting gas lawn mowers for more environmentally friendly electric or rechargeable models. We were glad to work with the Clean Air Foundation and a number of private sector sponsors to make the program possible.

While more than half of all of Ontario's smog is the result of pollution from sources in the United States, we must do more here at home to improve our quality of air. Here are some other interesting facts to keep in mind while enjoying Ontario's summer:

A two-stroke, 70-horsepower engine emits the same amount of smog-causing pollution in one hour as driving

a new car 8,000 kilometres. Running a 100-horsepower personal watercraft for seven hours is estimated to cause more air pollution than driving a three-year-old car 160,000 kilometres. Simply driving our cars less and taking public transit even one day a week can make a big difference to the air we all share.

We also need to make sure that our vehicles are well tuned to run efficiently, and using less gas also helps. We should avoid idling our cars while stopped.

The products we use also have a large impact on our air quality. We should all try to avoid products such as aerosol sprays, oil-based paint and strong cleaning products, especially on hot summer days when smog levels are higher.

As well, we need to reduce energy demand. We can turn off lights when we're not using them, we can turn down air conditioners a few degrees, and we can make sure our homes are well insulated to cut down on wasted energy and air pollution.

The added bonus of these actions is that they will also cut down our energy bills. Other simple actions include recycling and composting food scraps and yard clippings, which drastically cut down on the amount of waste going to landfill.

As well, we can reduce the number of days that we water our lawns, and we can practise pesticide-free lawn and garden care.

While the role of individuals is vital to protecting our environment, the government of Ontario will continue to do its part to ensure environmental sustainability. Recently, this government has taken action to improve the air we breathe through proposed regulations targeting the electricity sector. We are also working with the transportation sector and other industry sectors to ensure the positive momentum of air quality actions underway continues.

Today's Pollution Probe Clean Air Commute is an example of our shared commitment to educate Ontarians about personal environmental choices. Through Operation Clean Water, we continue to work with our municipal, conservation authority and other partners to ensure Ontario has the safest and cleanest drinking water. And we are already well underway with legislation to clean up brownfields and are working to ensure that, through careful planning and management, companies are not creating any future brownfields.

So as we recognize Canadian Environment Week, let each of us take stock of our own personal actions. Let us take time today to remind ourselves that the responsibility for the environment is in our hands, and from our hands it will be passed on to future generations. Let us make sure not only that this summer is safe and enjoyable, but that each one of us does our part to protect our precious environment.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I find it unfortunate that the minister is trotted out these days by her staff to a number of photo ops instead of having the support from the rest of the cabinet for meaningful environmental initiatives.

I noticed her staff had her out with Imperial Oil, which we know as Esso, which produces the dirtiest gas in all of Ontario, and yet the minister was doing a photo opportunity with Esso the other day. I thought that rather inappropriate.

Today she was with Pollution Probe. The irony of that is that she's advocating public transit, and I believe she truly believes in it, yet her government has totally abandoned public transit. No longer do we have funding for various transit commissions across the province or operating funding for transit out of Metropolitan Toronto to other communities. That is gone. We're virtually the only jurisdiction in North America that does not provide that today.

The only answer they seem to have is to keep widening highways and encouraging more and more urban sprawl, which contributes negatively to the environment. Of course, the minister is presiding over a ministry which has had its staff cut by an unprecedented one third and its budget cut by some 45% in funding. That is a true example of what the government really believes the importance of the environment is.

The most powerful initiative within this government is the Red Tape Commission, which seems to walk over all Ministers of the Environment, one after another, tearing apart the regulations, trying to weaken the legislation, telling them they should be business-friendly instead of, of course, toughly enforcing the environment. Nothing can replace strong laws and tough and fair enforcement. All of these partnerships you have are very nice, but what you really require is a strong investigations and enforcement branch to go in, investigate, lay the charges and set an example for everybody else. The good corporate people will support that, as well as the whole population of the province.

I remember that behind closed doors—talking about air quality—the previous Minister of the Environment and the previous Minister of Energy were on the side of the polluting companies. They didn't want to remove sulphur from gas to the same extent as the federal government wanted to, and they didn't want to remove it as quickly. But when the final communiqué came out, they attacked the federal government, when everybody knew that behind closed doors they were fighting on behalf of the companies that wanted to pollute for a longer period of time and to a greater extent.

We have coal-fired plants in this province that are virtually untouched by this minister, outside of one. Nanticoke, which is the largest polluter in all of Canada, is going to be allowed to continue to burn coal. The minister has come up—at least her government has—with some hare-brained scheme to trade pollution credits with people down in the United States, with no overall cap. That certainly is a recipe for disaster in terms of air quality, with 1,900 premature deaths per year from smog in this province.

1410

As a result of Walkerton, we were to see certain action take place. All of us are waiting for action on factory

farms. Nothing has happened. The minister has been mugged in the hallways or the backrooms by her caucus, who won't let her pass this legislation. No action on the spreading of sludge, no staff to look after it, no rules and regulations. Again, I can't help but believe the minister wants to do this, but the powers that be in the government are not allowing her to do so.

No groundwater strategy, not enough funding for sewer and water projects in this province, all within the purview of the Ministry of the Environment.

Appointments to agencies, boards and commissions: I see people who are clearly anti-environment, in some cases, being appointed to these agencies, boards and commissions. I hope the minister can find pro-environment people for those particular agencies.

Water-taking permits: that's just totally out of control.

Also, they've abandoned recycling funding in the province to help out the municipalities.

Now, don't just take my word for it, because the minister is going to say, "Well, the opposition is naturally going to be opposed to the government." What I've got to say to the minister and to the government is, ask the Provincial Auditor. He's had several reports condemning the Ministry of the Environment and the Harris government. Ask two environment commissioners, even one who is the Tory president in North Bay. Both of those commissioners have condemned this government. I wish the minister well, but I'll tell you, she has no friends on that side of the House.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I guess I'm not going to be so kind to the minister. Pollution Probe says the focus of the campaign is to bring individuals to action against smog by promoting alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle, and that is a good starting point for today. But if there is one individual in Ontario who should be motivated to action, an individual who is entrusted with being and who is paid a great deal of money to be motivated on this issue but who has not been motivated to take action on this issue, it is the Minister of the Environment.

To be fair to her, the previous Ministers of the Environment have been dismal failures as well. I say that because there were at least eight memos warning the government, former Ministers of the Environment, that their drastic budget cuts could put health or environmental protection at risk. Those were former ministers Elliott and Sterling. They were at meetings when they were warned that their drastic cuts could put people's health at risk and the environment at risk, and they did not tell the people that they were warned that these things could happen. And then we had Walkerton.

It is absolutely incredible that this minister can stand here telling people today that they should take action to promote alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle, when it is her government and cabinet that refuse to fund public transportation in this province, the only jurisdiction in North America and the western world that is not helping support public transportation. She may be aware, by coincidence, that it is today that fares have

gone up on the Toronto transportation system—right here today. Evidence shows, and the statistics are there, that ridership goes down when fares are increased.

At the same time they're doing this, they are threatening to build seven new highways without putting a penny into public transportation in this province. How can the minister stand here today and tell us of her commitment and her government's commitment to curtailing air pollution in this province?

The NDP has put forward a plan. It's called the transportation trust fund. Other jurisdictions are doing something similar, and that is taking two cents out of the gas money—just two cents of that money—and putting it into a permanent transit fund. We would call on the federal government to do the same thing. That could promote public transportation and make sure that there are dollars in the system, year to year, so that we can plan ahead, instead of doing things that actually curtail and cut and hurt public transportation.

It is this government that repealed the NDP green planning act, which would discourage urban sprawl. And what is this government doing? It repealed that act. All its policies actually promote urban sprawl, which, as we know, leads to more people driving their cars and fewer people taking public transportation.

We have a situation where we have coal-burning plants, which we know now are one of the deadliest aspects of air pollution. The government has announced—it still hasn't been done—that they will convert Lakeview, after much prompting and urging by us and other people in the community asking this to be done, but nothing about Nanticoke, which is the largest polluter in all of Canada.

This is a very serious issue we're talking about here today. We know from the OMA that up to 1,900 people a year die from air pollution in this province. That is not acceptable. There are many things the government can and should be announcing today. The bottom line is, we want to hear that the money the government took out of the Ministry of the Environment when they took office will be put back, because even after the latest announcement in the last budget, the operating budget is still about \$43 million less than when they took office. That is shameful and unacceptable.

The other thing that they could and must do is to bring back the staff they laid off. It is already clear from the evidence before the Walkerton inquiry that that is where we need to go, and I call on the government today to do that.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My questions today are for the Minister of Education. Minister, I'd like to pursue a matter with you which was

raised in the weekend media. One of your caucus colleagues, the member for Waterloo-Wellington, attacked your new voucher for private schools here in Ontario. I want to take the opportunity to congratulate him for his insight and understanding of this issue.

Mr Arnott believes in public education as an integrating force in society, and so do I. Mr Arnott believes that your voucher will lead to fragmentation of the education system, and so do I.

Madam Minister, you dismissed these very concerns when we raised them here on this side of the House on behalf of Ontario's working families. I now put them to you on behalf of your own caucus colleague, Mr Arnott. Would you tell him why you are proceeding with a voucher plan, which we all know will fragment and weaken public education?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): As the honourable member knows, we are not proceeding with a voucher plan.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, this is your own government's position quoted in the UN decision: "If the province of Ontario were required to fund private religious schools, this would have a detrimental impact on the public schools and hence the fostering of a tolerant, multicultural, non-discriminatory society in the province, thus undermining the fundamental rights and freedoms of others." That was a decision rendered just 15 months ago before the United Nations tribunal. That was based on the argument that your government put forward. Can you tell us why 15 months ago you argued, very compellingly, I might add, that funding private religious schools was a threat to a tolerant society but today you argue that it represents no such threat? Were you completely wrong then, or are you completely wrong today?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, I think we should be very clear about the allegation the honourable member is putting on the table. What he is putting here in this Legislature is that somehow or other those parents who choose to send their children to independent schools or the education provided in those independent schools is somehow not tolerant, not acceptable to the values of Ontario. I think that's a very offensive notion that the honourable member is putting on the table here today.

1420

The other thing is that a strong public education system is important to the values of this province, very, very much so, and that is why we are not proceeding the way that he is suggesting. That is why we are continuing to increase resources for the public education system and at the same time invest a small portion of government resources to respect parental choice in independent schools.

Mr McGuinty: I will read back to the minister the same quote which was taken from the government's brief presented before the UN. These are your words, through your government: "If the province of Ontario were required to fund private religious schools, this would have a detrimental impact on the public schools, and hence the fostering of a tolerant, multicultural, non-

discriminatory society in the province, thus undermining the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.” That’s the Mike Harris government’s position, taken just recently before the UN tribunal.

Madam Minister, you made that argument through the government, through Mike Harris, in a very compelling way. What I want to know, on behalf Ontario’s working families, is, were you right then or are you right today?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Let’s be clear what the government was rejecting. The government was rejecting taking money from the public education system and putting it somewhere else. Let’s be very clear: this government has continued to put new money, more money, into the public education system because we believe that should be, that has been, that will be, that continues to be the priority of this government, to put more resources into the public education system.

We announced \$310 million on April 12. When we put forward the compromise solution for extracurricular, we added another \$50 million. When I put out the programs for strict discipline for students who had been expelled, there was another \$16 million. When I introduced the early reading strategy, something the honourable member said he thought we should do, and now of course appears not to recognize that, that was another \$24 million, new investments into the public education system which has been and remains and will continue to be the priority of this government. Nothing we have ever said has taken away from that.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, I need do nothing more than use the very arguments you made before the UN against you today. That’s what this is all about. I’m not inventing these things; I’m using your very own words.

Ted Arnott said this weekend that his concerns with your voucher plan don’t begin and end because of his fears over the fragmentation effect it will have on public education.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member opposite is absolutely wrong. At no point did I ever call this a voucher system. It is not a voucher system. You are absolutely wrong on that.

The Speaker: Order; the member take his seat. It’s not a point of order. Sorry for the interruption, leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: The member also expressed the very real concern about the enormous cost. He said this was hard to justify, given your cuts in other areas. Of course, he is absolutely right: our public education system is in desperate need of funding for everything from textbooks to special education programs to English-as-a-second-language programs. Why won’t you listen to Ted Arnott’s concerns when it comes to the huge cost of your private voucher plan?

It seems to me that if you have hundreds of millions of dollars to further invest in education, then what you should be doing on behalf of Ontario’s working families

is investing in public education. So why don’t you do that?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member keeps ignoring—deliberately, obviously, because it undermines his argument—the fact that this government has had four separate announcements in the last month about increasing investments, about increasing money for this upcoming school year, again, for strict discipline programs, for an early reading strategy to help our children in kindergarten to grade 3.

But if we want to look at the record, and the honourable member loves to talk about the record, let’s look at the honourable member’s record on this issue. When asked from the Ontario Jewish community, he said he has no ideological opposition to ensuring public funds support Jewish day schools. “Will you provide families with a tax credit?” “If we’re looking at equity, yes,” he said—but somewhere down the road, not today. Today, it’s the fight of his life, but tomorrow? Maybe tomorrow it’s OK. If you want to talk about records, to the honourable member, you better look at your own record, because you certainly have been firmly ensconced on both sides of this issue.

Mr McGuinty: I am very proud to say that our commitment to public education has never once wavered.

Madam Minister, you yourself said in the past that funding private schools could cost as much as \$700 million, so I want to come back to what that public money might be used for. When your finance minister was asked recently whether or not Ontario taxpayers should be paying to send kids to some of the world’s most exotic and elite schools, in locales throughout the globe, he refused to rule out that possibility. I know that you have better sense in this regard. Can you tell Ontario’s working families that you will never, ever allow public dollars to subsidize education in exotic locales like Geneva and Paris and Rome and London and Florence, and instead, you would prefer that those dollars go into public education?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, to the honourable member, one of the arguments we used to the United Nations was—what they were asking us to do was take money from the public system and put it in the independent schools, and we said no, because that’s not what we’re doing. We were also asked to shut down funding for Catholic schools and we said no, that was something that was recognized by our Constitution in this country and we are prepared to support that.

Secondly, or thirdly, maybe the honourable member thinks that the children of our armed forces personnel don’t deserve an education where their families are stationed. Clearly, we respect that parental choice. We respect those children whether they’re here in Ontario or whether they’re with their parents on missions across the seas.

The other thing: he says he supports public education—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Come to order, please.

Sorry, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: He says he supports public education. He tells the Ottawa Citizen, "I support the testing of our schools," yet his education critic is out there saying no, they don't. He says he's in favour of making changes to stop sexual abuse but the Safe Schools Act that helps us do that, he calls—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, it seems to me you've got three full-time jobs now. You're Minister of Education, you're House leader, and the other full-time job for which you've assumed responsibility is bailing out the finance minister day in and day out.

Now you tell me you've got the army on your side. It's great to receive this news.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Your federal Liberal cousins aren't on the army's side, so someone has to be.

Mr McGuinty: Every day, Madam Minister, it becomes—

Interjections.

The Speaker: It's too noisy in here. We're getting a little carried away now. Sorry, the leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: Every single passing day, it becomes more and more apparent that this was made out on the back of an envelope. It represents a massive flip-flop of Olympian proportions. You argued against doing this before the UN. Mike Harris said he'd never do this during the course of the campaign. What public education needs is a friend. You keep kicking it in the shins and bringing it to its very knees.

You know in your heart of hearts this stands for everything that you've argued against in the past. Why not do the right thing and scrap this policy?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, the honourable member has had both feet so firmly planted on either side of a fence post, I sometimes wonder how he can continue to function. He said on the one hand he doesn't disagree with sending money to independent schools. His education critic agrees. He has members who agree. His new candidate in the by-election has clearly gone on record as saying, whether by government decree or court order, that Ontario's Jewish day schools will be publicly funded by the year 2000. So he can't make up his own mind, and clearly neither can his caucus.

What is very clear amid all the political rhetoric—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, the government members. The minister can answer for you. You're yelling over top and I can't even hear—I'm two feet away—for all the government members yelling. She can answer very competently for the government. Sorry, Minister.

1430

Hon Mrs Ecker: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That's the nicest thing you've said about me.

What is very important here, amid all the political rhetoric of the honourable member across the way, is that our commitment to public education—new funding, higher standards—continues, and I wouldn't stand for

anything less, and at the same time, we respect parental choice.

What the honourable member keeps saying is that maybe his principles are important today and maybe they're not important tomorrow—

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

New question.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Finance. You continue to say that your private school tax credits or vouchers, whatever you want to call them, will not result in cuts for the public education system, but some opinion research has been done which shows that 15% of parents with children across Ontario would move their children from the public school system to private schools if you provided the tax credit and voucher enticements.

Now, 15% of students means 330,000 students across the province. Under your funding formula, if 330,000 students move from public schools to private schools, that's a \$2.3-billion cut to public education. Before you take even some small steps down that road, don't you think that people across Ontario deserve to be heard before you create even more problems for the public education system?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): As the Minister of Education has already pointed out today, our commitment to public education is firm. We fully fund the public education system in Ontario, which, as you know, includes not only the public schools but also the Catholic schools and the franco-phone schools. They have been fully funded; they will continue to be fully funded.

In addition, we propose to provide a tax credit for parents so that they can exercise their choice—not your choice, not politicians' choice, but their choice as parents for their children's education in Ontario.

Mr Hampton: Minister, 15% of parents with children across this province are very clear: if you're going to provide an enticement for them to move their children from public schools to private schools, they're going to choose to take it up. Fifteen per cent means 330,000 students moving from the public system to the private system. That's consistent with what's happening in the United States. In the United States, they use the same language that you are using. They call it the parental choice program, and in Milwaukee, when they made the same kind of vouchers or tax credits available, 15% of the students in the public system moved to the private system. In Ontario that means \$2.3 billion.

I think you either have to tell people you're going to make an additional \$1.5 billion a year available for private school funding and not affect public schools or you're going to have to cut public schools to find the \$1.5 billion in enticements for private schools. Which is it? Are you going to increase the budgets overall or are you going to cut public schools? And if you're going to increase the budget overall, where is the money going to come from?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I must say at least it can be said that the leader of the third party is consistent in his position. The Liberal Party says that they will repeal private school tax credits when they form the government and, I gather, paid \$50,000 to say that in the Toronto Star the other day. Then their candidate in the riding of Vaughan-King-Aurora says somewhat differently. He says, "If we don't get it (funding) by a court decision, we'll get it by way of a political decision." He says whether by government decree or court order, Ontario's Jewish day schools will be publicly funded by the year 2000. He said that in 1994. I guess he says something different today if he's going to listen to his leader, who apparently believes that he would repeal those tax credits.

Mr Hampton: Minister, thank you for telling us that the Liberals are trying to be on both sides of this issue at the same time, but we know that.

The issue, Minister, is simply this: in the United States, when they made tax credits and vouchers available to entice parents to move their children from public schools to private schools, 15% of parents started moving their children. Public opinion research already tells you that in Ontario, 15% of parents are prepared to remove their children from public schools and put them in private schools. That means a \$2.3-billion cut for public schools, and it means you've got to find almost \$1.5 billion to cover the tax credits for private schools.

You have to tell the people of Ontario, Minister. How are you going to do this? Are you going to cut the public schools, which is what we think you're going to do, or are you going to increase taxes to provide for the private schools? Which is it? You can't have it both ways. The Liberals can't have it both ways, and you can't have it both ways. Which is it?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I appreciate the member opposite saying the Liberals can't have it both ways; they apparently think they can. The Leader of the Opposition was asked by Andy Barrie on his radio show in the morning on May 17, 2001:

Barrie: "Would you repeal that tax break?"

McGuinty: "Yes."

Barrie: "Unequivocally?"

McGuinty: "Unequivocally."

Then we have the ad last week: \$50,000 spent by the Liberal Party to say they'll repeal the tax credits. Then we have an interview by Mr McGuinty at the end of last week for the Ottawa Citizen, where he's asked, "Will you provide families with a tax credit?" and he answers, "If we're looking at equity, yes, somewhere down the road." That's consistency. Three weeks later, that's the story he tells the people of Ontario. You've got it surrounded. You're in a fog. You're just not up to the job.

Mr McGuinty: Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. I need to hear the point of order. Government benches, please let the leader of the official opposition speak. Sorry for the interruption.

Mr McGuinty: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would draw to the Minister of Finance's attention the correction printed in today's Ottawa Citizen.

The Speaker: It's not a point of order.

PRIVATE CANCER CLINIC

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Health. You have said that the private cancer clinic that you established at Sunnybrook is paid exactly the same as the publicly funded cancer care system.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Beaches-East York has the floor. I can't hear the question. I need to hear it. The Liberals will get another question in a minute, and then you can start back; but I need to hear the member. Sorry. The member for Beaches-East York.

Ms Lankin: To the Minister of Health: you have said the private cancer clinic that you established at Sunnybrook hospital is paid exactly the same as the public system: \$3,000 per case. You've also refused my repeated demands to make the contracts detailing that available to the public, and now I think I know why.

You see, it turns out there's a nifty little clause in that contract. It's section 2.6, and it absolutely guarantees that 500 patients will be referred to your private for-profit clinic. Now, 500 patients happens to be exactly the number that it needs to qualify for what was supposedly a special volume bonus. So there's no risk here for the private owners at all. The contract guarantees 500 patients and a payment of at least \$3,250 per case, not the \$3,000 per case that you led this House to believe. So your private for-profit clinic is going to get a full 8% higher than the amount paid to the public system.

1440

I was allowed to review this contract but not to make a copy, Minister. Why can't all of the people of Ontario, not just one MPP, see the special deal that you approved with this private health care clinic?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for the question. Certainly I understand that she did have an opportunity to review the contract and have the discussion of that contract with the CEO. There is a value-for-money audit that can proceed, and we will co-operate fully with the Provincial Auditor on that.

When it comes to the contract itself, my understanding is that they haven't reached the 500th case, so I guess her interpretation of the contract is somewhat incorrect. When I compare, even at the top end, if it is \$3,500 per case as she mentions, plus the overhead costs, you compare that to the \$17,000 per case that we were costing the taxpayers of Ontario to send that cancer patient away from her family, away from her support network, to the United States, I'd gladly pay the \$3,500 per case rather than the \$17,000 per case that we were paying under the previous system.

Ms Lankin: Do you know what? We'd be really glad if you'd put that kind of money into the public system here in Ontario, Minister. That's the issue. You're the

minister who stands in this House day after day and talks about public accountability, talks about transparency for the taxpayers, and yet you refuse to make this deal public. Now that I have seen it, I can understand why. You've made a special sweetheart deal with this private company, and then you refuse to let the public even see what's in the contract. That way, you're able to incorrectly claim that private health care is cheaper and better and the public can't see the contract that proves, in fact, that you're wrong.

I've seen that contract. I think perhaps you and I are the only two people in this Legislative Assembly who have seen that contract. But my question is about the Ontario public. They have a right to know the secret deals you're making that give public funds for private health care. Given your own words of "public accountability" and "taxpayer transparency," why won't you make this contract public so that everyone can see what you're doing?

Hon Mr Clement: The logical inconsistency in the argument is that if she's seen the contract, then clearly it is not a secret contract. It is not a secret contract. I'm quite willing to supply any information that I have, and she obviously had access to that information as well. Anybody in this House can have the same access.

The other point of her argument, and I do want to correct the record: if anyone was confused about the honourable member's suggestions, she has also confused—and this happened a lot during the NDP government—gross versus net. The fact of the matter is that the amounts she was referring to in terms of payment were gross amounts. The contract in this case meant that they had to pay \$220 per patient for equipment, supplies and overhead, which are not usually charged when it comes to the financing of our hospitals. So when you actually figure out the gross versus the net, the private sector supplier is not in the position that she alleges they are in. I ask the honourable member to keep that in mind. Clearly, it was not something they kept in mind when they were in government.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to talk to you today about something that means the difference between life and death for Ontarians, and that's cancer care.

Friday morning we heard that you were shutting Cancer Care Ontario down. Later in the afternoon we heard that, no, you may have some different plans for it. It was in 1997, not that long ago, that your government announced, with great fanfare, Cancer Care Ontario. You felt that it was going to play a very important role in terms of central coordination and ensuring that all Ontarians who suffer from cancer would have access to treatment in a safe and timely way. But working families are very concerned now about your announcement to wash your hands of cancer treatment in Ontario.

You've now had some opportunity to consider this. Can you tell us exactly, because Ontario's families are very concerned about this, what your plans are for Cancer Care Ontario?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Thank you for the opportunity, to the honourable member, and I would say parenthetically that since 1995 we've increased funding for cancer care by almost 48%. I just wanted to get that on the record as well. That might be something the public might have some interest in.

I would say to the honourable member in answer to his question that the position of this government in 2001 is the same as our position in 2000, in 1999, in 1998, and in 1997, at which point—I know it's difficult for them to comprehend, but here's what we said in 1997. The Premier of the province, Premier Harris, stated that one of Cancer Care Ontario's goals would be to "coordinate and integrate cancer treatment services. That was our position in 1997, it is currently our position and it will be our position in the future. We have been absolutely consistent and we are moving forward with the integration of cancer care services to better serve the cancer sufferers and the public of Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you didn't answer the question. You told us what you said about something in the past. Ontario families who have members who suffer from cancer are very concerned by your prognostications made last week.

They want to know exactly what you're going to do about their Cancer Care Ontario. It has served an important role as a central coordinating institution in directing treatment to the appropriate places. It's had some difficulties, no doubt about it, but our concern now is that you're going to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

The people inside Cancer Care Ontario have expressed these concerns to you. I want to give you the opportunity here and now; you told us what you're not going to do. What we want to know now is exactly what your plans are. What is it that you're going to do that is going to change in any way from the status quo when it comes to Cancer Care Ontario?

Hon Mr Clement: We are always looking for ways to better deliver services and make sure the funds are there. I mentioned in my remarks earlier that we've increased funding by almost 48%. That funding will be still in place. It will be a discrete funding envelope so that no other portion of our health care system would try to feed away money for that.

But we are looking at integrating the services at the local level of cancer care delivery to better treat cancer sufferers, to integrate their needs with the other needs that they take from our hospitals, so it delivers better cancer care. That is our goal; it has been our express goal since 1997 and we are in fact working with the board of Cancer Care Ontario and its chairman to realize that goal.

Nothing has changed. We are moving forward with a plan to do that. For the average person who, unfortun-

ately, has to rely on cancer care services, they should see little or no change.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): My question today is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, I hosted a number of round-table consultations in my riding. Certainly as a government we believe in listening to the public and what it is they want to see us do as a government.

In the next two weeks I will have the privilege of holding the fourth of five successful round-table sessions. This one will be focusing on the environment. The residents of Thornhill and surrounding communities have expressed to me their sincere gratitude regarding the scheduled closing of the Keele Valley landfill. However, with the recent reporting of southern Ontario's first smog advisory, I anticipate provincial pollution control measures to be raised during the round table.

Minister, could you please let me know what initiatives the government has taken in the area of pollution control so that I may report back to my constituents on our government's proactive approach to maintaining Ontario's precious environment. What is our government's plan to preserve our environment?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): I thank the member from Thornhill and I congratulate her on planning this successful table discussion in her riding to discuss the environment. We've certainly found that throughout Ontario there is a tremendous amount of interest in the environment.

I would just like to reassure the member that we are moving forward with the implementation of the Gibbons report, which requires all government ministries to work together. More importantly, this government is moving forward with a very careful monitoring and enforcement program. We believe strong enforcement is integral to the protection of human health and the natural environment. We have made our SWAT team permanent. We have hired 130 new enforcement and investigative-related staff. The number of charges laid in 2000 increased by 48% from 1999.

1450

Mrs Molinari: Thank you, Minister, for your response. Certainly maintaining, monitoring, and enforcing is a program that my constituents will be very happy to hear about. It sounds like we're doing a lot to preserve the environment. I will be proud to pass all of these initiatives on to the Thornhill constituents during the round table put forth in the details of the government's plan for Ontario's environment.

I have been informed that the pollution hotline implemented by your ministry has been very successful. Can you please elaborate on this hotline and its success so that I may be able to highlight some of the uses of helping to preserve Ontario's environment to my constituents.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The pollution hotline which was launched on April 17 of this year has been very success-

ful. It is a public reporting mechanism which enables anyone in this province to call the hotline at any time, 24 hours a day, to report incidents where they feel the environment is threatened.

I'm pleased to say that in the first two weeks the hotline received 325 phone calls. This resulted in 133 incidents being filed and all of these incidents have been sent for follow-up to the district office. This is just another indication of the commitment of this government to ensure that we get tough on polluters in the province of Ontario.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health.

Minister, we know what you intended to do to Cancer Care Ontario last week. You intended to turn Cancer Care Ontario into a shell, an empty shell, with no responsibility for delivering care to patients. You intended to eliminate provincial coordination of cancer services so that the waiting list for radiation therapy could be buried. You intended to make sure that Cancer Care Ontario would never put pressure directly on you or your government again to provide enough resources to meet standards of care across the province. You intended to go back to a fragmented system, with no assurance that cancer patients would have equal access to care, no matter where they lived in this province.

What we don't know, Minister, is whether you really are backing down on all of this. By Friday afternoon, all you wanted to do was to get this story off the front pages of the newspapers. Are you truly prepared to abandon your plans to merge cancer centres with hospitals, or are you just slowing down until the political heat eases off?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): If the honourable member is asking whether I'm backing down from the fictitious plan that made it into one of our nation's newspapers, I have to concede that since that was never my plan, I guess one could interpret it as backing down. But if the real question before us is, can we provide better care for our cancer sufferers, can we have a more integrated system for cancer care in our province, one that takes the best of the professionals and the best in our hospitals and the best in our system and integrates those at the local level, the answer is yes. That has been the position of our Premier, our province and our government since 1997.

We are working with the board, after the board made the unanimous motion to move ahead with integration. We are working with the board of directors of Cancer Care Ontario, with the chair of Cancer Care Ontario, and with cancer care providers to make a better system for Cancer Care Ontario. If she's against that, I seriously question whether that's the right thing to do in this particular case.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Minister, are you saying that there was no initiative and no directive

sent to Cancer Care Ontario that there would be a program to integrate their services into local regional hospitals? Are you saying, number one, that that did not happen? Number two, will you categorically state that you're not moving on dismantling a system that's taken a series of years, implemented by the previous minister—a very good minister, I might add—and now you're looking at dismantling this and creating a situation where no one would be able to tell you the length of time people will have to wait for treatment, the length of time people may have to wait for chemotherapy or radiation? That's what you will have.

You can appreciate why people might say—perhaps it's not true; then check the record or change the record and state it clearly—that this is just a way to push it aside so that clearly you will not be able to state the case of cancer treatment in Ontario today.

Next, there is a committee that's at work. Will you tell us the function of that particular committee? Is it to review and look at how to improve services and keep the independence of Cancer Care Ontario or is it an implementation committee, which you say is not the purpose?

Hon Mr Clement: The original questioner asked me whether it was our intention to create an “empty shell,” to use her words, for Cancer Care Ontario. Our intention very clearly is no. There is a need for a standard-setter. There is a need for a results-oriented examination of whether cancer care is delivered properly in Ontario.

If the question is, do we think there should be better integration at the local level to ensure that our cancer sufferers have better care, the answer is yes. We are moving ahead with that. We are moving ahead with an implementation team that is working with the board and with the ministry to ensure that it's done in a seamless way, in a smooth way, but the answer is, we're moving ahead.

We think it is important for the betterment of cancer treatment for cancer sufferers in Ontario to have a better integration of those services at the local level. I'm not equivocating, I'm not trying to deny anything; I'm saying that's where we're going and we are doing so in a way that has a very serious role for Cancer Care Ontario in the present and in the future, and has better cancer treatment for all of the cancer sufferers in Ontario at the local level.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Minister, as you no doubt are aware, I have recently chaired the Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal for the Premier. During the task force's consultations and in subsequent meetings with my local municipal councils, I have found that red tape issues have been a significant frustration. Applications to the government's SuperBuild partnerships initiative have become a source of concern due to alleged red tape requirements. Some applicants have submitted 44 pages as part of a SuperBuild application. I'm sure you will agree that this seems excessive, particularly for smaller municipalities.

Minister, would you be willing to review the application forms to determine how efficient this process really is?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question. There has been a phenomenal response to the SuperBuild OSTAR and SCTP—that's the sports, culture and tourism partnerships initiative. Some 380 applications were received under OSTAR. SCTP has over 450 applications for contributions.

We did ask the municipalities and others submitting applications to complete business plans after developing them and to include capital asset management plans. We enunciated that we would be judging the proposals against six specific criteria: the need for the project, partnerships, innovation, cost-effectiveness, the financial plan, and the capital asset plan.

The information requested, of course, is to help the province make prudent investment decisions. We certainly want to avoid what was done by Human Resources Development Canada, by the federal government in Ottawa.

Mr Galt: Many thanks to you, Minister, for the response. I'm sure many of the partnership initiatives are indeed of the best intent.

There is also a concern that small-town and rural Ontario does not have the financial resources to become a full partner. Could you update us on the status of these various partnership initiatives?

Hon Mr Flaherty: OSTAR will provide \$600 million over five years for infrastructure and economic development. It's purpose is to invest in strategic infrastructure. That infrastructure is critical to the economic growth of Ontario and also our small cities, small towns and rural areas.

A minimum of \$240 million will be provided to support public health and safety infrastructure. We're proceeding with the mandatory engineering studies.

The sports, culture and tourism partnerships initiative was launched in December 2000. Letters of intent were due February 2, 2001, and the deadline for applications was extended to April 12, 2001. We expect to be proceeding with the responses to those applications this autumn.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): A question to the Minister of Health: Minister, last week when you were asked about your devastating cuts to CCACs, about your funding freeze of CCACs, you said that we should not jump to conclusions. You said that you were in the process of discussion.

Today, tens of thousands of home care patients across this province are either losing their home care services or having them reduced. It means, for some home care patients who cannot get the services any more, they will have to look at moving into a nursing home or a home for the aged, which will cost the health care system more

money and deny dignity to those frail elderly and disabled patients.

Minister, why have you frozen the budgets of community care access centres when you know that it's going to lead to cuts in home care and that cuts in home care will drive those frail elderly patients into nursing homes and homes for the aged? Give us the logic for doing this when it's going to reduce people's access to home care and result, in the long run, in more costs to the health care system.

1500

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): First the honourable member says that there are cuts, then he says there's a freeze. I can tell the honourable member that in the last few years community care access centres' home care has seen an increase in their budgets in the order of 72%. So he's got a very strange definition of cuts.

I will say for the record that we have directed the CCACs to stay within their budgets, pending, as well, a third-party review of the CCACs and their ability to govern properly and their ability to manage home care properly. I make no bones about that. I think every segment of our transfer partners, as well as what the government does directly, should always be reviewed. It should always been seen whether there are better ways to deliver better services to more people on a more accountable level for taxpayers. So that is going on, and until that review is completed we are saying, not a penny less than last year but they have to live within their budgets.

Mr Hampton: Minister, it is less than last year because last year, as they took on all of the frail elderly, as they dealt with more and more acute care patients being put out of hospital, you covered their end-of-the-year deficit when they found that the demand for services exceeded the budget. This year you've already announced you're not going to do that. Given the fact that we have an aging population, given the fact that we have a great need for services, the fact that you're now going to freeze their budgets on top of not covering the end-of-year deficit means they are going to have to cut home care services. It is affecting tens of thousands of seniors across this province today.

Minister, you always talk about fiscal responsibility. If this is going to force more patients into nursing homes and homes for the aged, if it's going to force them to stay in hospital longer, which is more expensive, tell us, how is this fiscally responsible? But most of all tell us, how is cutting home care services going to improve health care for tens of thousands of patients across Ontario?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member, the leader of the third party, makes the fundamental error once more: he equates the ability to live within one's budget as automatically meaning service cuts. That's the NDP world. That is not the real world. The real world says that when you have to stay within your budgets, look for ways to deliver better services for less, at a more accountable cost to the taxpayer. That's the world most

of our transfer partners inhabit and that's the world in which the CCACs find themselves. We make no bones about that, no apologies: they have to live within their budgets, something that one didn't hear a lot under the NDP.

Speaking of NDP budgets, I'll just taken one region as an example of how far we have come in terms of meeting the needs of home care recipients. York region, for instance—I don't know why that came to mind, but York region came to mind—under the NDP it was funding of \$16.9 million. Under the Mike Harris government, for this year, it is \$49.7 million. Yes, we're asking them to live within that budget and we make no apologies for it.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Health and it concerns home care in Ontario. Minister, I'd like to you to tell the elderly women who today are facing the cuts under your ministry—because they are no longer getting the home care that they require to keep them in their homes. Last year to two years ago, the percentage of home care that used to be because of hospital discharges was 30%. Today, under your restructuring and your cuts, that number has moved to 70%. That means that all of the mostly elderly women who rely on home care to stay in their homes now are at the bottom of the priority list of what community care access centres can care for. I'd like you to tell these women who aren't getting baths, who aren't getting personal grooming, because you and I both know that community care access centre boards met last week and the week before to determine what services to cut to try to stay within your budget requirements—I want you to tell the elderly women, how do you expect them to stay in their homes now that you have mandated these service cuts?

Hon Mr Clement: Again, I'll give some more facts for the honourable member's edification: \$550.8 million was announced in 1998-99 in new community health services, in-home nursing, therapy, homemaking, supportive housing; \$389.7 million in new permanent funding has been announced by this government. I believe the record speaks for itself.

I can tell the honourable member that we provide the most generous level of home care services in Canada, approximately \$128 per capita. We are second to none in Canada. We are proud of that fact, but we are also a government that believes that one has to live within one's budget. That is true of us and it is true of our transfer partners as well. In this case, the transfer partners have to live within their budgets. We make no apologies about that. We make no prevarications about that. That's the reality and that's what the taxpayers of Ontario expect of us.

Mrs Papatello: This is about elderly women trying to stay in their own homes. This is about women who will be forced into long-term-care beds that you can't seem to build since you took office. Let me ask you this. You now want to freeze their budgets because you're going to do a review of home care, these home care agencies. Community care access centres would welcome a value-

for-money audit. I'm asking the minister, are you prepared to pay for an audit so that they can once again prove to you that they're doing their job, that the \$175-million deficit that community care access centres face across this province is your doing? You cut hospitals, forcing pressure on the home care system. In the end, it's mostly elderly women who fall to the bottom of the priority list, because they're not getting some very basic personal grooming needs met. You and I know both know these decisions happened, that this is already happening today in our Ontario. Minister, will you do a value-for-money audit, and will you pay for it, to prove in fact the money has been well spent and there's simply a deficit that will fall at your feet?

Hon Mr Clement: We would and we have. We have sponsored and paid for an independent third-party operating review of the operating procedures of the community care access centres. It looks at governance issues; it looks at operating procedures. We hope to have that finalized very soon and we'd be happy to share it with you. I can assure the honourable member that she'll be the first to know when that becomes available.

To those who are recipients of home care I would say that we have put our money where our mouth is. We have increased the system by 72%, put real dollars into patient care, direct-line patient care, direct-line home care for these individuals. The answer coming back from the honourable member always seems to be, "More money, more money, more money," not caring about whether it's actually spent on the front lines; the Liberal answer is more money. I would say I think it's time for the Dalton McGuinty spend-o-meter to be back in this House, because that is the kind of promise that is irresponsible; that is the kind of promise that they leave for the election campaigns. Now we're seeing it two years before the election campaign. God only knows how much money they'll spend and promise—a chicken in every pot—before the election. That is the irresponsible nature of the opposition.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. In a news release on energy issued during the western Premiers' conference on June 1, 2001, the western Premiers said, "It is essential that provinces and territories be full participants in international discussions related to energy."

Media reports indicate that Premier Ralph Klein of Alberta is scheduled to meet with United States Vice-President Dick Cheney in Washington on June 14 to discuss Alberta's role in the United States national energy policy. Minister, do you agree with the western Premiers that it's important that provinces be full participants in international discussions related to energy?

1510

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'd like to thank my colleague from Barrie-

Simcoe-Bradford for the question. Ontario's success is essential to the success of this great country. Thriving under the policies of the Harris government, over two thirds of the jobs created across Canada have happened right here in Ontario.

Of course, energy is essential to our ability to create jobs and be competitive. This government is committed to ensuring that Ontario's interests are considered and met in any negotiations concerning a continental energy policy. We recognize the federal government's jurisdiction concerning international trade and we think that each and every province should be involved with the federal government in this discussion. It's important, in international discussions of this nature, that commitments on energy policy recognize provincial jurisdiction over resources. Consultations by the federal government about an energy plan, to be meaningful, must ensure that Ontario's interests are heeded and reflected in any energy agreement.

Mr Tascona: Energy is critical to Ontario's competitiveness. Minister, can you explain how the Ontario government intends to ensure that Ontario's interests in energy are well represented?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I want to assure my colleagues here in the House and the people of Ontario that my cabinet colleagues and I continue to work diligently to ensure that our interests are represented. My colleague the Honourable Jim Wilson, Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, intends to discuss the Bush energy plan with his federal and provincial energy minister counterparts. He has indicated his interest in an early meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial ministers to agree on a process for full provincial participation in the development of any plan. And indeed, as my colleague has referred to, the western Premiers have called for a western meeting of energy ministers to take place in June. They've invited the federal energy minister and other provincial energy ministers to take part. This is a positive initiative.

I've written to my federal counterpart, Mr Dion, asking him to ensure that Ontario interests are well represented in any negotiations with the United States. There is a role for the federal government in balancing the interests of the provinces that produce with those that consume energy, and it is essential that individual provincial implications are understood and that provinces and territories are full participants in international energy discussions.

DEAF-BLIND COMMUNITY

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question today is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, I want you to imagine being in a room with not one glimmer of light—no matter how long you're in there, no light. Not only is that room pitch black, but there is no sound whatsoever. I want you to picture being in that room for six months, with no contact through eyes or through ears.

Last December, we passed in this House a bill to make June Deaf-Blind Awareness Month. Since that time, you've reacted to it by slashing funding for the deaf-blind by 5%. Only 10% of the deaf-blind community now receive the services. You've refused funding for a training centre for adults with acquired deaf-blindness. While the enrolment for interveners has plunged at George Brown College, you have done nothing to encourage that. There is no funding for volunteer recruitment, for screening, for training or for supervision.

Minister, in the last six months, what have you done for the blind-deaf community?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Providing supports to those fellow citizens with a disability is a tremendous priority for me and for this government. I think we've done a great deal to help the lot of the disabled, particularly at my ministry, over the last number of years.

The member opposite talks about a funding reduction. If the member opposite wants to stand in his place and give me more details about that, I'd be very happy to look at it. In the budget we brought in not too long ago we put in additional funding to help graduates of the Ross Macdonald School in Brantford; we've increased the budget there. Last week we announced more than \$200 million in funding, increasing over the next five years, for people with developmental disabilities. We've increased support to help people suffering from autism with early intervention services. We've put in more money to help infant development. I think we've done a terrific amount to try to improve the services for our fellow citizens with disabilities.

I'm the first to acknowledge that we can do more. That's why we've been making increased investments in the past year.

Mr Parsons: The deaf-blind believe that now that we have the awareness month, it has made them a target rather than attracting support.

There are 4,200 individuals in this province who are deaf-blind. In January, the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind and the Canadian Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association put together a proposal to help identify the deaf-blind in rural and remote areas in this province who receive no services. They've got federal funding for it. What they need out of the province is support for it—no financial support; simply agreement in principle that you believe this is a worthwhile project, no financial commitment, and yet, Minister, they've received no answer whatsoever from you to their January letter. January to June, they haven't even got a written acknowledgement that it has been received.

At absolutely no cost to this government, you could provide services to the deaf-blind rather than removing them, as you've done. Let the federal government at least provide some supports and services to our deaf-blind community. Will you now say yes and allow this project to go ahead to identify those in need in our province?

Hon Mr Baird: I will certainly go back to the ministry and look into the proposal which the member opposite cites.

I very specifically asked the member opposite to tell me about the 5% cut, and you offered absolutely no explanation of it, which suggests to me it's not true.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question? The member for Durham.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question—

Hon Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent—if the member opposite would like to get up and provide that, our party would be pleased to give it to him—

The Speaker: Order. The member now brings attention to it. That was marginal. I let it go. I'm going to ask him to withdraw it. You can't say that.

Hon Mr Baird: Withdrawn.

BY-ELECTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier. Minister, as we know, there is a by-election in Ontario. I was quite alarmed by the inconsistent reports from the Liberal candidate, Greg Sorbara.

It's clear here. He was asked to reconcile his strong views with those of his party, which hemmed and hawed on funding for years. Sorbara doesn't back away. The Liberals were equivocating, for he concedes, "We were not violently opposed or thoroughly in favour, but while in power we didn't do anything about the issue, and we're avoiding it for now." Minister, could you clarify this apparent inconsistency from the Liberal Party?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I thank the member for Durham for the question. It's very difficult to tell on this issue. It depends on which Liberal you ask, what kind of answer you get. I know they spent \$50,000 on an ad that says they'll repeal the tax credit, but then in 1994 the Liberal candidate in Vaughan-King-Aurora said, "Whether by government decree or court order, Ontario's Jewish day schools will be publicly funded by the year 2000." He said the Liberals were equivocal. "We were not violently opposed or thoroughly in favour, but while in power we didn't do anything about the issue, and we're avoiding it now." He said, "We see the merits of both sides of the issue," in typically Liberal fashion.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that clarification, Minister. I do look forward to further comments on the debate because we've heard the Leader of the Opposition state three different times three different positions. Clearly, with a new candidate, who I think has some aspiration for leadership, there will be more to be heard on this issue in the future.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I thank the member for the question. There's this ad that says the Liberals will repeal the tax credit. Then the Leader of the Opposition tells the Ottawa Citizen—but there's a correction here, Speaker, and it's important that we get the correction accurately. It

was first questioned—this was the Ottawa Citizen, June 1, 2001—“Will you provide families with a tax credit?” Answer: “If you’re looking at equity, yes, somewhere down the road—”

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order for just a quick minute here. The questions are supposed to be related to government business. Quoting other people in here—I gave a lot of leniency because I’m not going to write the questions for people, but you know what—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. I don’t need you guys yelling at me while I’m talking, thank you very much, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier. I gave a lot of leeway, but it’s supposed to be public policy. To read other people’s records during a by-election is not the purpose of question period. I gave a lot of leeway; if the Minister of Finance could come to some conclusion on that. I will not allow people to use the questions to turn them into partisan situations.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, and who wants to be thrown out first, for the members laughing? Solicitor General, do you want to be thrown out? I will do it.

Interjection.

The Speaker: No, you’re not allowed to yell when I’m doing a point of order.

I will be very clear: Minister of Finance, the questions in here are supposed to be relating to government business of the day; this is not, in my opinion. I will say very clearly that if the minister doesn’t get to his point very quickly, I’ll be up and we will go to petitions.

1520

Hon Mr Flaherty: Thank you, Speaker. Relating to the education tax credit, which is part of the budget bill, the quote, and it’s important that we get the corrected quote because the Leader of the Opposition raised a point of privilege, is corrected in today’s Ottawa Citizen.

Question: “Will you provide families with a tax credit?” Answer: “If we’re looking at equity, somewhere down the road—”

The Speaker: The minister’s time is up.

PETITIONS

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

“Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation, against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

“Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable

local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

“Whereas the promise of tax decreases have not been met, based on current assessments; and

“Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents.”

I sign my name on this petition and hand it over to Katie.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I’m pleased to present this petition that again talks about cancer in the workplace, and much credit to the labour movement, the CAW in particular, for ensuring that this matter stays on the political agenda until it’s dealt with properly. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances (carcinogens); and

“Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens; and

“Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances in work; and

“Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

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

“That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer and that the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation.”

On behalf of my constituents and the NDP caucus, I proudly add my name to this petition.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

“Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

“Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

“Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

“Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

“Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

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

“To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent”—and Christian—“schools as soon as possible.”

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Ontario Legislature. It deals with northerners demanding that the Harris government eliminate the health care apartheid which it is presently practising in Ontario.

“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 of Ontario; and

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

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

I affix my signature to this petition of 2,000 people.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): “Whereas the Harris government is planning to take funds that our public schools desperately need and funnel them to private schools through tax credits; and

“Whereas the government’s plan is to give parents a \$3,500 enticement to pull their kids out of public schools; and

“Whereas this initiative is in effect a voucher system and is the beginning of the end of quality public education in Ontario,

“Therefore, we, the hundreds of people undersigned, call on all members of the Legislature to fight and defeat this attack on the choice parents most want: stability, co-operation and respect in clean, safe public schools.”

I support this petition.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

“Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

“Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

“Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

“Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

“Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

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

“To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible.”

GARDERIES

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): J’ai une pétition qui provient de résidents de St Isidore de Prescott, ainsi que de Casselman.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que la garde d’enfants en résidence privée comprise dans la Loi sur les garderies définit la garde temporaire, moyennant rémunération ou avantage quelconque, de cinq enfants au plus âgés de moins de 10 ans ;

« Attendu que dans les régions rurales, il y a un manque et en grande partie l’absence de transport en commun, et étant donné que la population est majoritairement éloignée des centres et des écoles ;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons la pétition suivante à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario apporte la modification suivante sur la définition de la garde d'enfants en résidence privée comprise dans la Loi sur les garderies, permettant un nombre plus élevé que de cinq enfants de moins de 10 ans dans les régions rurales. »

J'y ajoute ma signature.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

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

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will create two-tier education;

"Whereas the government plans to give parents a \$3,500 entitlement to pull their kids out of public schools;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will encourage the growth of a segregated society of narrowly focused interests;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will steal money from an already cash-starved public system and deliver public money to special interests who do not have to account for its use;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools effectively create a voucher system in Ontario;

"Whereas the Harris government has no mandate to introduce such a measure,

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

"We call on the government of Ontario to withdraw its plan for two-tiered education and properly fund public education in Ontario."

That's signed by Mario Iudiciani, David Street, Welland; Elizabeth Jansen, Westdale Drive, Welland; and thousands of others. My signature is affixed as well.

1530

STATUTORY HOLIDAY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, it's my distinct pleasure to present a petition on behalf of hundreds of thousands of Ontario citizens. I'm not saying it would be completely endorsed by this government, but with your indulgence, I'll read it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a recent Ipsos-Reid National Omnibus survey revealed that almost half of Canadians today are suffering from a lack of free time in their lives. In addition, more than three quarters of Canadians—77%—support the introduction of a new public holiday in the spring or summer months.

"Here in Ontario, eight in 10 respondents—81%—are in favour of an additional holiday. We feel this is a strong indication that the people of Ontario deserve a long weekend this summer." I might say I support that myself.

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

"To grant the citizens of Ontario a statutory holiday during the month of June."

I am submitting this on behalf of Steve Silverstone from Labatt Breweries of Canada and all of the citizens of Ontario who took the time to sign this important initiative in the province.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

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

"That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex, and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families and/or their agents."

I affix my signature to this petition.

ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Mississauga South.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Jim.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Jim is supposed to take Margaret's picture.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the member for Mississauga South.

Mrs Marland: Thank you. My deep appreciation to all the members, especially the opposition House leader.

It gives me pleasure to present this petition on behalf of the member for Oakville, the Speaker, Gary Carr, and on my own behalf as the member for Mississauga South. It is a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas Sithe Energies Canadian Development Ltd is actively pursuing the development of an 800 MW electricity generating facility;

"Whereas the 14-hectare parcel of land on which the station is proposed is located on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard in the Southdown industrial district of Mississauga;

"Whereas Sithe has stated its commitment to an open dialogue with communities where it has a presence and to being responsive to the concerns of the same; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Ontario citizens and to determine how this facility will impact those who live in its immediate, surrounding area,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of the Environment to undertake a formal environmental assessment of the Sithe project.”

There are now about 7,000 names on this petition and I am happy to add my name to it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this government is planning a complete overhaul of the developmental services system, which could result in the closure of the three remaining developmentally handicapped regional centres;

“Whereas suitable quality medical, behavioural, social, emotional and spiritual services are readily available in the three remaining centres; and

“Whereas there is a distinct deficiency of services available in the private sector, including dentists, kinesiologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and emergency services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that you recognize that the three remaining centres for developmentally handicapped individuals are providing a community for the residents that live there, and acknowledge that these centres deliver quality care and services by keeping them open and by directing private/public agencies with limited resources and services to access the resources at the centres and to work in partnership with them.”

This petition is signed by a number of residents from Chatham and Paincourt, and I affix my signature to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 45, An Act to Implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes, when Bill 45 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time, the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs; and

That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That the committee shall be authorized to meet on Friday, June 8, 2001, in St Catharines, on Monday, June 11, through Thursday, June 14, 2001, in Toronto, on Friday, June 15, 2001, in London, on Monday, June 18,

2001, in Sudbury and on Tuesday, June 19, 2001, in Ottawa;

That the committee meet on Wednesday, June 20, 2001, and Thursday, June 21, 2001, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

That, on these dates, the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to meet outside of its regularly scheduled meeting times, but when meeting in Toronto, not during routine proceedings and that the committee be authorized to meet on June 21, 2001, until completion of clause-by-clause consideration;

That pursuant to standing order 75(c), the Chair of the standing committee shall establish the deadline for the tabling of amendments or for filing them with the clerk of the committee;

That, at 4:30 pm on Thursday, June 21, 2001, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto;

Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration, and not later than June 25, 2001.

In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

When the order for third reading is called, that two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, to be divided equally among all recognized parties, and at the end of that time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding “deferred votes”; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott): The government House leader has moved motion 22. It is now time to call for debate on the motion.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Before I begin my debate, I move the following amendment to the time allocation motion:

The third paragraph of the government motion be struck out and the following inserted:

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet throughout the summer in at least 10 cities and towns, for at least 370 hours of public hearings. The venues for those hearings will be established by the committee and shall include Sudbury, London, Toronto and St Catharines.”

The fourth paragraph of the government motion be struck out and the following be inserted:

“That the committee shall meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 45 before the House resumes in the fall and that clause-by-clause consideration not conclude until all amendments placed by the government and opposition parties have been given due consideration.”

1540

That paragraph 5 be struck out.

That paragraphs 7 and 8 be struck out.

That the words “and not later than June 25, 2001” in paragraph 9 be struck out.

That paragraph 10 be struck out.

That paragraph 12 be struck out from the government motion and the following inserted:

“The time allotted to the third reading stage of Bill 45 be the aggregate of 20 minutes times the number of members who did not speak at the second reading stage of the bill, such aggregate amount to be divided equally among the recognized parties.”

I have copies of this for the table.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Windsor-St Clair has moved an amendment to the basic government motion, and it reads as follows: The third paragraph—

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Dispense.

The Acting Speaker: No, I'll read the whole thing.

The third paragraph of the government motion be struck out and the following inserted:

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet throughout the summer in at least 10 cities and towns for at least 370 hours of public hearings. The venues for those hearings will be established by the committee and shall include Sudbury, London, Toronto and St Catharines.”

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“The time allotted to the third reading stage of Bill 45 be the aggregate of 20 minutes times the number of

members who did not speak at the second reading stage of the bill, such aggregate amount to be divided equally among the recognized parties.”

Mr Duncan: Last week we confirmed with the Clerk that in fact we could place this amendment to a government time allocation motion, and we did that for two reasons. The first reason is, we want to force the government members later today—because they're going to have to vote on this amendment—to stand up and vote and actually be recorded as voting to shut down debate on public hearings across the province of Ontario. This is not something we take lightly.

The second reason we've placed this amendment is to force the government to begin to debate this issue of province-wide hearings as opposed to the narrow shutting down of debates. We intend to use points of order to ensure the debate focuses on the amendment and not on the government's motion, so that we can get the government members to tell their constituents why it is they're trying to jam this bill into law without adequate consideration.

Let me address the amendments. First of all, why 10 cities and why 370 hours of public hearings? Well, the best comparative piece of legislation we could find was the Education Amendment Act, 1985. You'll be aware that that was the bill that extended full funding to Catholic schools in Ontario. That bill received a total of 80 days in committee hearings—370 hours and 28 minutes; 68 of those days dealt with public hearings and 12 days dealt with clause-by-clause legislation.

We think it's important on a major initiative of this nature, where the government has clearly changed its position, a position that was enunciated by the Premier in the election, which was spelled out very clearly in the government's presentation to the United Nations, which was again reaffirmed as recently as last year by the Minister of Education and the Premier in letters to my leader, Dalton McGuinty.

Why: clause-by-clause consideration being opened up the way it was throughout most of Confederation? So that the public understands, by doing what they were doing, the government was effectively saying to your member of provincial Parliament, “You cannot make a motion to amend a government bill. You cannot allow your point of view to be debated on the floor of the Legislature or in committee.” The government wanted to effectively eliminate that. That's why we propose that every reasonable amendment be debated—every government amendment, every opposition amendment—and we think that's important. Why do we think that's important? Because this government, the Harris government, has used time allocation motions more than every government in the history of this province combined. What does that mean? That means, again, they're using their majority to not allow members of provincial parliament to speak about a bill. The way the rules work, very few members have an opportunity to speak in this House about the bill.

Third reading debate: what we're proposing to do is what has been done throughout most of history in

Ontario. This isn't a radical departure. This is going back to the way things were in terms of democracy, and that is, on third reading debate, to allow the members who did not have the opportunity to speak earlier on to get up and represent their constituents, to do the job they were paid to do; to be able to speak out and be recorded in Hansard for the public to see and to respond to. We don't think that's particularly radical. We don't think that it's wrong. What we think is wrong is a government that's taking a fundamental piece of education policy, changing its position entirely, not affording any more than a couple of days' debate, and jamming it into law in under two months. That is wrong, and this government has done it too often.

You know, we checked a little bit on this. The Davis and Miller governments, between March 1981 and May 1985, introduced three time allocation motions on 292 bills. The Peterson minority government, from May 1985 to September 1987, used time allocation once on 129 different bills. The Peterson majority government used time allocation on three of 183 bills. The Rae government used time allocation on 21 of 163 bills. Now, the Harris government, in its four years, used time allocation 41 times on 118 bills. Since the 1999 election and up to December of last year, the government used time allocation 22 times on 39 bills—22 times they shut down the public's ability to speak on a bill. Effectively, as my colleague from York West says, they shut down democracy.

This place worked quite efficiently and effectively for many years under different governments of different stripes. Indeed, I see members who served in the Davis and Miller governments here. Their governments only used time allocation three times on 292 bills.

We place this amendment today as yet another expression, first and foremost, of our opposition to extending tax credits for private schools and to our commitment that they will be repealed when Dalton McGuinty forms a government in two years.

The second reason we do it relates to our ability as a Legislature, and indeed as a people and as a province, to debate the great issues of our time in a full and frank fashion. This government has shut down those kinds of debates too often, and it's the commitment of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party that this sort of abuse of democracy and abuse of the Legislature will end when we form a government in two years' time.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Thank you. Further debate?

1550

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): It was one of those speeches, you don't know where it ended.

I want to say first of all that I'll be sharing while in rotation our time with our education critic a little bit later.

I want to put a few things on the record that I feel very strongly about: first of all, that fundamentally the government is going in the opposite direction of what should be a good public policy position on the part of the Ontario Legislature.

We have had a tradition in this province for many years now, I would argue, for more years than most of us

can remember, that a good way of making sure we provide education that is affordable to children, that is universal to children and is accessible to all children has been by way of the public system. Back in the 1930s and 1940s we decided in this Legislature to move away from private education to public education because we'd seen what it gave when you had the mix of both a public and a private system together at the same time.

Many parents didn't have the opportunity to send their kids to school because they couldn't afford to under a private system. That was the very reason why this Legislature, some years ago, decided to create a public system and a separate system to make sure that those children in the province of Ontario had an opportunity to get access to what is affordable education and an education that is basically the same no matter where you are across this province, let it be Timmins, Hearst, Toronto or Windsor. All children are being put into an education system that has much the same curriculum, so that where you come from does not matter as to how you compete in today's economy. This government has decided, by way of this particular policy, to change that and to forget the history of what we have learned in this province when it comes to public education.

Among a number of things about this issue, one thing that really bothers me is that this government is doing this without any kind of a mandate. We know when we watched the speeches during the election of 1999, when we watched the leaders' debate in 1999, my leader, Howard Hampton, was very clear in questioning the Premier when it came to the question of private education. There were no ifs, ands or buts about it. Mike Harris, the leader of the Conservative government of the day that was running for re-election, was very clear and said, "We are not and I am not—read my lips—going to move toward private education." That's basically what he had to say.

Based on that, voters made a choice. They said, "There are some things we don't like about this government, but on that one we agree." By and large, people supported him in the election of 1999, so much so that they got 44% of the vote in the general election and, because of the first-past-the-post system we've got, ended up with over 65% of the seats in the Legislature.

So this government had a mandate to fund public education and to preserve public education and not to go in the direction of starting policies that fund a private system of education. What bothers me is that this government, without a mandate to make the change, because they have a majority in the House, just goes ahead and does it, without any consequence, without any thought about what kind of mandate they were given by the voters of this province. That is one of the reasons why you'll hear me on a number of occasions in this House and outside of this Legislature speak about—

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): On a point of order, Speaker: I believe that we are to be speaking to the amendment to the time allocation motion. I believe we're not—

The Speaker: I appreciate that. We will listen closely. I'm sure the member for Timmins-James Bay knows that.

Mr Bisson: I'm getting exactly to that point, talking about democracy. I appreciate your bringing it up, because it brings me there a lot quicker. That is, basically you have a very undemocratic thing being done here today by way of this government. Not only are they changing a policy without a mandate, but they're doing so without any regard for the public, without any regard for true public hearings and what should be done when it comes to being able to deal with this bill.

This government says at the end of the day, "To be damned, the public. Not only do we not have a mandate to enact these particular changes of public policy, we're going to do it." Initially they said, "We're not even going to do any public hearings."

When you listened to the Premier and to the Minister of Education speak in this House but a week ago, those particular individuals, as members of the government and as spokespeople for the government, were getting up and saying, "No, no, we're just going to pass this legislation. If we do public hearings, we may have a couple in Toronto but that's about the end of it."

We stood up in this House as New Democrats and challenged the government and said, "How can you do that? You don't have a mandate," to my first point, "and second of all, because you don't have a mandate, it behooves you to make sure that there is a true process of public hearings on this particular bill." Initially the government said no. We kept on pushing them. In fact—you might have seen it on the news, and I'm sure the government members across the way saw it—we approached the government on their caucus day, which was last Tuesday. I and other members of the NDP caucus went to lobby the Conservative members at their own caucus meeting, standing outside the door handing out papers to the government members. I, Peter Kormos and Tony Martin, our education critic, stood in front of the doors to the Conservative caucus room and handed them leaflets and lobbied them in order to say, "We want you to hold public hearings. We want 80 days of public hearing across this province to give everybody who wants the opportunity a chance to be able to speak to this bill."

We stood there at that time lobbying the government, and to our surprise at the end of that process the government said, "Yes, we're going to have some public hearings." We thought initially our tactic worked. We came into the House, we pressed the government, we spoke to the minister individually and as a group, we went out and we lobbied the government. The New Democrats showed up at the Tory caucus meeting last Tuesday, we petitioned the members going into their meeting and a decision was made to have public hearings. We thought we won a battle.

But we find out that this battle was a bit of a hollow victory, because the government has said, "It's OK if you live in Windsor, it's OK if you live in Sudbury, it's OK if you live in Ottawa, but if you live anywhere else there's

not going to be a public hearing anywhere near your community." I say that's, first of all, very unfair to the people of this province, because I know there are people in Thunder Bay, Kenora, Timmins and many other communities across the province who want to speak on this particular issue, who feel strongly one way or another.

The majority of people in the communities I represent in Timmins, Kapuskasing and Hearst who have spoken to me on this issue, who have called my office or who have sent me letters or e-mails say, "We want to stay with the public system. We don't believe that the government should be providing either a voucher or a tax credit, whatever they want to call it, by way of education." But there are a few people in my community who do support it, and those people, in opposition or for, are not going to get an opportunity to speak on this particular issue in those other communities.

So I say to the government members across the way, you don't have a mandate on this issue. At no time did you campaign, in 1999 or in 1995, saying that you were going to introduce a voucher system of education in Ontario. You didn't say you were going to put in place a tax credit to give parents, as you say, "choice" to opt out of the public system into the private. The voters went out to the ballot boxes believing that you were going to be true to your word, you weren't going to break your promise and that at the end of the day you were going to stick to the public system.

Well, you broke your word, you broke your promise; you, the government that says, "We say what we do and we do what we say." They're hollow words. This government, I remind you by way of this particular policy, has broken its word to the people of Ontario. They have broken their promise. Their promise was to stay within a public system. Now they say, "We want to fund a private system by way of a voucher that's called a tax credit."

I say to the government across the way, if you feel so strongly that you have to break your promise to the people of Ontario, that you have to say to Mr and Mrs Ontario out there, "I, the Mike Harris government, am going to break my promise that I made in 1999, and I will move to a private system of education," the least you should do is hold true public hearings on this particular issue.

Your response has been to travel to a few communities in Ontario and give people in Toronto an opportunity to speak, because according to the government Toronto is the centre of the universe and everybody who lives outside Toronto should be able to get here lickety-split to speak on your bills. But the reality is that there are a whole bunch of people across this province who would like an opportunity to tell you how they feel when it comes to this issue who are not getting the opportunity.

I say we should do at least what your Conservative caucus called for in 1985 when we introduced separate school funding in Ontario. There was a campaign on the issue. People knew what the positions of both the New Democrats and the Liberals of the day were. They also knew the position of the Tories. Basically, an election

was held. Separate school funding became a reality in 1985 by way of legislation. At that time, the Conservative opposition said, "We are not going to stand for this unless you have true public hearings," and they called for 80 days of public hearings in Ontario so that people had their opportunity.

1600

You remember, Mr Speaker—you were here at the time—that there was a Liberal-NDP accord in place. David Peterson was the Premier of Ontario, supported by Bob Rae and the rest of the New Democrats. There was an accord that was formed, and that lasted for some two years, at which point 80 days of public hearings were given to the Conservative caucus by way of an acceptance of their position that there should be true public hearings on it, because we understood at the time that it was somewhat of a controversial issue.

This government says now that they want to move away from public education, they want to move to private education, and they're not prepared to do what they called for as Conservatives when they were in opposition in 1985. I say to the government across the way, it takes a lot of gall to walk in here and bring in a time allocation motion without any real public hearings in light of what you guys called for in 1985.

Some of your own members of this present government were part of that opposition party. Mike Harris, Mr Sterling and other people within the Conservative caucus who are here today were members of that opposition caucus, and they accepted that there should be true public hearings, and 80 days were given.

We say to the government across the way, you should do the same. We believe if it was good enough for the Conservatives in 1985 to call on the then government, the NDP-Liberal accord, to have public hearings on what is a fundamental issue of a policy decision within Ontario, if it was good enough for you, it should be good enough for us and the people of Ontario.

I say quite clearly to the government across the way that we call on you to have true public hearings on this issue. If you feel so strongly that the people of Ontario will support you on this issue and that people will flock to your side, then what have you got to be afraid of? You've got nothing to fear if you're so strong in believing what you do when it comes to this particular policy.

I listened to Mr Spina and other Conservative members as they walked into their caucus meeting last week, as Mr Kormos, Mr Martin, Mr Marchese and I were out—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Order. The member would know that you need to refer to members by their constituency, not by their proper names.

Mr Bisson: OK, ridings. The members for Trinity-Spadina, Niagara Centre, Sault Ste Marie and I, the member for Timmins-James Bay, were all there basically lobbying the government at the time to have public hearings. What did they say to us? They said, "Gilles, we

don't understand why you guys are so opposed to it. This is vastly popular." I remember a number of the caucus members, as they were going into the Tory caucus meeting, were saying, "People are on our side. Oh, yeah, they're on our side. We don't understand why you guys are opposed. You should see all the letters we're getting on this. Everybody is in favour." Well, if everybody is in favour and you think it's such a popular thing, then call public hearings. What have you got to be afraid of? Unless maybe you think you're on shakier ground than you actually are. Then maybe we understand what you're afraid of. I think that's where we're at.

First of all, not only have you made a huge policy shift when it comes to public education in the province, but I think you've underestimated the public. There are some people who support this position—I accept and I understand—but they are, by and large, not the majority of Ontarians.

I say very simply that if the government feels so strongly that they have to have this particular policy change two years into their mandate, that they've got to break their promise to the people of Ontario and move toward private education, then you should have the courage of your convictions and you should have full public hearings on this issue. We call on the government to do that for at least 80 days.

Ce n'est pas à chaque journée qu'on voit un gouvernement rentrer dans l'Assemblée faire une décision telle que la décision qu'a faite ce gouvernement, de faire un changement qui est complètement contraire à ce qu'ils ont dit dans les élections. Ce gouvernement a dit carrément en 1999, à travers le premier ministre, que oui, pas de problème, le gouvernement conservateur était complètement en accord avec la position NPD et celle de notre chef, M. Howard Hampton, que seulement un système public serait financé, et que, si le gouvernement conservateur serait élu pour un deuxième mandat, pas de question qu'ils n'étaient pas pour rentrer dans le débat de compléter un programme où qu'on aurait un système public et, sur l'autre bord, un système privé.

La plupart d'Ontariens et d'Ontariennes ont dit, « On est d'accord avec le gouvernement. On est d'accord avec M. Hampton sur cette question. » Le monde a voté. Ils ont fait le scrutin la journée du scrutin. Ils ont fait leur décision. Ils ont dit, par 44 % des voix, qu'ils étaient pour supporter le gouvernement, et une des raisons, c'était sa décision de financer un système public seulement et de ne pas rentrer dans le débat sur le financement d'un système privé.

Là, on voit que le gouvernement a brisé sa promesse, que le gouvernement, deux ans après cette élection, dit carrément au public : « On s'en fiche. Foutez-vous. On casse notre promesse et on fait ce que nous voulons faire à ce point dans notre mandat. »

C'est pourquoi je pense que le système démocratique qu'on a dans cette Assemblée ne marche pas. Il n'y a aucune manière de nous assurer, une fois qu'un gouvernement dit, dans les élections, qu'ils vont faire quelque chose, et qu'ils font complètement le con-

traire — on n'a aucun mécanisme d'intervenir et d'appuyer nos convictions contre ce gouvernement quand ça vient à cette décision.

Je dis au gouvernement, si le système démocratique ne marche pas, on doit le changer. Ça, c'est pour un autre débat. C'est pourquoi moi, je favorise un système de représentation proportionnelle où un gouvernement qui a 44 % des votes ne peut avoir que 44 % des sièges. De cette manière, ils n'auraient pas pu faire ce qu'ils ont fait la semaine passée. Ils auraient eu besoin soit des libéraux, soit des néo-démocrates pour les supporter dans leur décision.

Moi, je sais que le parti NPD est carrément d'accord avec le support pour un système public. Les libéraux, c'est une autre question ; on ne sait pas—un système de représentation proportionnelle, ils auraient besoin de faire la décision.

Mais là, on se trouve dans une situation où on n'a pas un tel mécanisme pour prendre le gouvernement à son mot. Je dis au gouvernement, on n'a qu'un seul autre mécanisme; et c'est à travers des audiences publiques. Le gouvernement, comme vous le savez, monsieur le Président, a dit premièrement, « Jamais on ne fera d'audiences publiques sur cette question. Nyet. On s'en va. Fini. On passe ce projet de loi par motion de clôture et on s'en va de cette Assemblée à la fin de juillet avec ce projet de loi, et aucune audience publique. »

Le Nouveau Parti démocratique était le seul à rentrer dans l'Assemblée législative dire au gouvernement, « Ce n'est pas acceptable. On pense qu'on veut aller dans la mauvaise direction. On veut que vous vous arrêtiez. On demande au moins des audiences publiques, 80 jours pour que la population ontarienne soit capable de se prononcer sur ce projet de loi. »

Initialement, à la période des questions, le gouvernement a dit non. Notre chef du NPD, M. Hampton, et notre critique, M. Marchese du comté de Trinity-Spadina, se sont levés dans cette Assemblée à beaucoup de reprises pour dire au gouvernement, « On demande carrément 80 journées d'audiences publiques sur cette question. » Initialement, le gouvernement a dit non. C'est pour ça que la semaine passée, mardi, les députés néo-démocrates ont fait du « lobbying » devant le caucus conservateur. On s'est plantés là. On a donné des feuillets aux députés quand ils rentraient dans leur « meeting » conservateur, et on a demandé, on a fait pression personnellement sur tous les membres du caucus conservateur, afin d'être capables de donner des audiences publiques.

Imaginez-vous, monsieur le Président. On était un peu surpris quand on a appris cet après-midi, ou plus tard ce matin, je dois dire, que le gouvernement avait renversé sa position, qu'ils étaient pour allouer des audiences publiques. On l'a pensé une victoire. Mais aucune victoire : ils veulent seulement faire des audiences publiques dans environ quatre communautés dans la province, et des audiences publiques d'à peine deux semaines. Ce n'est pas acceptable.

Premièrement, l'Ontario est beaucoup plus gros que Toronto. Il est beaucoup plus gros que Sudbury et Ot-

tawa. Elles font partie de nos communautés provinciales, mais il y a beaucoup d'autres communautés où le monde veut se prononcer sur ce projet de loi : Cornwall, Hamilton, Timmins, Hearst et d'autres communautés comme Thunder Bay, Kenora, Fort Frances. Ils veulent tous avoir l'occasion de commenter sur ce projet de loi. On dit au gouvernement que si en 1995, quand les conservateurs étaient en opposition, ils ont accepté et pris la position qu'il devait y avoir au moins 80 jours d'audiences publiques sur ce projet de loi, on vous demande au moins de faire la même chose quand vous êtes en train de faire ce changement au système privé.

Les libéraux ont demandé un couple de jours. On dit aux libéraux, « C'est beau, mais nous, les néo-démocrates, pensons que c'est important de faire au moins 80 jours d'audiences publiques. »

Je veux dire, avec ces derniers mots, que c'est très hypocrite, ce que le gouvernement est en train de faire. Ils ont brisé leur promesse au monde de la province. Ils ont cassé leur mot en disant, dans les élections de 1999, qu'ils étaient carrément pour un système public, et là, aujourd'hui, ils virent leur mot, disent non, brisent leur promesse, et décident de financer un système privé.

On dit qu'on doit avoir des audiences publiques d'au moins 80 jours, telles qu'on a eues en 1995 quand les membres de l'opposition conservatrice ont demandé à l'accord Peterson-Rae d'avoir ses audiences sur un système séparé.

Avec ça, je vous remercie beaucoup pour avoir cette chance.

1610

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I'm pleased to rise today and speak to the motion before the House and the amendment put forward by the opposition. I will be sharing my time with the members from Thornhill, Northumberland, Durham and London West.

Budget 2001 is all about making responsible choices to ensure continued prosperity for the people of Ontario, both now and in the years to come. Bill 45 provides for implementation of many of those responsible choices. The sooner these initiatives are in place, the sooner the people of Ontario can benefit from them and the sooner we can move forward and discuss some of the other important issues put forward in the budget, such as public sector accountability.

Ms Di Cocco: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe that we're speaking to the amendment to the time allocation motion, and I would like just to point out that I believe we have to get back on topic here.

The Deputy Speaker: That of course is a point of order, and I'm sure that the member for Oxford was coming to that.

Mr Hardeman: I really question the member opposite. I had spoken on the need for expediency for moving this bill through. I started my address speaking to the amendment and the motion that was before the House. I really find it difficult—obviously, the member opposite was not listening to the presentation. I gather from that that she is more interested in obstructing the goings-on in

the House than she is in the debate for the public and the need for the debate on this important motion and amendment that is before the House.

The people of Ontario have a right to know that they are getting value for the money they invest in health care and other services in this province.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: He must speak to the amendment to the motion. He is on a speech. He doesn't have anything prepared and he's lost. Somebody give him another speech—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Oxford.

Mr Hardeman: Again, I'm somewhat taken aback here that the members opposite are not interested in hearing the debate but are interested in trying to stop the workings of this House. I think it all speaks to the problem with the amendment and the problem with the motion, that the opposition have no interest in moving this matter forward but have an interest in stopping things from happening. In fact, they're being obstructionist in the legislation.

The comments from the opposition keep pointing out that the government does not have enough public consultation, does not have enough debate in this House as it deals with its legislation. I suppose every time we put forward a motion—and today was another example. We put forward a motion to lengthen the time that we spend in this place in order to debate government and opposition legislation. It seems that every time we do that, the members opposite want to vote against it. They don't want to spend time in the Legislature to deal with government business. In fact, they just want to stop government business from happening.

I believe that every time—

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Not only is he not speaking to the amendment, but he doesn't have a quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The member for Oxford.

Mr Hardeman: Again, it becomes obvious that the interest across the aisle is not in the interests of the people of Ontario, but in fact to see how they can keep the function of this House running in an orderly fashion.

As the amendment we're referring to was put forward by the opposition, I think it's interesting that when Bill 118—which is the Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2000—was debated in this Legislature, the Leader of the Opposition demanded public hearings on that bill. The government agreed to hold public hearings, but when the time came for the hearings in Sault Ste Marie, did the Liberals have the courtesy to show up? No, they didn't bother. I guess that was too far from home. They didn't want to spend their time and effort, after they had demanded the hearings, to go to the

public hearings and give the public the courtesy of listening to them.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): They have a member from Sudbury, don't they?

Mr Hardeman: The member opposite mentions that they have a member in that area. I thought they did too, but it became quite obvious that that member thought there were more important things to do that day than go to the public hearings in Sault Ste Marie. I think that's somewhat of a slight for the people of that area who had taken their time to prepare and to come and speak to the committee after all the efforts of the government to take the committee hearings there.

There are also implications in the amendment put forward that the government uses time allocations too often. I would point out that, with our standing order, we have used time allocation motions 63 times. In that same time, the Liberal government in Ottawa has used that same initiative 70 times, so I don't know why it is that they believe that federally time allocation motions and non-committee hearings are the appropriate thing.

In fact, I found it interesting, as I was reading the paper today, that we have a motion coming before the federal House. I'm not sure if it arrived today, but it has something to do with increasing the pay for the federal members.

Mr Marchese: Behold.

Mr Hardeman: Hey, behold, and my understanding is that it is going to be passed before the end of the week. Not a lot of public hearings on that one.

During the 36th Parliament of Ontario, we sat for 443 sessional days. Now, as the commitment of the parties opposite, the NDP sat 385 days in their last session, while the Liberals sat 297 days in the sitting of their whole parliament—total sitting days. I find it hard to understand, with the amendment, the suggestion that this government has not been taking the passing of legislation seriously and taking it out to the people to be sure that we have the public input.

In the 36th Parliament we sat 2,353 hours and 55 minutes. The NDP government, in their term of office, sat 2,209 hours and 22 minutes. They sat the full five years but sat a hundred hours less than the government did in the last four years. So I find it very difficult that any member opposite would suggest that we are not taking this seriously and making sure that each and every bill gets appropriate debate and gets appropriate public hearings.

Not to make light of what the New Democratic Party did, the Liberals in their term of office sat 1,484 hours, almost a thousand hours less.

Mr Marchese: Did they get paid for that?

Mr Hardeman: I'm not sure. Of course, I wasn't here at that time. The member opposite wonders whether they got paid. I presume that their hand shook a little as they took the cheque, but I'm sure they took the cheque.

1620

To suggest that we don't take it seriously that we take our bills to committee, as was suggested, that we go out to the public, since we have been in government—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I'm sorry. I apologize to the member for Oxford. The member for Trinity-Spadina is not in his seat, and while heckling is always out of order, it is very much out of order if you're not in your seat. I apologize to the member for Oxford.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you again, Mr Speaker.

As we talk about having public involvement and having sufficient time in our debate, since we have been in government, our government has passed 173 bills since we came into office, and in fact 109 of those bills went out to committee.

In the first session of the 37th Parliament, 53% of the government bills had been sent to committee. In the 36th Parliament, 43% of all the bills coming before this House went out to committee for further discussion. When the NDP was the government, they sent 38% of government bills to committee, and the Liberals—I'd think they would all be listening to this—sent 19% of their government bills. Less than 20% of their bills even went to committee. Here they are suggesting that we're not doing enough public consultation and public debate on the bills, and obviously they didn't see a need to do that when they were doing it.

I find it very curious that they would put forward an amendment to the resolution, as they're doing today, to suggest that we should not pass the budget, not put all these things in place that are going to increase the prosperity for the province of Ontario and make our province work even better than it is today. The opposition amendment would tell us that we should spend at least all summer going out to public debate and public discussion and not let any of these initiatives take hold and help to improve the quality of life in the province of Ontario.

That's why I am opposed to and I will be voting against the amendment and for the motion, because I believe it's time that we move forward, that we implement the good news budget that the Minister of Finance has put forward and that we move forward with all the other things that are in that budget to further the cause and to better the quality of life in the province of Ontario.

With that, I will turn it over to the next speaker, but I want to say thank you for the time for allowing me to speak, and that I think it's the appropriate thing to move forward with this bill and get it passed so that all the good things in it will benefit the people of Ontario.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Speaking to the amendment proposed by Mr Duncan, my House leader, the essence of it is to allow for a substantial amount of public input into the education tax credit, the voucher system. The key proposal is that the Legislature separate the bill, take the tax credit out of the budget bill, allow the Legislature, over the summer, to visit at least 10 cities and give ample opportunity for input into the bill.

Why is that important? I believe that the educational tax credit, the voucher proposed by the Premier, will fundamentally change Ontario. One of the best evidences of that is the brief that the Harris government itself

presented to the United Nations just a few months ago, where the government—and I might add that it was the Attorney General's department, the Ministry of the Attorney General, that made this presentation to the United Nations dealing with whether or not the province of Ontario should extend funding to private schools and to private religious schools.

What the brief said, among other things—and I would urge the people of Ontario who are interested in this issue to make themselves aware of some of the conclusions that the government reached when it was just a few months ago arguing against funding. I'd like to read a paragraph from the United Nations brief because it captures, certainly for me, my major concern with this tax credit plan—and it says the Ontario government “submits that one of the strengths of a public system of education is that it provides a venue where people of all colours, races, national and ethnic origins, and religions interact and try to come to terms with one another's differences.” That's a statement that I support strongly.

The brief goes on to say: “In this way, the public schools build social cohesion, tolerance and understanding. Extending public school funding rights to private religious schools will undermine this ability and may result in a significant increase in the number and kind of private schools. This would have an adverse effect on the viability of the public school system which would become the system serving students not found admissible by any other system. Such potential fragmentation of the school system is an expensive and debilitating structure for society.”

This brief goes on to point out some of the additional concerns. And remember, this is Premier Harris's brief. This is not some third party; this is the government speaking on behalf of the people of Ontario. It goes on to say here, “if the province of Ontario were required to fund private religious schools, this would have a detrimental impact on the public schools and, hence the fostering of a tolerant, multicultural, non-discriminatory society in the province, thus undermining the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.”

Another part of the brief says that extending the funding would undermine Ontario's “very ability to create and promote a tolerant society that truly protects religious freedom.”

Another paragraph: “The objectives of the state party's—that is, Ontario's—“education system are the provision of a tuition-free, secular public education, universally accessible to all residents without discrimination and the establishment of a public education system which fosters and promotes the values of a pluralistic, democratic society, including social cohesion, religious tolerance and understanding. The state party”—Ontario—“argues that if it were required to fund private religious schools, this would have a detrimental impact on the public schools and hence the fostering of a tolerant, multicultural, non-discriminatory society in the province.”

That's powerful language, and it's language which I endorse. The area I represent is an area here in the city of

Toronto that is extremely diverse, and I'm very proud to represent that area. There's a secondary school in the area I represent with flags around the meeting hall from 81 different countries, and that represents the countries where those students were born—81 different countries.

The area I represent has changed dramatically in the last 15 years, with a maximum of goodwill and a minimum of challenges and problems. I credit very much our schools for helping make that a reality. It's been our schools where our young people—our elementary schools, our secondary schools—come together, get to know each other, get to understand each other's history, and religion, I might say.

So the reason I strongly support the motion of Mr Duncan—the member for Windsor West, I believe—is that it provides Ontario with an opportunity to get involved in this debate. This is early in this debate. I know the government would like the debate to be over. In three weeks, the government's motion would be the end of the debate on extending funding to private religious schools. That would be a fundamental mistake. The people of Ontario deserve an opportunity for input. That's not going to happen over the next two weeks under an extremely tight timetable with a gun to our heads.

Why is it significant and important? Read the language and the words and the arguments of the government itself, speaking on behalf of the Premier, presented by the Attorney General to the United Nations. It spelled out the fundamental challenges with this bill. So my colleague's proposal for hearings in 10 different communities is an opportunity for some legitimate input. I might add, there is no urgency on this. This does not come into effect until the tuition year 2002 for the tax year 2003. So there's absolutely no sense of urgency other than Premier Harris trying to force it through before Ontario has an opportunity to participate in the debate.

So I very strongly support the motion proposed by my colleague.

1630

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Marchese: I would like to move an amendment to the Liberal amendment and then speak to it once you have it in your hands.

It's an amendment to the amendment to government motion number 22:

That the third paragraph be struck, and the following inserted:

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet for 80 days throughout the summer in locations across the province, including northern and rural communities, as recommended by Howard Hampton and the Ontario NDP caucus in a letter to the Honourable Janet Ecker, government House leader, on May 17, 2001.”

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Marchese has moved an amendment to the amendment to government motion number 22:

That the third paragraph be struck, and the following inserted:

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet for 80 days throughout the summer in locations across the province, including northern and rural communities, as recommended by Howard Hampton and the Ontario NDP caucus in a letter to the Honourable Janet Ecker, government House leader, on May 17, 2001.”

Mr Marchese: This amendment speaks to what we called for on May 17. Why do we call for such hearings and extended hearings? Because we believe that extending funding to private schools is of such significance in terms of public policy and the direction this government is taking us in, a direction this government had never informed the public that they would do, requires that we have this lengthy discussion and debate, requires that the public has an opportunity to discuss fully this policy direction that is of great significance to Ontarians.

It is some surprise to hear some Tories: when other members of the opposition call this tax credit a voucher, they are almost offended by the term, by the reference to this tax credit as a voucher, literally offended, as if to suggest that calling it such—a tax credit voucher—is to misrepresent, really, the intent of this government. This government is very cute, as you would know.

Mr Tilson: That's right.

Mr Marchese: Very cute, but not so cute, David. Because all you had to do was simply say, “How do we get around the fact that we said we would never introduce a voucher system?” You knew that if you did, of course you would be whacked by the Ontario population, because you would be seen to be breaking your promise. So clever Tories decided, “What do we say? What do we call it? What do we do? We'll just call it a tax credit, and we could never be accused of breaking a promise, because it's not called a voucher; it's called a tax credit.”

Aren't they clever, fellow Ontarians? Good citizens, aren't they really, really sharp? And isn't it beautiful, while M^{rs} Ecker stands up, and M. Harris, and all the other minions on the other side, saying, “Ha! This is not a voucher, it's a tax credit”—the stuff that Americans dream of. In fact, you people have done Americans one better because, you see, Americans have vouchers. You have given the Ontario population, yearning for public money for private schools, a tax credit, which is much better than a voucher. In fact, they get more money out of it than they would from a voucher system, because a tax credit for a family earning \$100,000 and sending two kids to private school will get back 11,000 bucks, which is more than the \$3,500 you purport to say they will receive. A tax credit means that when they do their income tax, if you earn 100,000 bucks with two kids in a private school, you get about \$11,000 back. Not bad for those whose interest is private education.

But we're opposed to that. So we're saying we want 80 days of hearings, similar to what happened in 1984-85 when the then government of the day said, “We're going to extend funding to Catholic schools.” They lost the election, God bless. They never thought it would happen, but it did, and we had, mercifully, a change of direction after 43 years of Tory rule in this province. Good God,

we thought that tyranny would never end, but it did. But Davis lost the election, the Liberals got into power and the Tories said, "We will support this measure we introduced as long as we get 80 days of hearings." The Tories pressed the Liberals on that, and they got 80 days—a whole lot of days to debate. Why? Because the Tories then knew it was of such significance, and having lost the election, they thought, "Maybe it was because of this, so maybe we should have the hearings and see what the public has to say."

We demand nothing but consistency from this Conservative government. We pressed these Tories to get these hearings, and they had to submit to some kind of hearings because, you understand, they cannot sustain the attacks on the tyranny of this government that suggests that democracy was had in 1999 and they don't need to consult any more because they consulted in 1999. But that kind of tyranny lasts so long, and the public of Ontario, the good citizens, yearn for some democracy; I'm not sure they yearn for a whole lot, but many yearn for some little democracy, to have some say on policy changes that are radically different than what many in 1999 expected they would get from Harris.

I understand Ecker would have loved to have had no hearings on this bill. I know M. Flaherty would have loved not to have any hearings on this bill and to dismiss and dispense with hearings because, oh, good God, they're such a weight on the government in terms of being able to do its job in a hurry. Because they've got so much to do, they don't want to waste any time, they say.

In fact, Ernie Hardeman argued that we are being obstructionist with these motions. The member for Oxford said we were being obstructionist with these motions. Can you believe that? He is arguing that we are the ones slowing the government down from doing its good deeds, as if to suggest that the Ontario public out there is demanding public money for private schools; that we are obstructing this poor, hapless, if not helpless, government from doing its job. They suggest that we, the members of the opposition, outnumbered by the tyranny of the majority of the Tory government, are slowing them down. They've got so much good to give you, good citizens, that they can't afford to have the opposition parties demand more than what this government has offered by way of these 10 days—eight days of hearings, really.

1640

I know Ecker, Flaherty and Harris, ministers all, don't want any hearings, because, you see, good citizens, I know they're going to get beaten up. I also know that they are going to try to get all of their buddies, the most special of special interest groups out there, the ones with the big bucks, the ones who are getting their corporate tax breaks amounting to \$4.2 billion—those are the ones who will show up at the committee hearings on Bill 45, because, you see, it's a finance bill. It won't be just education that we'll be talking about; we will be talking about Bill 45, a finance bill that includes in it—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: It's more than just the one I was about to suggest, the \$4.2 billion in tax breaks. It will have a whole array of issues. They're going to try to have those committees in St Catharines, London, Sudbury and Ottawa filled with their friends.

Who are those special friends, those so-special interest groups? The corporate sector, the ones who are so avaricious, the ones who can never get enough from this government. They've been asking for tax breaks ever since they got into government, and they've been getting more and more and more, leaving you good citizens as the only ones holding the bag. You good citizens and taxpayers are the only ones holding the bag, so that when we've got to pay for education and health care, you are the ones who are going to be screaming bloody murder. You're the ones who are going to be saying, "How come we have to pay more and more?"

Well, it's because the corporate tax cut amounting to \$4 billion means that if that money goes to them, we have to take out from some other source to balance it out. You see, we're not getting \$12 billion of income every year into the provincial kitty. We don't get enough of the money to supplement or to make up for the money that's going out for individual tax cuts and corporate tax cuts. So you understand, good citizens who are Liberals out there, who are Tories out there, that what this government wants is to limit the debate, for good reasons, because they are afraid. They are terribly afraid, but they have to take a chance on having four days here in Toronto and four days out of Toronto. They had to say, "We have to give these people some hearings so that we will not be accused of not wanting any hearings at all."

So they've given us a few little scraps. "Here you go, opposition members. Here's a little scrap for you. I hope you feel good and I hope you feel happy with the kind of scraps that we have given you. Please stop whining, because we've got so much work to do in this place. We've got so many other things to do. But to pacify the opposition, those pesty opposition members, we'll give them a couple of bones and hopefully they'll be fine," eh, John? The member from Etobicoke North, what do you think? But you see, a couple of scraps, member from Etobicoke North—through you, Mr Speaker—are not going to satisfy us.

But I'm not just talking about opposition; I'm talking about satisfying the Ontario public out there, because you as a government have to account for your vacillating positions—not to talk about the Liberal Party, but for your own vacillations at the moment. The New Democrats were the ones who first alerted you good citizens of the fact that M^{me} Ecker, months and months ago, said, "We cannot take \$300 million from the public kitty, because it would be diverted from our public system to the private schools." That's what Ecker said. You have to account for that.

Ecker and Harris, ministers both, you both said it. You see, you can't run away from what you said, because it's not what I said; it's what you said, Ecker; it's what you said, Premier Harris. Then all of a sudden you change

your tune and you sing a different song. I don't know how you do it. I don't know how political parties do it, and do it without compunction, do it without flinching, do it with a straight face.

I know the Liberals have a problem with this too, and I know the Tories have been dealing with this problem, because every time the Liberals say, "You said, Ecker, that you don't have any money to take from the public system to give to the private schools"—and the reason why Ecker has not been attacking the Liberals as much is because the Liberals, as you know, say no to the tax credit but yes to fairness on the issue of religious schools. They both, Liberals and Tories, have a problem with respect to consistency on this matter. So the Tories have been cautious in attacking the Liberals because they don't want to say to the Liberals, "Yes, but you had a position like this six months to two years ago," because then the Liberals would say, "Yes, but you had this position too, and now you've changed your mind." So they have to dissemble in the best way possible, you understand, good citizens, and they, with great circumlocution, get around the issue by talking about "blah, blah" this and "blah, blah" that. But you understand.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): But Rosario, we want hearings.

Mr Marchese: On the hearings, both the Liberals and New Democrats agree. The brilliance of the Liberals calling for these hearings is they know the Tories will not have more than what they have given us. So you guys look good. Good citizens, the Liberals look good, because they can say, "We want hearings," knowing fully well that Ecker and Harris don't want the hearings. So you can take the high ground and say, "Hah. We demand hearings." "At least 10 days," was their amendment. Now they can proudly say, "We want as much as the New Democrats wanted." If the New Democrats want 80, the Liberals want 80; if the New Democrats want 100, the Liberals will want 100. Do you understand?

If only Ecker would say, "We're going to give you 80," then we would expose the Liberals and the Tories for their inconsistencies. But Ecker is not going to give in. She will not submit to this, because they have more to fear by taking this out—as do the Liberals, but they more than the Liberals. Thus, good citizens, we are stuck with a mere eight days of hearings, four in Toronto and four across this great, big province of ours that is bigger by three times than Italy. It is three times the size of Italy. Could you believe that?

Mr Levac: Mezzo-mezzo.

Mr Marchese: No, more than that; more than mezzo-mezzo. It's three times. And you understand, getting around this province is not easy. Needing people to express themselves across Ontario isn't easy. So, quite comfortable, the government originally would have been very happy to have given us a couple of hours in Toronto. Harris would have been happy with that, although he doesn't like Toronto very much. But when he wants only hearings in Toronto, he loves Toronto a great deal so as to avoid the debate that I have seen in the

cities I have been at. I've been in London, I've been in Guelph and I've been in Timmins, and I tell you, people are not happy. They are not happy with this initiative, because they are all for a public system. If you saw the people in Timmins speak with tremendous passion about the concern they have on issues of special education and the children of theirs who are seeking the support that is desperately needed by them from this government—if you could just hear them, you would know the kinds of problems that we are having in the public system, the tragic stories of people who have special education needs who are not getting their needs met because this government has taken \$2.3 billion out of the education system.

It's remarkable that Ecker could stand up here every day saying, "We've put more." She just announced \$300 million a couple of weeks ago and almost suggests that this is money that would not have been forthcoming had it not been for the generosity of this government. But you understand, this money is part of the regular flow from the provincial government to boards of education. It is part of the regular flow. It doesn't even address issues of inflation, let alone deal with the energy problems that everybody has been suffering. The Toronto board, and I've raised this before, has \$17 million of energy requirements, and this government, I believe, has give them \$6 million, more or less. And then they say, "Oh, we've given them so much."

1650

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Use wind power, including yours.

Mr Marchese: Give Toronto wind power, the member from Etobicoke North says. God bless, Irene Atkinson and Toronto board, he wants to give you wind power. That's good, very good; very noble.

Mr Levac: A lot of hot air.

Mr Marchese: A lot of hot air, a lot of hot wind, a lot of wind that comes from there: "Here you go, Irene Atkinson. Here's a little bone; we're going to give you some wind. That should do it, that should cover the energy costs"—\$17 million in energy costs for the Toronto board alone, and this government gives them \$6 million and they say, "Oh, the millions and millions we're giving to these boards, why are they whining?" You understand why so many people are so unhappy. They have taken \$2.3 billion out of the system. Transportation needs have gone down, plummeted; busing dollars, busing supports, plummeted; specialty teachers, librarians, music teachers, physical ed, tech, the home—

Mr Levac: Technical studies.

Mr Marchese: Technical studies as well. But all of these specialty courses have gone down in terms of our ability as boards to be able to hire these specialty teachers. Why? Because there's no money. Secretaries, down; fewer principals than ever before; fewer books than ever before, in spite of a new curriculum; pupil-teacher ratios, up. Fewer teachers than ever before, and this government, with a smile, stands up and says, "We have given boards more money than ever before. We've

given them \$2 billion more.” Man, it’s worse than alchemy, you understand, 17th century kind of stuff. You just can’t invent, out of metal, and create gold. You can’t do that.

But these Tories, boy oh boy, are they so good. Minister Ecker, you are so good. Harris and company, you are so good, you must be getting lessons from the US. You people must have sent a whole lot of trainees to the US for your campaigns, because you’re doing well.

The public demands 80 days, the public supports one public system, they’re opposed to public dollars for private schools.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): I’m pleased to enter the debate this evening on the amendments put forth. There is the amendment from the Liberals and then the amendment to the amendment from the New Democratic Party.

The first amendment calls for—

Mr Marchese: Put in your own.

Mrs Molinari: I would not support any of these amendments; I would support the bill as it stands. It’s important that that be clear to all of the members in the Legislature.

The first amendment calls for 370 hours of public hearings. That’s the amendment from the Liberal government. In the 1980s they spent a grand total of 349 hours in committee the entire time they were in government. Where is the disparity here? The amendment calls for the committee to travel to Sudbury, London, Toronto and St Catharines. Well, the original motion outlines that the committee will travel to all of these cities.

The amendment to the amendment calls for 80 days and that we travel to rural areas. Well, in Sudbury, London and St Catharines there are rural areas around these cities, and in Ottawa. The amendment calls for the committee to travel all summer long, at least 10 cities. The motion before the House today allots six days of public hearings in five different cities in Ontario. It calls for 20 minutes, times the number of members who have not spoken at second reading, to be divided equally among all recognized parties.

The fact is that it is not in keeping with the democratic principles of public debate. This would only prove to delay the process and progress of this bill and any other bills before this House. Certainly that is the intent of the opposition in all of the bills, and I understand that, because that is the role they play in this House: to oppose, to amend, to obstruct, and all of those negative things, to prevent the government from actually moving forward on some very, very important bills, such as this one.

Over the last week, I have learned a lot about the leader of Her Majesty’s opposition. I have learned that he is prone to exaggeration. I have learned that he attempts to mislead Ontario’s working families, the same families—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: The member will withdraw the objectionable word.

Mrs Molinari: All right, I take that back, Mr Speaker.

Let me reword it then: I have learned that he attempts to confuse Ontario’s working families, and these are the families he purports to defend. I have been reminded that he just doesn’t get it.

Reading newspapers on a number of issues that have come forward, I learned that the most dangerous place in southern Ontario is standing between Dalton McGuinty and an open microphone. I want to quote the Canadian Jewish News, December 18—this goes back to 1998. The heading is, “McGuinty Expresses Support for School Funding.” It says: “Opposition leader Dalton McGuinty told Ontario’s Jewish leadership that he has no ideological opposition to ensuring public funds support Jewish day schools. It is believed that this is the first time any provincial party leader has made such a declaration.” So he was applauded by the Canadian Jewish Congress for his view back in 1998 on this issue.

Despite the grand rhetoric, the tax credit initiative introduced in this latest budget actually is the right thing to do. It’s the fair thing to do. I look forward to hearing all the members opposite explain to me why the Ontario government should fund secular French and Catholic schools, yet not, for example, Jewish schools, Hindu schools or Muslim schools. My constituents of Thornhill have demanded that this government take action in providing funding to be fair to all of the independent schools and to provide choice for parents, so that they have the ability to send their children where they want them to go.

I want to talk a little bit about my round-table sessions. I’ve mentioned in this House a number of times that I listen to the constituents of Thornhill. I have hosted round-table sessions. The first one was on education funding for independent schools. That was the first of five sessions. There were two questions that were posed to the people present. One was, “If the province provided equal funding for independent schools, what form should the funding take?” There was a lot of discussion on this issue. Question number 2 was, “If the province were to offer partial funding to independent schools, what form should partial funding take?” This was generated, if the members opposite are asking, by calls that came into my office by constituents who demanded we take action, so the action I took was to host a round-table discussion on the issue that meant something to them, an issue that was pertinent to the people of Thornhill. We asked the two questions and asked them to come up with some possible solutions, because when you have an issue, you go to your constituents, you consult, you work together with some possible solutions.

I’m pleased to say that from these consultations the one area that was supported by all in attendance was tax relief. A refund on provincial tax credits was a direct result of this consultation process. So certainly the constituents of Thornhill are pleased that, after going through the consultation process, this government listened—listened to not only Thornhill constituents but all the constituents in the province, because I know that my

colleagues engage in public consultation sessions with their constituents. They listen to what they're saying, and they bring it forward to all of our caucus sessions.

I want to also comment on—because it's important that I enter the debate—some of the comments that came from members of Thornhill. There have been several letters written to our local papers, one letter written by Charles Wagner, who is a resident of Thornhill. He says:

"Many parents sending their children to private schools are not wealthy. They are hard-working people who turn to private schools because their needs are not served by the public school system.

"In many of these schools, parents sacrifice virtually every disposable dollar toward their children's education. They are hit twice because they pay their taxes to the public education system and sometimes pay more than \$10,000 in tuition per child."

These are families that have three, four and five children. Paying that kind of tuition for every single child is quite a burden for the constituents of Thornhill.

1700

Our local paper is a fair paper; it's called the Thornhill Liberal. It's a paper that is very open and is non-partisan, but I do want to point out the editorial on May 24, by David Teetzel. He says:

"The worst misconception being spread by opponents of the tax credit scheme is that it's funnelling money into the hands of 'the wealthy'.... But the people I know who send their children to religious or private schools don't conform to that stereotype.

"Rather, they are people who are willing to make sacrifices in their lifestyle to give their children the kind of education they believe in. In some cases, they want their children to learn their religious heritage in school. In other cases, they believe elements of the public school program are hostile to their beliefs.

"One woman I know, who would fall into the lower-to middle-income bracket, was so offended by the policies and attitudes of her local public school that she not only pays a hefty tuition, she also drives her child an hour to school and an hour back.

"These people would continue to make these sacrifices without the tax credit. But I'm glad to see them get a little something back from the education taxes they pay to a system they don't use."

This was, as I said, an editorial from our local paper.

Now, it's been mentioned before that there are members in the Liberal caucus who would support the tax credit in this tax bill, and I know there's some discrepancy there and some discussion in that caucus.

I'd like to conclude by saying that certainly this is something that the Thornhill residents applaud the government for doing. It's about time, and they're very pleased that we're going to keep going forward to it.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I'm pleased to spend a few minutes this afternoon debating the two amendments, particularly the main motion, and the main motion, of course, is to strangle debate in this Legislature and to minimize public hearings in the province.

I ask one basic question of the government: why are you afraid to consult the people of Ontario? We'll make it two questions: why are you afraid to spend a sufficient amount of time with the people of the province? If the government is right, as they say they are, if they have this budget bill and those parts of it—that we don't like—perfect, then they shouldn't be afraid to go out to the public.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): You should welcome it.

Mr Crozier: You should welcome it, as my friend from Thunder Bay has suggested. You should welcome the opportunity to go out and talk with the people of Ontario about this budget bill and specifically about the tax credit that seems to be one of the contentious issues in the bill.

The member for Thornhill suggests that we exaggerate. Well, the member for Thornhill—who by the way was a former chair, I believe, of a separate school board and who should understand this better than many of us should—has said that we exaggerate and that what we're doing is holding this issue up. We're not holding it up at all. We have two years to debate this, because it's not scheduled to start until the year 2002, and my understanding is that it would then be the spring of 2003 when the first tax returns are filed. Let's even speculate that the debate wasn't finished then; you can always make it retroactive. So there is no attempt to hold up any kind of legislation in the amendments we have proposed and the third party has proposed.

What we really want is meaningful hearings on this bill. This is a significant change in the philosophy of the government. Just two years ago, the Premier said there was absolutely no way he would support funding of independent schools; today, at least he and the finance minister say they will. That's a fundamental change, and I think it deserves a significant amount of public debate so that we can hear everyone on the issue. Even then, we probably won't get the opportunity to hear as many people as we can in this province.

Then, of course, what they want to do is come back to the Legislature, minimize the amount of time spent on amendments—and we all know what happens then. They run out of time in committee, they deal with all the amendments almost at once but without any debate, all the opposition amendments are defeated and all the government ones are carried. In fact, there shouldn't be any government amendments if this bill is as perfect as you say it is. So again they want to minimize the amount of time that's spent in committee on clause-by-clause.

Then they want to come back to the Legislature and limit third reading debate to two hours. Well, you can't even debate eight days of hearings in two hours in this place. If we, as we suggest, have longer hearings, it certainly would take longer than two hours to debate what we hear from the public.

I suspect that by limiting the amount of time that will be spent on clause-by-clause and by limiting the amount of time on third reading debate, what the government is

really saying is, "We don't care what the public says, in eight days or 80 days. We're simply not going to listen to them." I think that's why they're trying to choke off this debate today.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I was rather entertained by the two amendments: the amendment to the amendment and also the amendment from the Liberals.

First the NDP, in the amendment to the amendment, comes out with 80 days throughout the summer in locations across the province, including northern and rural communities. I can empathize with the northern and rural communities, but when they talk about 80 days, what's the credibility? Why 80 days? Why wasn't it 70 or 100? Did they happen to get that from the movie *Around the World in Eighty Days*? Was that where they picked it up? I can't imagine 80 days. I look at the number of hours spent in hearings during their five years, and it was 645 hours. Eight times 80 is 640. That's just about all of the hearings the NDP had in their government, in the first five years of the 1990s.

I don't think they really want to have this passed. I think they're just putting up some smokescreens, making a big number to ensure that it won't be passed.

Then I look at the amendment, 370 hours, as the Liberals have to say. Then I look at the number of hours spent by the Liberal government in the late 1980s. How many hours did they spend? In total, 345; 25 hours less than the number of hours they're asking for hearings on one bill. They're not real either. They don't want this to pass, obviously. It's a very silly position that they're putting forward, and they really don't want to have it passed.

Let's have a bit of a look at some of these amendments coming forth. First, the NDP and what went on in their government. Do they remember the social contract? I'm sure they remember the social contract very well. It struck down absolutely every collective agreement made by any public service in the province of Ontario back in 1993. How many hours of public hearings did they have at that time? Not one single second—not one—and they're asking for 80 days on one that we're prepared to go out for 10 days on. I think that's pretty realistic.

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I wonder if they can remember the bill that was brought forward on Sunday shopping. Here are two bills, the social contract and also Sunday shopping. Was that in the Agenda for People, their platform? No. Neither of these issues was in their platform. Did we get any hearings on Sunday shopping? People in my area, especially small-town Ontario, were pretty concerned about that particular legislation.

Then I hear the member from the NDP bringing forth the amendment to the amendment, and he says, "What a brilliant move on the part of the PC Party to have a tax credit rather than a voucher system." But I can understand why an NDP or a Liberal would want to collect the money and then give it out in a voucher—make it as complicated as you can so there are a lot of dollars spent

on the collection and distribution and increase the inefficiency. But our government looks at efficiency, and what could be more simple than just simply a tax credit? It's never collected, it's never given out, it's just giving some more tax relief. I think it's time the members in the opposition recognize that tax relief is something the people of Ontario are indeed looking for.

Then, I come to the Liberals. They're asking for 370 hours. They're asking for all these hearings and to travel the province. Wasn't it in Sault Ste Marie when they were pleading with the government to have hearings? Lo and behold, who didn't show up? Not a single member of the Liberal Party came to those hearings. Could I get assurance from each and every member of the Liberal Party that in fact if that number of hearings is held, they will show up for those hearings?

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With all due respect to the member for Northumberland, we have two amendments on the floor, one from the member for Windsor West and another from the member for Trinity-Spadina, which is the 80-day amendment. I would appreciate it if the member for Northumberland speaks directly to that amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sure the member for Northumberland will be speaking directly to the amendment to the amendment.

Mr Galt: I thought I was dead on it with discussions about coming out and attending the hearings. I'm very concerned. It's embarrassing, even to the government, when the opposition doesn't show up.

But then we had a bill before this House not too long ago having to do with attendance, of course attendance of cabinet, coming from—what else would you expect from the opposition? When the vote was taken, 30% of the opposition was missing. So 30% of the official opposition were not here on an accountability bill having to do with attendance. They weren't here.

We've had a lot of debate in this Legislature—some three days on this particular bill in second reading; also the time allocation. You know, I didn't hear anything worth being said from the opposition. So what are we going to do on 80 days out there or 370 hours out there? I just don't follow it.

They go on and on about the time spent by our party on hearings. When I see that in our 36th Parliament we spent 798 hours and 14 minutes in hearings and the Liberals spent less than half of that—349 hours. It doesn't matter what part of Ontario, whether it was in the west, the Niagara Peninsula, in the central area, the east area or the north, it's all the same. We more than doubled the number of hearings the Liberals had in their government.

It doesn't matter if you look at the number of sessional days, for example. We had 431 sessional days in the 36th Parliament. How many did the Liberals have? They had 297 days. This is unreal.

We could go to the three years, if you wanted to balance one term with another. How long did the PCs have in the 36th Parliament? They had 361 days in three

years. How many did the Liberals have? They had 297 days.

So I rest my case. I think it's pretty obvious they're playing games, talking about 80 days for hearings in the amendment to the amendment, 370 hours in the amendment. They're not serious about this. They really don't want to see it go through. As a matter of fact, they want their summer off, and I can understand why they might. I think 10 days of hearings in the month of June will be more than generous, particularly if the opposition show up in those opposition benches for the hearings.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I rise to speak to the motion and the amendment standing in the name of my colleague Mr Duncan. I was interested to hear some of the debate this afternoon. I just want to make a couple of comments. I don't know how many of you listened to Rex Murphy's Cross Country Checkup yesterday afternoon. It had to do, actually, with members of the federal Parliament and what a proper level of remuneration is for those members, subject, that is—

Interjection.

Mr Conway: It was very interesting listening to that phone-in. I've heard several similar kinds of phone-ins on that program over the last number of years. I can say some things perhaps a little more easily and more critically of both the current—it's not even a question of governments, I suppose. The point I guess I want to make here is that the public out there—and it was very clear yesterday in listening to that phone-in—has figured us out. They know—

Interjection.

Mr Conway: John, you laugh. I guess I'm reminded of the old song, "I started the whole world laughing and now the joke is on me." The joke is increasingly on us. The public is increasingly aware that the old parliamentary paradigm is increasingly irrelevant, if not a nullity, and we'd better find a way in which to make ourselves, both in government and in the opposition—I accept the frustration of government members when they hear the caterwauling from the opposition that everything governments do is bad and everything the opposition would do is good, because I've been on both sides of the aisle. I hear the previous speaker talking about some bill that was debated in Sault Ste Marie and some members didn't show up. Maybe that is the case, but I want to say this: I think all fair-minded people would say that the initiative announced in the Ontario budget of May 9, 2001, with respect to providing provincial government tax credits to parents who wish to send their children to private schools was a significant and surprising development, and I say that without prejudice.

It's not a position that I have advocated. It's not a position that I support, though I understand that there are honourable members here who have a different view than mine and that's entirely their right. I want to say that it is important to understand that when governments and Legislatures announce significant departures from policies that were put before the general electorate that brought us here, we have an even greater obligation to go

out and give the public an opportunity to speak to that policy and that change.

Whither the public schools, I have to tell my friend from Northumberland, is quite frankly a more important question to put and to answer than a number of other issues that we might debate here on a Tuesday afternoon or on a Thursday morning. It is hard for me to imagine, as a member of this Legislature and as a former Minister of Education, that there is going to be a subject more likely to engage the public interest than changes we might make to public schooling.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): How about no-fault insurance?

Mr Conway: Certainly, no-fault insurance is an issue again that is very important. I would argue that important as it was, it is not as important as the future of our public schools.

Listen, I have been through eight electoral campaigns. I understand the pressures that all of us face and I certainly have my sins of omission and commission for which atonement is due.

Let me just say to my friends opposite, the Ottawa Citizen the other day had a story under the headline, "Province Answers Prayers of Calvary Christian Academy." It's an interesting story about a Christian school in rural Lanark county down near Franktown along the Highway 15 corridor between Smiths Falls and Carleton Place. Let me just read one paragraph from this story. It is May 17, 2001, in the Ottawa Citizen:

"To Calvary Christian, the timing"—the budgetary announcement—"was miraculous. Four years ago, the school"—Calvary Christian—"began with six kindergarten students in a church basement. Enrolment this year is 51, with 91 students registered for September, kindergarten to grade 5." So in a period of what, four to five years, we've seen in that part of rural Lanark a new school created, by good people, no doubt, that went from zero enrolment to 91. I can tell you, that development is not only going to be significant for Calvary Christian; that activity is going to have a significant effect on the schools operated by the Lanark board of education.

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I'm not here this afternoon to debate all of the issues that will arise from this particular initiative. But let it be clearly understood that this is an initiative that is going to have significant program, capital and financial implications, not just for the tens of thousands of students of parents who will receive the education tax credit; make no mistake about it, it will have very significant implications for the public school boards in those areas.

So what I would simply say, on the basis of my experience, is that we owe it to people in Franktown, Lanark county, in Woodstock, in Renfrew, across Metropolitan Toronto, to give these people—taxpayers, parents, students, teachers, business and labour leaders and others in the community—a full and fair opportunity to address a significant change that the government has announced in the spring budget that, as I said earlier, any fair-minded person would have to say is a surprising departure from that which was announced by the leader

of the Conservative government—or Conservative Party—heading into the last electoral campaign 24 months ago.

I want to say again today what I said the other night: it is clearly the opportunity of individual members and members in collectives known as political parties to make or to change positions. Some good fun was had here today about some changes that apparently have occurred on both sides of the aisle over time.

I had the opportunity, 15 years ago, to implement a policy that was dramatically changed by one of the most significant people who was ever here in the last 130 years, William Grenville Davis, probably one of the most significant ministers of education in the post-Confederation history of the province. I think it was on August 31, 1971, Bill Davis made a very powerful declaratory statement about funding to the extended separate school system. And 13 years later, without any notice and no public consultation, he reversed himself absolutely. It was a very trying, difficult time, not the least of the trying difficulty attaching to myself. I won't involve my friend from Manotick, the now Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. We all had some stress and some difficulty through that period.

I don't know about others, but I learned something from that experience, and the experience around the Meech Lake accord and the Charlottetown accord, and some of the other major policies that were at issue in the 1980s and 1990s. In conclusion, what did I learn? I learned that our democracy has matured. The old days of what we used to call in political science classes “the politics of elite accommodation,” where the brass got together—the business, the labour, the political and professional leadership—and they decided what would be good for the general public, and then handed it down from on high to an accepting and quite remarkably deferential general electorate—those days seem to have washed away in the 1980s and 1990s. As our friend from Kitchener says, “Thank God they did.” I think there are a lot of people in my county particularly who would agree with him.

So I ask this Legislature, who do we think we are? After all of that pain, after all of that controversy, provincially and nationally, do we think in 2001 that we can stand up without notice and without consultation and say to the general electorate on something as important as the future of our public schools, “We are going to reverse ourselves absolutely, and make a change that, if not today, certainly tomorrow, could have enormous implications, some of those implications very negative and deleterious on the public school system, without so much as a meaningful consultation with you, the people”?

I can't believe that honourable members elected in 1995 and 1999 really think that we can or should do that. It's because I like to think that, painfully, slowly perhaps, I learned some of those lessons of a decade ago that I want to support my friend Mr Duncan in his amendment here this afternoon.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): In the few minutes remaining I am interested in first recognizing that the

government has responded in this debate by having 10 days of public hearings. I am a member of that committee and certainly look forward to the input.

The NDP amendment, as has been mentioned, calls for 80 days—it's *Around the World in Eighty Days*. We've all heard that song or read the book; I guess it's Jules Verne or one of those.

The Liberal amendment is obviously kind of divided as it puts its argument forward here. I have the greatest respect for the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, because he was, I think, Minister of Education at the time all this was playing itself out. In fact, I was a school trustee at the time and felt quite honoured the first day I came here to meet him, and I still to this day have some good respect for him. So he's probably more informed than most of us on this important debate.

This morning, going through my newspaper clippings, there was an appropriate article in the *Post*, which was by one of their writers, Moira MacDonald. She points out the struggle in Toronto. Toronto is a very important part of the province of Ontario. A lot of the students in the province are right here. What stresses me is that this education tax credit came about because of, I think, the demand on the government by families to provide some choice mechanisms. Just to see how inequitable the education system is, in all respect, if you look back on this, we all know that when they did the Royal Commission on Learning and the Fair Tax Commission, they called on the province to fund education to solve this inequity in the people in Durham spending \$4,000 per student and people in other places in the province spending \$8,000 to \$9,000 per student. And this is the public education system; this isn't some sort of—

So people for a decade or more have been struggling with the issue of equity in education, and an alternative that has been invented and become very popular is the independent schools. These are independent schools, and I should say that I have five of them in my riding. I want to put it clearly on the record today, if I could just find my list here, possibly I will mention the people in my riding who are and have been, at great pains to themselves, supporting independent schools. These are, I can attest here today, hard-working people.

The independent schools in the riding are Knox Christian School with Principal George Petrusma, Knox Christian High School with Fred Spoelstra, Scugog Christian School with Tony DeKoker, and Immanuel Christian School with Stan Baker. Many of the students of these schools have indeed been pages here; I think about four or five of them from these individual schools. They're very accountable. I've been to their board meetings. They're all volunteer boards made up primarily of parents, but certainly school supporters, because the community broadly supports these schools in fundraising through their church and through other initiatives within the community.

So out of respect for a few hundred students who attend these schools and those parents, I think this government has listened. It's clear the opposition won't tell you the truth anyway.

Interjection: What's that?

Mr O'Toole: I withdraw that. I meant to say they won't give you a clear answer. Perhaps that's more accurate anyway. They will give you a couple of different answers. It depends on whom they're speaking with.
1730

But this government is prepared to take the difficult choices, and it is difficult. My wife—I've said this 1,000 times—is a teacher, and my middle daughter's a high school teacher in the public education system. There's no question these are difficult choices, but what it comes down to is parent choice. The one-system-fits-all kind of status where we are today is no longer acceptable.

I'm going to put on the record some of the differences. The Toronto District School Board has just under three times the number of students their Catholic counterpart in Toronto has: 270,000 compared to 102,000. Yet the public board spends more than four times what the Catholic board does on administration—\$83 million compared to \$19 million—and they're looking to make cuts, if you read the paper last week, where? In the classroom, not where we need to make them. While the public board has 73 administrative staff earning more than \$100,000 last year, the Catholic board has 13.

There's clearly more to be done. It's about accountability. They're afraid of it; there's no question they're afraid of it. Teacher consultants, an explicit target cut by the provincial Tories, are funded at a higher rate at the public board than at the Catholic board. Some \$25 million was spent on them this year at the Toronto district, compared to \$6 million at the Toronto Catholic.

What's this about? Why don't we really get down to it and fund the classroom? If there are 20 to 25 students times \$6,000 per student, certainly to pay the staff, to pay the school, to pay the resources, there's enough money in the system; it's how well it's being spent.

I really do believe, whether it's the amendment or the non-amendment, the government is having 10 days of hearings, and in that I believe we're providing student choice. I think that Bill 45, which we are discussing in the broader sense, was a bold initiative. But at the end of the day, it's still up to parents. First of all, they have to spend the money, they have to choose for their children, and at the end of the day they would get an education tax credit. This year it's 10% of the amount; next year it's 20%; after five years it would be 50% of the amount—that's really six years from when we're speaking—up to a maximum of \$3,500 of tax credit.

I really believe that parent choice is very important. Teachers cannot do it by themselves. They have to have the support from the home, and this focuses the debate back on the importance of education. I, for one, think it's an important debate.

With that, I'm willing to share the rest of my time with the member from London West, who is anxiously waiting to get his constituents recognized for the hard work they have done to make this government respond to an important initiative.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I am pleased to be able to rise but saddened to have to do so

on this debate from this least courageous government that we've seen in modern times in Ontario, a government unable to stand behind what it really believes in, only able to put forward simplistic solutions and then run like heck for the exit. That's what we have here today: a government unable to come to terms with its fulsome responsibility.

As my colleague said earlier, there has been a change, and this government seems not to have understood it. They and their elites want to be able to make these kinds of decisions, want to do it with two pages in a finance bill, not even having the gumption to concede that this has something to do with education. We congratulate some of the members opposite. They've dropped the fiction they hid behind last week. We heard some of them mumbling on about some of the things in the finance bill, patently not willing to address what the members of their constituencies want them to address, what their individual electors say to them: "Take care of business. Give us a chance to be heard on this."

We have the amendment in front of us. It says eight days to be heard. It says, in fact, something similar to what we've proposed, 370 hours, in the earlier amendment. It's something I guess we can only conclude the government of the day is afraid of. If they weren't afraid, if they had the courage of their convictions, they would be rising today in favour of the amendments. They would be there as individual legislators, saying, "I'm not afraid of what I'm going to find in my constituency. I'm not worried about this policy. I'm not afraid to say that this is the reason it's going to affect public education, and I'm in favour of it."

That's not what we see from the members opposite. Instead, we see from the members opposite. Instead, we see an inability to focus on the matters at hand, an inability to say clearly and honestly to their constituents, "Yes we will take responsibility for the damages we do to public education." Those members opposite, had they conceded to us the time—and they still may yet vote for these amendments—if they did do that, I think they would find that this is time well spent in the public interest, time not hiding behind, as some of the members opposite have tried to say, "This is somebody's issue of conscience somewhere." What time would do is expose the fact that this bill does not actually address people in religious schools, it addresses people in private secular schools to a factor of five, because there are existing tax credits for people in religious schools. So instead, the government is bringing in a new innovation, something new and only applicable to private secular schools.

Had they wished otherwise, the time we want with this amendment, the time we want with the hearing being extended to show respect to the people of Ontario, would allow that to be found out, would allow it to be discovered. Why would the members opposite be afraid of that? If they have their own facts to table, if they have their own analysis, then surely they believe that should be part of the public record. Surely they wouldn't run scurrying and hiding into their summer vacation, having

pushed this through. Surely that wouldn't be the attitude and the approach of the honourable members opposite.

So I have to believe that something else is at work here, that some other powerful force is holding the members opposite from their true duty as members of independent good standing in this House, because we've yet to hear from them on that score. We've yet to hear them say that they are unafraid to come to public debates. We asked the members two and three weeks ago, "Go to your public schools, please. Be part of a program that is non-partisan. They're your schools; it's your constituency. They expect you, if you're going to pass measures about public education, to be there and talk to them about this bill." I can't imagine—

Interjections.

Mr Kennedy: Members are asking if they did it. No, very few did. We respect very much the member for Guelph-Wellington, he did go back to schools and so did four or five members opposite, but the majority of the government caucus has shown a reluctance and some have even said that they'd be afraid to go into schools.

When we look at these kinds of initiatives, we have to wonder, what kind of path have we come to? If there's any reason that a member elected to this House could not go, hold a forum in a public school, explain this to the members of those school communities, take the questions and provide the information, what path have we come to? I think the member from Renfrew has actually probably put his finger on it. We've come to a place where individual members on the government side no longer feel they can do that for their constituents. I think it is a sad day.

The 80 days of hearings, or the 370 hours, would address that. It would allow the members opposite to cleanly and clearly state the case they may have for this kind of initiative, and they know, because if you look at the language they're using, it's borrowed. Where is it borrowed from? It's borrowed from the state of Michigan. In the state of Michigan the proponents of vouchers and tax credits held a referendum. They at least had the guts, that much fortitude to say, "We don't deduct away from democracy here. We will stand accountable and measurable and in front of the voters for this initiative."

Instead, we have a government here that has had to be dragged kicking and screaming all the way to even some small concessions that might have something to do to education—and maybe there should be hearings, maybe the public should actually be give an opportunity to both understand and give their opinion.

I think we see some of the root rot for this government in the bill and the amendment in front of us when this kind of amendment has to be brought forward, when the government of the day with a majority in the House cannot concede to the public. It's not for our benefit; it's for the public that brought them here. What my colleague from Windsor, our House leader, has proposed is an eminently reasonable version, as is the version put forward by the NDP for 80 days or for the equivalent, 370 hours, to be there and pursued by this House.

I can't imagine what would grab hold of a member opposite to make them worry about that, to make them be concerned that more of their constituents might want to come forward, because as the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has already said in this House, there is nothing in this measure that requires it to be rushed. It is only the fear and consternation and, I guess, apprehension of the government members that keeps this out of extended hearings, because extended hearings obviously bear no threat to the initiative. If the initiative itself has merit, then it can stand up to the light of day. It doesn't need to be thrown in as an afterthought of the finance committee and the Minister of Finance now having an overall view on the undertaking of education in this province.

1740

I think people know that the reason we need hearings is because of what's in this bill. This bill is a back door to public education. It is built on a foundation of basically giving up on public education because it takes with it each person who leaves. We would have time for this had the hearings been extended. We're still hopeful that the government may take us up on this challenge, but if they would have the time, if they would have that kind of outlook, we'd learn this. We'd find out just how this is structured, that each time a family withdraws a student from the public system there is \$7,000 lost.

These members opposite I think have at least enough exposure—many of them have extensive knowledge—to know better, that that is not going to do anything but weaken the system. It will fragment and undermine it, as the Premier said, as some of these members used to say but are no longer standing up to say in this House.

I think they owe the electorate of this province an explanation. They ran on a different platform. This is not administrative housekeeping; this is a government that took a fundamental change in the way they want to approach education. What does look like the benefit of any extra days of hearings is for them to tell us otherwise. How can you otherwise connect the dots here except that a government that has spent six years attacking, undermining, over-centralizing in a Soviet style, taking control out of classrooms, giving meaningless things for special education teachers to report on, giving other teachers things that are not worthwhile to follow, and taking no accountability and no responsibility—only now does it seem that there's a point to this. The point of it is a government not willing to even commit to the elements of public education but instead willing to give up on it.

That's what we see in the listlessness of the members opposite. If they can't stand up for the members in their ridings, if they can't say, "We're not afraid of you. We'll hear from you," then we know there are no defenders of public education opposite. There are no people willing to go toe to toe with their version of public education, the one that will benefit most of the children in this province, that will be as respectful as possible to all types of diversity, that won't try and pretend and hide behind fairness for a few at the expense of fairness for everyone.

That would be the definition of what this amendment is all about: an opportunity for the members of this House to stand up and say whether or not they're for public education. More importantly, beyond the ambit of the spin, beyond the ambit of the paid advertisements this government I'm sure will be using our tax dollars for, beyond the ambit of the way this government has been operating would be some fundamental honesty about whether or not these members believe in allowing the individual students of this province to reach their potential or whether they pass this bill and get in their way.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I rise to oppose the amendment and support the motion. The motion gives adequate time for public hearings and for changes to the bill. The amendment is unnecessary. I support the motion because the bill is a good bill that I believe should be passed.

My reasons for that are these: the bill provides for continued tax-cutting policies, which have created over 800,000 net new jobs; it provides for continued new investments in health care, education and community safety, and introduces a significant step forward for the students of Ontario, namely tax credits for independent schools. I support that policy. I do it because I have confidence in parents, I have confidence in the independent schools, I have confidence in the public school system and because I care about all the public elementary and secondary students across this province.

I have confidence in the parents of this province to make the right decisions for their children. It's trite to say, but not always obvious to all, that parents know their children better than anyone else. We also know that in this day and age one size doesn't fit all when it comes to education. There are legitimate choices that have to be made and not all of those choices can be made available in the two public systems.

I also have confidence in the independent schools themselves. It's become apparent during the course of this debate that some members opposite have rather out-of-touch ideas about what goes on in independent schools. I invite them to spend a little more time visiting. I invite these members across the way to spend a little more time visiting independent schools so they understand what actually goes on in them.

I think the record is quite clear. They are approving the parents who choose those schools to be right for their particular children and that the schools are doing a good job. The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, for example, had an 82% success rate in the grade 10 tests, which contrasts favourably with the 68% across the two public systems.

I might say as well that I have confidence in the public schools. It's happened time after time that, where people have more choice, the vast majority still choose a public system. If one wants confirmation of that, one can look at the province of Quebec, the province of Alberta, the province of British Columbia, or, if you wish to look to foreign jurisdictions, look perhaps to Denmark, which has a long tradition of support for independent schools.

They have strong, effective public systems in every one of those jurisdictions.

I might say that this really seems to be the major objection raised to this proposal: "Gee, if we help the 5% who don't get any help now, it's going to hurt the two public systems." The people who say that betray a lack of confidence in our public systems. The evidence is quite clear from elsewhere that the public systems are quite able to attract students and they are quite able to do a good job for the students they have. So, I would invite the members across the way to show a little more confidence in our two public systems than they seem to be showing right at the moment.

The other reason that I am a big supporter of this budget generally, and the proposal for tax credits in particular, is that I believe in supporting education for all the students of Ontario. Sometimes the 100,000 students in the independent system tend to get a bit neglected, particularly by the members opposite. They seem to be the second-class people in the universe for the members opposite. I would invite them to open their minds a little, see the very positive things that are happening in the independent schools and consider offering a little more tangible support, rather than just the rhetoric that we tend to get from the opposition on this subject.

I would also like to say, in opposing the amendment and in supporting the motion, I do hope that the members of the Liberal Party will take advantage of the hearings that are going to be held and tell us just where they stand, where their party stands, on the issue of help for independent schools. They say they're opposed to the proposal for tax credits, and I understand that position. What I don't understand is what they do have in mind for independent schools. Their leader says he favours aid to religious schools, it's merely a matter of him figuring out how and a matter of him figuring out when. I say they now have before them a very positive initiative to help the independent schools. If they have a better idea, let them come forward now and tell us what it is. If they indeed have a good idea, let them bring it forward. All we hear now is opposition and a promise they'll think about it later.

I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to come into the House tomorrow and tell us how he intends to help religious schools. I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to come into this House tomorrow and tell us when, because the truth of the matter is these independent schools are doing their work now. Now is the time to recognize the work they're doing, to give appropriate help for it and to stop the rhetoric.

What I would respectfully suggest to the House is this: I think that the Leader of the Opposition is taking a traditional Liberal position. He wants to have it both ways. He wants to try and attract those who like our idea by saying he'll do something later and also attract those who don't by saying he's opposed to our idea now.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for debate is complete.

Mr Marchese has moved an amendment to the amendment to government motion number 22:

That the third paragraph be struck and the following inserted:

“That the committee be authorized to meet for 80 days throughout the summer in locations across the province, including northern and rural communities, as recommended by Howard Hampton and the Ontario NDP caucus in a letter to the Honourable Janet Ecker, government House leader, on May 17, 2001.”

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say “aye.”

All opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Mr Marchese has moved an amendment to the amendment to government motion number 22. If those in favour would please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Martel, Shelley
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	McGuinty, Dalton
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	McLeod, Lyn
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	McMeekin, Ted
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Crozier, Bruce	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Di Cocco, Caroline	Levac, David	Smitherman, George

The Deputy Speaker: Those opposed will please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

We will now deal with the amendment to the time allocation motion relating to Bill 45.

Mr Duncan has moved the following amendment:

The third paragraph of the government motion be struck out and the following inserted:

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet throughout the summer in at least 10 cities and towns, for at least 370 hours of public hearings. The venues for those hearings will be established by the committee and

shall include Sudbury, London, Toronto and St Catharines.”

The fourth paragraph of the government motion be struck out and the following inserted:

“That the committee shall meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 45 before the House resumes in the fall and that clause-by-clause consideration not conclude until all amendments placed by the government and opposition parties have been given due consideration.”

That paragraph 5 be struck out.

That paragraphs 7 and 8 be struck out.

That the words “and not later than June 25, 2001” in paragraph 9 be struck out.

That paragraph 10 be struck out.

That paragraph 12 be struck out from the government motion and the following inserted:

“The time allotted to the third reading stage of Bill 45 be the aggregate of 20 minutes times the number of members who did not speak at the second reading stage of the bill, such aggregate amount to be divided equally among the recognized parties.”

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

All in favour will say “aye.”

All opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Same vote?

Call in the members; this will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1805 to 1815.

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

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	McGuinty, Dalton
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hampton, Howard	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	McMeekin, Ted
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Crozier, Bruce	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Di Cocco, Caroline	Levac, David	Smitherman, George
Dombrowsky, Leona	Marchese, Rosario	

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

Nays

Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Jackson, Cameron	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Guzzo, Garry J.	Newman, Dan	

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 29; the nays are 47.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

We will now deal with government notice of motion number 22 standing in the name of Mrs Ecker.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Carried.

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

The House adjourned at 1819.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affaires / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
Bartolucci, Rick (L)	Sudbury	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Beaubien, Marcel (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bountrogianni, Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Bradley, James J. (L)	St Catharines	
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma-Manitoulin	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Bryant, Michael (L)	St Paul's	
Caplan, David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC)	Oakville	Speaker / Président
Christopherson, David (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC)	Stoney Creek	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Cleary, John C. (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)	Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC)	Ottawa-Orléans	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Conway, Sean G. (L)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Cordiano, Joseph (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
DeFaria, Carl (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques
Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Sarnia-Lambton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dombrowsky, Leona (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Duncan, Dwight (L)	Windsor-St Clair	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)	Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)	Guelph-Wellington	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Galt, Doug (PC)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Gerretsen, John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	
Gill, Raminder (PC)	Bramalea-Gore- Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	
Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Parliamentary assistant to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au vice-premier ministre et ministre des Finances
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)	Nipissing	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John (PC)	Etobicoke North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)	Erie-Lincoln	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)	Burlington	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Johnson, Bert (PC)	Perth-Middlesex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kells, Morley (PC)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale-High Park	
Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / -Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Lankin, Frances (ND)	Beaches-East York	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity-Spadina	
Marland, Margaret (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martin, Tony (ND)	Sault Ste Marie	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Maves, Bart (PC)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mazzilli, Frank (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
McGuinty, Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lyn (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Aldershot	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Molinari, Tina R. (PC)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister responsible for Children / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire au premier ministre
Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Durham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	
Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Phillips, Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Pupatello, Sandra (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / -Ouest	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Smitherman, George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Spina, Joseph (PC)	Brampton Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire au solliciteur général
Tilson, David (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)	Markham	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Don Valley West / -Ouest	Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Wood, Bob (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services correctionnels
Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Willowdale	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Vaughan-King-Aurora	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli,
Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Norm Miller
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Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
Rosario Marchese, Norm Miller, Marilyn Mushinski
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
James J. Bradley, Bruce Crozier,
Leona Dombrowsky, Bert Johnson,
Morley Kells, Tony Martin,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien,
Michael Bryant, Carl DeFaria,
Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Tina R. Molinari
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: R. Gary Stewart
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Ted Arnott, Marilyn Churley,
Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Margaret Marland, Jerry J. Ouellette,
R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John C. Cleary
John C. Cleary, John Gerretsen, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Richard Patten
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et des projets de loi d'internet privé**

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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