



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 11 June 2001

Lundi 11 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 11 June 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 11 juin 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): As a result of the Mike Harris government's repeal of the Rental Housing Protection Act, which prohibited the demolition and conversion of affordable rental housing into luxury condos, modest and affordable rental housing across the city of Toronto is now being demolished and destroyed by developers who basically don't care about neighbourhoods and certainly don't care about affordable housing. By their demolition of this affordable housing, they are forcing low-income residents, mostly seniors on fixed incomes, literally on to the streets of Toronto. The destruction of affordable housing is essentially an attack on seniors and an attack on neighbourhoods. These are very livable, successful neighbourhoods that have been established over 50, 60 and 70 years, which the taxpayers of those neighbourhoods built.

Now we have individual developers that come in and destabilize neighbourhoods by demolishing existing low-rise affordable housing and replacing it with monster condos, causing immense disruption and destabilization of these beautiful neighbourhoods. We have cases like the Rosewell Court decision, Cheritan, where the OMB, appointed by this government, overrules local council, overrules local taxpayers, overrules elected officials and says no to thousands of citizens who are saying, "Protect our neighbourhoods."

Shame on this government—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Thank you.

SCOUT GROUPS

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Today I have the pleasure of recognizing and congratulating the scout groups of my district of Parry Sound-Muskoka. There are a number of groups that are going to be attending the Canadian Scout Jamboree, July 6 to 13, in Prince Edward Island. Those groups are the First Bracebridge Scout Group, the Third Bracebridge Scout Group, the First Milford Bay Scout Group, the First Gravenhurst Scout Group and the Huntsville Scout Group.

I'd like to congratulate all the parents, the scout leaders and the scouts themselves for the terrific fund-raising they've done in making this project possible. They've raised \$1,200 for each scout and each leader who's taking part in this project. They did that through scrap metal collecting, car washes, selling hot chocolate at parades, beer bottle drives, spaghetti dinners, selling ice cream, selling baked potatoes and perogies, as well as other activities.

At the CJ there are going to be 10,000 scouts attending, as well as 5,000 leaders. It's going to be a fantastic week. I know the kids are looking forward to the mud maze, the obstacle courses, the badge trading and the many other activities that are going to be going on there.

I'd like to particularly recognize Dave and Kathleen Johnson as being a couple of the key people involved in this organization. It really was all the parents involved, taking part in all those various activities, raising \$1,200 per child to be able to attend this fantastic week-long scouting event, July 6 to 13, Prince Edward Island. Congratulations to all of you.

TOM JOY

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On Wednesday evening, the Jewish National Fund will be honouring a man in my community who, I know, is a friend to many members of this House, Tom Joy.

Mr Joy is a remarkable member of our community and of this province. He is someone who has served us all well. He has a remarkable presence about him. He's physically imposing, with a broad smile and a warm way about him that I think all of us have come to appreciate over the years.

Mr Joy, for those who don't know, presently owns Windsor Raceway. He bought that at a time when it was suffering financially. He invested a huge amount of his own personal money to save that racetrack. That track contributes enormously to our economy. Mr Joy has contributed literally millions of dollars to various charities in our community and throughout the province.

One of the more interesting stories about Tom Joy is that when Mr Pearson passed his flag bill back in 1964, it was Tom Joy who got together a consortium at his request to mass produce it. I should say that Mr Joy hails originally from the great town of St Catharines, Ontario.

All members will not be aware that Tom Joy is now fighting the greatest battle of his life, with cancer. He's going to be home Wednesday for his tribute, and I know

all of us join in wishing him well in that fight as we celebrate the enormous contribution he has already made, knowing the great contributions he has ahead of him.

SIMCOE COMMUNITY ACCESS NETWORK

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to comment on an exciting event that occurred in Simcoe county last Friday. I was pleased to join Jim Wilson, the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, to announce the launch of the Simcoe Community Access Network, Canada's largest fibre optic community network.

This new network project will build a massive infrastructure over the challenging rural terrain of Ontario's second-largest county. In total, 600 kilometres of fibre optic cable will be constructed to connect municipal governments, health care providers, schools and college campuses, libraries and local businesses, 250 locations in all.

In February of 2000, the Ontario government invested \$1.7 million under the telecommunications access partnerships in the \$30-million project. The TAP program was initiated to improve Ontario's competitiveness in the new economy and create new high-tech jobs through advanced telecommunication applications and infrastructure.

I'd like to congratulate Desmond Lorente, president of the SCAN Development Corp, Glen Barnden, SCAN project manager, and all the partners who have worked so hard to make this project a reality. The SCAN fibre optic network will be constructed over the next 14 months by Hydro One and four local utility companies, and it will allow Simcoe county to remain highly competitive in a world economy.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): The decision by the Minister of Health to freeze the funding for home care services in this province must be reversed. The implications of this freeze for the Community Care Access Centre of the District of Thunder Bay and for the clients they serve are devastating.

Unless Minister Clement opens his eyes and sees the damage this freeze will cause, we will see many of our frail and elderly residents, who are so keen to stay in their homes, forced back into the hospital system or, conversely, they will be kept in a hospital for a longer period, due to the lack of available care at home. Now, does that make any sense, when the entire purpose of providing these services is to help keep people in their homes?

What will happen to the people who have been able to maintain their independence when this brutal decision forces the access centre to ration services and provide care to only those most urgently in need of care? This is

cruel, this is wrong and it is in fact bizarrely unsound from a fiscal point of view. It simply makes no sense.

If I may, I'd like to direct my final comment to the Premier. Last week, Premier, I asked you to find time during your stop in Thunder Bay to meet with our local physicians in order for you to see the depth of our physician shortage crisis. Now I implore you to find time to meet with the board of our community care access centre. You need to understand first-hand just what this funding freeze will mean to the clients they serve.

This is an issue that is of extraordinary concern to so many in our region. Please listen to this plea for compassion and provide the funding that is needed for our hard-working and dedicated home care providers.

1340

THOPPIL ABRAHAM

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Mr Thoppil Abraham has been a leader in psychiatric care in Welland and the Niagara region for 18 years now. He's an incredibly professional, well-trained and committed psychiatrist who has been serving our community for almost two decades. He's been at the forefront of advocacy for adequate levels of psychiatric services for people in Niagara region. He's the one who blew the whistle and insisted we were short some 13 psychiatrists in Niagara region to reach the complement of 18, which is what would be required to have a sufficient level of psychiatric medical services.

He blew the whistle again. He blew the whistle on a secret report that had been prepared by the Clarke Institute that recommended the closure of one of Niagara's three psychiatric facilities. Dr Abraham, with the courage and the insight he's displayed for his whole career, said, "No, it simply can't be done. We don't need fewer psychiatric facilities, fewer beds. Darn it, we need more."

What was the response to Dr Abraham's courage? Well, I'll tell you that the regional medical advisory committee of Niagara health services fired Dr Abraham as the senior responsible physician for mental health and psychiatry. This is a pure political response to a psychiatrist who has shown courage and insight during the course of his career. I condemn that action by the health services of Niagara and by the medical advisory committee. I call upon people in Niagara and across this province to express their outrage at that treatment of a brave and conscientious medical practitioner.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): On a crowded beachfront in Tel Aviv a couple of weeks ago a suicide bomber claimed the lives of 20 young people and wounded 86 others as they were enjoying the start of their weekend at a nightclub that faced a promenade area lined with restaurants, bars and hotels. Last night I attended a community memorial gathering at Mel

Lastman Square to grieve for the victims of this latest tragedy.

Most of the victims of the tragedy were recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Their brutal deaths plunged the country into mourning and sent shock waves around the world. Among the speakers at last night's memorial was Rabbi Zaltsman, who is a spiritual leader in the Russian Jewish community. He had known many of the victims whose lives have been claimed in the recent fighting that has occurred since September.

Young people came forward to light candles placed at the foot of the stage at Mel Lastman Square, one candle for each of the 20 victims. Boards that displayed the victims' names flanked both sides of the stage. All 20 of the victims' names were read as the candles were lit.

Let us hope and pray for the families of the victims whose lives were cut short in this recent tragedy and for all the families that have suffered because of the breakdown of peace in the Middle East. We can only pray that a solution to the current problem can be obtained so that tragedies such as this do not occur again.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Imagine being elderly, sick and without family or resources. Within that context, imagine receiving the following letter:

"Dear Client....

"I am writing to advise you that serious reductions in home care have become necessary right across Ontario due to inadequate funding and the fiscal policies of the current provincial government. For these reasons, community care access centres are being forced by the government's policies to make deep cuts in their services.

"... our agency, with deep regret and sincere apologies to our clients, will be introducing service reductions."

It's bad enough that this is happening, but when you imagine that this is a covering letter from the former president, the past president of the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres and one of the architects of community care access centres, you understand just how wrong this government is in their mean-spirited approach to the elderly and frail of this province. So today, on behalf of Bob Fera, on behalf of all the clients of community care access centres across Ontario, I implore the Mike Harris government to rethink their policies with regard to home care and to provide adequate resources that will meet the needs.

CATCH THE SPIRIT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It is my pleasure to rise in the Legislative Assembly today to talk about an important community event in my riding of Durham. This Saturday, June 16, the community of Tyrone is hosting an event called Catch the Spirit, at the Tyrone Community Centre.

This is the first time in a decade that Tyrone has held this re-celebration. One of the event organizers, Joy

Vaneyk, has planned this ceremony to resemble similar ceremonies that were held in Tyrone over a 20-year period. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening and a basketball court and new playground equipment for the Tyrone Community Centre. Clarington firefighters have also got involved and will be hosting their Safety House and giving parents and children valuable safety tips.

One of the highlights of this day will be to recognize the many volunteer contributions made specifically by two important area residents, Edna Philp and Laverne Taylor. In this International Year of Volunteers, I commend the community of Tyrone for their efforts to keep small-town Ontario spirit alive. I congratulate Ms Philp and Ms Taylor on their kindness of spirit and involvement in building strong communities.

VISITORS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, time permitting, I would like to recognize former parliamentarians who are in the Speaker's gallery joining us today.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): On a point of order, Speaker: I'm sure everybody will want to help me welcome students and staff from St Brigid school in Nakina, in my riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North. We're glad to have them here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): That is not a point of order, but we welcome them.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Speaker, I have a point of order in regard to standing order 97, which talks about written questions placed to ministers. You would know that on April 24 I placed nine questions to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and they have been printed in Orders and Notices every subsequent week. I should tell you as well, Speaker, before you understand the fullness of this matter, that back in December, I placed the selfsame questions to that particular minister, or rather to his predecessor, and it has been since December that the ministry has had an opportunity to at least place a response.

According to standing order 97(d), "The Minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sitting days, unless he or she indicates that more time is required...." It goes on, and I could read the entire section, but in section (e) it says, "The answers to such written questions shall be given to the member who asked the questions and to the Clerk of the House who shall print a notation in the Votes and Proceedings that the question has been answered."

Speaker, these questions have been sitting on the order paper since December. It was the government's choice not to call this House back for 133 days. This is a breach of the standing orders. I believe it is a contempt of this House, and I seek some redress and a remedy from you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Thank you. That is a point of order. Questions do need to be answered within the time allocated in the standing orders. I would hope the ministry can accommodate the standing orders, but I have no authority to compel it.

VISITORS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We have with us today in the Speaker's and public galleries former members of the provincial Parliament attending the inaugural meeting of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the founding executive: Reverend Derwyn Shea, Mr Gilles Morin, Mr Terence Young, Mr Tony Silipo, Mr John Parker. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO WATER RESOURCES
AMENDMENT ACT
(WATER SOURCE PROTECTION), 2001
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES RESSOURCES EN EAU
DE L'ONTARIO
(PROTECTION DES SOURCES
D'ALIMENTATION EN EAU)

Mrs Dombrowsky moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act with respect to water source protection / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario en ce qui concerne la protection des sources d'alimentation en eau.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): The Ontario Water Resources Amendment Act, 2001, amends the Ontario Water Resources Act with regard to the availability and conservation of Ontario water resources.

Specifically, the bill requires the director to consider the ministry's statement of environmental values when making any decision under the act. The bill also requires that municipalities and conservation authorities are notified of applications to take water that, if granted, may affect their water sources or supplies.

THE BOYS' HOME ACT, 2001

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr13, An Act respecting The Boys' Home.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): On a point of order, Speaker: On this special day, in honour of so many parliamentarians joining us here in the House, I would seek unanimous consent that for this day only, these former parliamentarians be allowed to heckle.

The Deputy Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no. It may be difficult to stop them, but I heard a no.

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 11; Tuesday, June 12; and Wednesday, June 13, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Mrs Ecker has moved that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, June 11, Tuesday, June 12, and Wednesday, June 13, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

All those in favour will stand one at a time.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Ecker, Janet	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Brenda	Parsons, Ernie
Baird, John R.	Flaherty, Jim	Patten, Richard
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Phillips, Gerry
Beaubien, Marcel	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ramsay, David
Boyer, Claudette	Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Kennedy, Gerard	Stockwell, Chris
Conway, Sean G.	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Tilson, David
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	Tsubouchi, David H.
Curling, Alvin	Marland, Margaret	Turnbull, David
DeFaria, Carl	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Di Cocco, Caroline	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Murdoch, Bill	Young, David
Duncan, Dwight	Newman, Dan	
Dunlop, Garfield	O'Toole, John	

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

Nays

Churley, Marilyn
Hampton, Howard
Kormos, Peter

Lankin, Frances
Marchese, Rosario

Martel, Shelley
Martin, Tony

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 70; the nays are 7.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): In the speech from the throne on April 19, our government set out 21 steps that would bring Ontarians into the 21st century.

The first step focuses on maintaining a strong economy with competitive business sectors that create jobs. To that end, step 1 calls for the removal of barriers to jobs, investment and growth so that Ontario will remain strong and competitive with the rest of the world.

As part of that process, this summer the ministry will begin meetings with representatives of key business and industry sectors to determine what they require to remain competitive in a global marketplace. My colleague the honourable member for Halton, Mr Chudleigh, parliamentary assistant for the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, will shortly begin face-to-face discussions and round-table meetings with representatives of the chemicals industry.

From 1986 to 1996, this industry grew faster than the entire manufacturing sector. These meetings will be followed during the summer by consultations with the industrial, commercial and institutional construction industry, a key employer in the province that builds our commercial and industrial infrastructure.

My colleague will also meet with experts in early-stage equity financing about the issue of access to risk capital for emerging high-growth firms. This is an issue that is crucial in terms of the success of these firms, which cut across all sectors. The purpose of these consultations is to discover the existing or emerging barriers to competitiveness and to identify opportunities for building stronger businesses and sectors. We must ensure our businesses are operating on a level playing field. Our business leaders and associations are the best source of information for this purpose. They have practical experience, waging daily battles with global competition.

I believe this process will result in concrete ideas and suggestions to help Ontario remain competitive with the world.

I plan to inform the House of our findings following my colleague's final report this fall.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Today, June 11, the annual day of commemoration for victims of crime, we stand to reaffirm our commitment: our commitment to support victims and to keep communities across Ontario safe.

Our government stands solidly on the side of victims of crime. We have backed that promise by funding a wide range of government and community programs that serve people across this province who have been victimized.

Some of our actions in the past six years include creating and expanding Canada's most comprehensive domestic violence program. We have also dedicated up to \$50 million in funding under our victims' justice action plan to provide further, better and faster services for victims of crime. This is in addition to the money already spent across government to provide services to victims.

Just last week I stood in the Legislative Assembly and introduced for first reading a bill entitled Prohibiting Profiting from Recounting Crimes Act. If passed, this bill will help to ensure that victims are not revictimized and it will also help to prevent criminals from profiting through the recounting of their crimes.

Five years ago we proclaimed the Victims' Bill of Rights. That was indeed a precedent-setting act which legislated a series of principles to support victims with timely, respectful, courteous treatment throughout the criminal justice system. However, we understand that there is more to do and we will do more.

Today, in this Legislature, in this building, we are proclaiming the Victims' Bill of Rights Amendment Act. This act creates a permanent Office for Victims of Crime. It is the first such permanent agency in this country and it is being established to advise government on matters of relevance to victims. It will help us ensure that the principles of the Victims' Bill of Rights are respected, and we will do so by consulting with victims. It will help us to implement provincial standards for services for victims of crime. It will identify community priorities for funding through the victims' justice fund, which I mentioned a moment ago. The office will also work closely with government to develop policies to further our efforts to support victims and—let me stress—to prevent further victimization.

Sharon Rosenfeldt, chair of the Office for Victims of Crime, and Scott Newark, who is special counsel to the same office, are here in the gallery today. I would like to take this opportunity, if I may, to thank them publicly for the tremendous work they have done to support victims across this province, on behalf of victims in this great province.

I am also pleased to tell the Legislature that over the next three years we will be expanding three very important programs that serve victims of crime across this province. These programs are part of the victims' justice action plan that our government announced last year.

The victim/witness assistance program, which provides information and support to victims across the province throughout the court system, will be increased by 31 sites. This will bring a total of 57 sites across the province.

The victim crisis assistance and referral service will be increased by 15 further sites. When completed, we will have a total of 42 sites across the province for this very important program. This vital service is managed by community-based boards, and it provides crisis intervention services to victims of crime and disaster through police referrals. That exists 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Our government will also expand the SupportLink program. SupportLink provides free wireless phones, preprogrammed to dial 911, for victims at risk of personal harm from sexual assault, domestic violence or from stalking.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Rogers AT&T Wireless and Ericsson Canada Inc for their participation in this very important program.

The pilot project established in Ottawa and Barrie of the SupportLink program has been very successful. That's why I am so proud to stand and announce that it will be expanded to 18 additional locations across the province.

1410

The permanent Office for Victims of Crime and the three program expansions I mentioned just a moment ago will help to ensure that if further victimization does occur, victims will have the supports they need and victims will have the supports they indeed deserve.

Yesterday, I was privileged to attend a ceremony at Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto. It was a ceremony in commemoration of victims, and there were many people in attendance. There were families and friends mourning the loss of loved ones. Individuals were acknowledged throughout the program for their personal strengths and for their very survival.

Leaders of victims' groups and advocates for victims of crime were there, and they all understood, all too well, the tragedy of victimization. So too does our government. We are listening to the voices of victims and, perhaps more importantly, we are acting upon what we have heard.

On this, the annual day of commemoration for victims of crime, I join with my colleagues in honouring all victims, in honouring their families who grieve and in honouring all of those who display rare courage, courage as they work to end violence in our society.

On their behalf, our government will continue to work hard to provide and to enhance victims' services. We will continue to seek policy solutions and to work to implement those solutions. And always, we will ensure that the rights of victims are protected throughout the justice system in this province.

Today, on this annual day of commemoration for victims of crime, I would ask all members of this House to join with me in reaffirming that commitment.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): Dalton McGuinty and Ontario Liberals wish to commemorate victims of crime by holding the government to account on promises made but unkept, by continuing to introduce new initiatives for the benefit of victims of crime, and by ensuring that this government commemorate victims of crime not simply by word, but also by deed.

Today, there is an announcement that a proclamation has occurred for an office that has been in existence since November 1998. I'd say to the government that, while this proclamation is a positive step, it's an overdue step and it smacks, I'm afraid, of yet another reannouncement when it comes to the subject of victims of crime.

I'd remind the House that the office of the victims of crime was the subject of a throne speech in April 1998. The creation of the office was announced in November 1998 and then in the year 2000, it was announced that the office would be statutorily entrenched.

Just in the past year, if you can believe it, we've had not just one reannouncement about this office, not just two reannouncements, we haven't had just three reannouncements in the last year; we've now had four reannouncements on the proclamation of this office.

I'd say that, yes, it is a recommendation fulfilled, but there are other recommendations that need to be fulfilled, as set forth in A Voice for Victims, authored by the Office for Victims of Crime. The office announced there is a significant disparity in the nature of victims' services available across this province, with no provincial standard. We hear the government talk the talk about promising to bring in a standard. I'd say to this government, let's commemorate victims of crime by actually enacting a provincial services standard.

The report concluded that there was an unjustified surplus in the victims' justice fund, while whole communities have no victims' services. I'd say to this government, let's commemorate victims of crime, not by talking about this unjustified surplus, but let's get the surplus out the door for those communities that need it.

I can only mention three for now. There is the existence of untapped financial resources in terms of uncollected fines and bail forfeitures. Let's stop talking about collecting these fines and let's just get out there and get this restitution on behalf of victims of crime.

Lastly, I'd say that we have before this House a number of initiatives, bills, introduced by Ontario Liberals. I would urge this government to bring them forward. We could do something for victims of gun violence. We could do something for victims of child prostitution, thanks to MPP Rick Bartolucci. We could do something for victims of organized crime, thanks to MPP Dave Levac. We could do something for victims of date rape drugs. We could do something for victims of domestic violence by implementing the Baldwin committee report provided in August of last year.

This side of the House will continue to fight for victims of crime, not just in words. When it comes to victims of crime, this government is all talk and no action.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I'd like to respond to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. I welcome anything that the ministry puts forward to help encourage our competitiveness, and I wish the member for Halton well. I'd be a little more enthusiastic if I didn't think that this was just another public relations exercise.

I've had the opportunity over the years to attend meetings where they've announced a new initiative that amounted to no more than a new logo. I've heard about the ambassador program, where businessmen would be going to countries to which we export, and then while they were there, they would act as our ambassadors. I haven't seen any great results out of that.

But I can tell you this: there are lots of opportunities for us to become competitive. They're known; they're known to the industry and they're known to the government. All the government has to do is act on it. We have this huge, untapped resource of foreign trade technicians and professionals that we could bring into our economy to make us far more competitive, at very little cost. We have the ability to make sure that our universities have the proper funding so that we can train people, because when you talk to businessmen, they tell you the number one issue is that they don't have the skilled people they need.

Minister, again, I wish you well in your endeavour, I wish you good luck in it, but I tell you that there are things, like making sure that we're represented in our major markets. We should do these things the businessmen have been telling us. They've been telling us this when we go to pre-budget hearings. They've been telling it to us when we've gone to other committee hearings. The issues are known. What we don't know is what the government's response is going to be.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I want to say to the Attorney General that the temerity of his comments today is in no way mitigated by his feigned sincerity. His and his government's history is a betrayal of the incredible shallowness and hollowness of his comments today on behalf of victims.

Where was this Attorney General when we called upon him to protect a young victim, 17-year-old Jeffrey Fleeton, struck dead by an illegal load? What did this Attorney General's prosecutor do? This Attorney General's prosecutor cuts a deal in a backroom plea bargain with the offending trucking company to pull the charge in exchange for a \$2,000 contribution to a charitable organization so that the trucking company not only kills an innocent kid but then gets a tax receipt for an income tax break come time to file its taxes. I hope you're not suggesting that that constitutes standing up for victims, Attorney General, because it doesn't by anybody's measure.

Where was this Attorney General when we called up him to protect victim Robyn Lafleur just last week in this very Legislature? Remember Robyn Lafleur, Attorney General? You saw her picture. You can't meet her, because she's dead. She was killed in a workplace homicide down in Thorold at the Esquire factory. Esquire and its corporate ownership have been charged with dozens of federal and provincial charges. This Attorney General's prosecutors are in a backroom, cutting a deal, plea bargaining to pull charges so that convictions are removed from the prospect of possibility against the perpetrators of what amounts to a workplace murder.

Attorney General, you don't give a tinker's damn about Jeffrey Fleeton, a 17-year-old boy struck dead—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): You'll need to withdraw.

Mr Kormos: Withdrawn. I'll explain to you the etymology of that phrase at some later time, Speaker.

You don't give a darn about 17-year-old Jeffrey Fleeton or his family. His family has been excluded from any consultation. His family has not been told what's happening behind those closed doors. His family has had the door locked, bolted, barred and slammed in their face by you and your prosecutors down in the Milton-Oakville-Burlington area.

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You don't give a darn about Robyn Lafleur, that dead young woman. We called upon you to ensure that your prosecutors prosecute those charges to the fullest extent to seek convictions against every accused after an extensive examination and after an extensive investigation of the facts. The facts were there to lay the charges; your prosecutors were there to withdraw them.

I spoke with Linda Even just last week. She has moved far away from Niagara region, where she was slashed and stabbed, knife blade after knife blade, in an attempt on her life. It was your prosecutors, Attorney General, who plea bargained that attempted murder away to a far lesser charge. Linda Even's attacker was out of jail a long time ago. Linda Even still lives with those physical scars, the physical disability and with the mental and emotional scars. She and her teenaged daughter, but 15 years old, are trying to rebuild their lives in a town far away from Niagara region, where she became a victim, first, of her spouse, and secondly, a victim of you and your government when your government pulled the charges against that perpetrator, effectively letting him walk on what should have been attempted murder. Surely 25-plus strikes to the body with a knife counts as attempted murder in any fair-minded person's mind; it didn't in your prosecutor's mind, Attorney General, when they pulled those charges and struck a backroom deal.

Linda Even was a victim once, of her spouse; was a victim twice, of this Attorney General; and is a victim thrice now, of this government, because she is forced to survive on ODSP benefits. You won't even give her sufficient resources to obtain the physiotherapy she needs to recover from those knife blows to her body that came this close to taking her life.

You talk about being concerned about victims. You're creating yet more victims. You've turned your back on victim after victim as your prosecutors and your crown attorneys plea bargain cases away on a daily basis, and we've raised them in this Legislature. This Attorney General says, "There's nothing I can do." Horse feathers, Attorney General, there is everything you can do. You can lay the law down with your prosecutors. You can give them the resources to prosecute these offences that result in death and serious bodily harm to people to the full extent of the law. You refuse to do that.

You've thrown your hands up. You're content with slick, facile press releases and press conferences. Victims don't believe you, we don't and the people of Ontario don't believe you.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House for statements on the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Mr Speaker, I believe we have agreement that each party will speak for approximately five minutes to welcome members of the association who have joined us here today.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise today and speak on the first anniversary of the passage of the bill that created the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians.

Every day on our way into this chamber I pass a wall downstairs on which are engraved the names of the former members of this Legislature. Regardless of the number of times I have passed that wall in the last six years, today it has taken on a special significance. That wall lists the members from all political parties who have taken the parliamentary concepts developed in Great Britain and adapted them to meet the unique circumstances of our great province. Visionaries such as Sir Adam Beck, Sir Oliver Mowat and Leslie Frost used the forum of this Legislature to develop and implement bold initiatives that propelled our province to the forefront not only within Canada but, arguably, of all the world economies.

Their visions have been embraced and improved upon by successive Premiers and MPPs and, regardless of our political differences, there has been a common goal of bettering the welfare of all Ontarians and ensuring that the provincial government remains relevant, responsible and progressive. I know that my colleagues on both sides of this House share my sense of honour to have been given the opportunity to join with the members listed on that marble plaque who have served the province as MPPs.

It wasn't that long ago that I first arrived at Queen's Park as a new member, with little knowledge of the workings of the Legislature. Instinctively, like most other

new members, I sought the advice of more experienced colleagues to help me find the way. Obviously, the business of the Legislature can't be put on hold while new members become acquainted with the rules and procedures, so for many members the learning curve was quite steep.

This was, in part, the inspiration for the creation of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. Born out of the deliberations of former members of all three parties, the goal was to create an association that would be far more than just a club for former MPPs. We know all too well the tragic consequences that have resulted from the dramatic change when people leave this chamber, especially when individuals are not prepared for that transition.

During the debate on the bill that created the association, all members of this House indicated they found it unacceptable that any member, past or present, should feel they have nowhere to turn when they require assistance. The men and women elected to this Legislature have brought to this job considerable expertise and knowledge from a wide variety of backgrounds. The association puts that knowledge and experience to use in a positive way and is ready to assist each and every one of us when the inevitable day comes that we too become former members.

Shortly after the bill was passed last year, I received a phone call from a constituent who had been watching the proceedings in the House that day. He commented that while such an organization was commendable, he couldn't believe the same elected officials he watched every day on the parliamentary channel could ever work together to help each other.

It struck me that most Ontarians don't get an opportunity to see the many occasions that members on both sides of the House do co-operate and work together on common goals. Far too often the focus has been on the negative aspects of our service and not the positive changes we are making each and every day. It's true that the media coverage of our parliamentary democracy can create the impression that individuals from different parties have little connection with each other and even less opportunity to work together. However, the co-operation by all members in the passage of this bill, when it came before our committee, was not unique. Instead, the tremendous work done by all the members of the general government committee on bills such as Brian's Law and the Franchise Act have shown me that co-operation can very much be an integral part of how we do business in this Legislature.

Today the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians works to support Parliament by offering non-partisan support for the parliamentary system. It helps develop relationships between former members and current members, and it assists former members who have completed their service and are attempting to make the transition back to the private sector. The association has elected a board of directors representing all political parties and has opened a small office to better serve the needs of former MPPs.

The association highlights the great respect each of us has, not only for each other but for the institution of Parliament. Each and every day the people of Ontario put their trust in us as elected officials to represent their interests in this Legislature.

Since Confederation we've built a province that is tolerant, a province that respects and encourages diversity, a society where an individual can start out with nothing and with some hard work can succeed and even be elected to this chamber and become either an MPP or even a minister of the crown. The opportunities that generations of Ontarians have fought to create and maintain are in our hands to protect and build upon.

I'd like to particularly thank Reverend Derwyn Shea, Tony Silipo, Gilles Morin, Terence Young and John Parker for their hard work, dedication and continued service to the people of Ontario. It was their initiative that helped create and establish this association, and it's been their hard work that's enabled the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians to grow.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this very important organization. I hope all members, past and present, take the time to learn more about this association and consider giving their time, experience and knowledge to help others who may benefit.

Finally, I want to thank the 40 former MPPs who have joined us here today in the Speaker's gallery and congratulate all of them and all of their other colleagues who are not with us today for their dedication and their record of service to the people of Ontario.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): On my behalf and on behalf of my Liberal colleagues, I want to join in the remarks and welcome our former colleagues to the Legislature today.

I was pleased this morning to have a coffee with the chair of the group, that noted Anglican divine from the west end, the Reverend Derwyn Shea. I want to congratulate Derwyn and my former colleague Gilles Morin and the others who worked so hard over the last number of years to bring about what the previous speaker indicated we celebrate today.

It is, as I think someone mentioned earlier, the fate of all of us that at some point we are going to go from here to there, and as I look up to the gallery, I say, advisedly for all of those of us down here, that it's useful when you've been around a while to think about who's up there.

1430

I won't go through the entire list, but these days it's fashionable to talk about grassroots politics. Our old friend Lorne Henderson is up there, and I have to say that in all the years I've been here I've never met anyone who was a better grassroots politician than our former friend from Lambton. Lorne's ear was so close to the grass that he could hear it grow.

The former member from Wellington-Dufferin-Peel, Jack Johnson, is up there. I've known many sinners in politics. I don't think I ever knew a saint except Jack Johnson. Jack had to be one of the absolute best people

who ever came here, and I'm delighted to see him here today.

Gordie Walker's up there. I want to say to Gord that if ever there was a politician who was ahead of his time, it was Gord Walker. Gord's, shall I say, eclectic career—and it was an impressive career—reminds us all that sometimes chance and opportunity don't quite present themselves when and where you would like them to appear.

Mr Speaker Turner, a former member from Peterborough, is there looking youthful and vigorous as always. I have to apologize to John for all the trouble that people like myself and Bradley caused him when he was here to my immediate right.

The squire of North Port, James Taylor—Sir John Macdonald used to say to his friend Sir John Carling that no man could be as honest as Sir John Carling looked. I ask you to look at the squire of North Port and ask yourself, "Does he look like someone who said publicly in this place, not that many years ago, 'I, a minister of the crown, was sadly mugged in the corridors of power by those agents of Hydro?'" We didn't understand the full measure of what Jim was trying to tell us, but, Jim, I think there was more truth than perhaps we gave you credit for.

My old friend Hughie O'Neil, looking very elegant and sartorial, is a reminder to those of you in the envy league that those parliamentary pensions of yesteryear do have a certain appeal.

Doug Reycraft, formerly of Middlesex—I say to the ministerial cohort that you should be so lucky to have as diligent a parliamentary secretary as I had in Doug Reycraft in the days when controversial school bills certainly were given a broader canvas and a much more thorough ventilation than appears to be the fashion today.

Interjection.

Mr Conway: I say to the Minister of Finance that I'm trying to be balanced.

Warner is there. When the member from Guelph said we should ask people to give our visitors the right to heckle, it must be difficult for Mr Speaker Warner to sit so quietly. I'm sure it's the company he's keeping up there with the current chair of the energy board, who proves without doubt that there is a very purposeful life after one's retirement.

Not too many of the current group probably know Mac Makarchuk, but Mac is up there. Mac might want to wave. People think Kormos is entertaining and lacerating, but I want to tell you that in the old days when Mac Makarchuk was here, in the age when the new democracy really seemed to have a punch, when you could be both a hard-hitting socialist and quite a sailing entrepreneur at one and the same time, Mac certainly was one, and he looks like he has retired well.

I just want to say to all these people here today and others who are not in the gallery—I was delighted to see William Grenville Davis down at the reception. The former Premier is looking very well and sounding even more well. I won't reveal some of our conversation, but

he certainly seems not to have lost anything in his retirement.

Again, as I take my place, I just want to say on the Liberals' behalf that we support the initiative. I want to say on my own behalf, and perhaps a little undiplomatically, that I believe this institution is very important, as the previous speaker indicated. It is, in my view, an institution that's in trouble. It seems to be getting into more trouble all the time, and that is no one's individual responsibility. But hopefully we will find individual and collective ways of dealing with solutions to the institutional difficulty. I think that what the Reverend Shea and others have done to bring this group together might be part of the remedial action.

I'm delighted to see them. I welcome them and wish them well in their work.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to on behalf of the New Democratic caucus here at Queen's Park take this opportunity as well to recognize the important contribution that all members over the years have made to this wonderful place that we call Queen's Park, the Legislature. I think by recognizing the contribution that members have made who have since moved on to other things, we recognize the very valuable role the Legislature and government play in the life of the community, the wonderful community that we call Ontario. I think it's important that we today speak, as we are, of that contribution, of that both personal and public commitment that each member has made to this place and that has left its mark. Your footprints are all over this place as we continue the work you started and worked so diligently to make Ontario a better place.

We indeed I think owe a debt of thanks to those who worked so hard with this whole body to make sure this organization got up and running so that it could do the job it is mandated to do; people like Derwyn Shea and Gilles Morin were already mentioned. I think Tony Silipo needs to be mentioned as well, as a person who put a lot of time and effort and energy into making sure this organization got legs under it and got moving so we could have this day, and hopefully many more of them, into the future as we recognize people who have contributed in significant and important ways to the province.

I remember myself some of the characters I served with over the last 11 years. As I was coming here this morning, I was led to chuckle at times as I remembered some of the speeches they made, some of the shenanigans, the geriatrics that happened in this place, and people like—geriatrics? Is that what I said? Yes, anyway; sorry, no offence meant. I just couldn't find the right word.

People like Gilles Pouliot—some of you will remember Gilles, a very colourful and wonderful member of this Legislature from up north. I remember the night in here when, I think it was Minister Palladini, suggested that we didn't need inspectors on our highways any more because everybody now has a cellphone. Very quickly Mr Pouliot was on his feet to suggest to the minister that

up where he comes from, on a clear day you can see the curvature of the earth, so the next time his phone didn't ring, that it was Mr Pouliot calling. Many of you will remember that, and I will never forget it. It was an off-the-cuff statement that I thought spoke yards about Mr Pouliot and his ability and the contribution he made here.

Of course there was Bud Wildman, my good friend who on one hand was a person who worked very hard and was very committed to his constituency and this place and on the other hand enjoyed himself as a member of the Legislature. As a matter of fact, I was hoping somebody from the group would give Mr Wildman a call because, I have to say to you, since he retired, he's been driving me crazy back in the Soo. He thinks he's still the member for Algoma and is out there doing constituency work, except that he doesn't have a staff any more. It's now my staff that have to do that work. So if you have some job for him or something you think he could do, please give him a call. I'll talk to you after and give you his phone number, if you'd like, OK? Bud just cannot extricate himself or disconnect himself from the work he did here. I think Bud is only symbolic of so many who served with the compassion and intensity of so many of you.

I can't sit down here this afternoon and not recognize the contribution Gary Malkowski made to this place as a member of our government from 1990 to 1995, and the effort he went through to make sure we were all aware of the challenges that disabled folks across Ontario run into every day in their effort to try and participate in the communities in which they belong. His effort here was gargantuan as he tried to participate as fully as he could in this place—the kinds of changes he was the initiator of so that those who would come after him who are challenged with a disability of one form or another might be able to participate. Some of you will notice, and maybe not note, that whenever the bells ring in this place, a light goes on that flashes on and off. That wasn't here before 1990. It was on Gary Malkowski's insistence that when the bells rang in this place, if a member happened to be deaf, as he was, he should also have the opportunity to respond as quickly as possible, and so those lights were put in. We thank Gary and we recognize his contribution.

It's only one of the many contributions that all previous members have made to this place, and we thank you. It was a difficult job while you were here. We understand some of the challenges some of you might be facing out there now as you try to meld back into the communities from which you came and we wish you well in the future.

1440

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Speaker, just a point concerning the hearings: I don't know whether as Speaker you can deal with this matter. Perhaps it has to be with the committee. It's a logistical thing, more than anything else, that was in St Catharines on Friday when the hearings were held, to do with the bill that has the tax credits in it for education

purposes. There didn't appear to be sufficient room for those who wanted to observe at that time, because a lot of people are interested in it. Is there anything we can do that ensure that that would be the case?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Thank you for bringing that to our attention. The proper place to do that is at the committee, as the member would know.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Last year seven died and 2,300 were made sick when the people of Walkerton drank tap water. The lab test results showing that the water was poisonous was only sent to the local water operator and was not sent to the local medical officer of health, who would have, had he received that notification, acted immediately to protect the people of Walkerton. As it was, he did not receive information until some three days later.

It turns out that three years ago, Madam Minister, that notice was sent to your Ministry from Richard Schabas, the then chief medical officer of health for Ontario, who expressed some very serious concerns in writing about the fact that there was "no legal requirement"—to quote—"in the Ministry of the Environment legislation reporting adverse drinking water test results to the local medical officer of health."

The chief medical officer of health for Ontario was putting your ministry on notice that, should the water be poisoned, they should receive that information. Why did you ignore that warning?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): I believe that is directed to the Minister of Health.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The correspondence the honourable member refers to took place some considerable time in the past, and I would have to review that in order to answer him fully and completely.

Mr McGuinty: Back to the Minister of the Environment: there is a clear, written record putting your Ministry on notice of the dangers of not making it a legislative requirement, not passing a law, in Ontario that said that the new private water testers should be given the legal responsibility to notify the local medical officer of health, should something go wrong on the ground, as it did in Walkerton.

My question to you, Madam Minister, is, why did your Ministry ignore that warning? They said it very, very clearly: they think it's very important that the local medical officer of health have that information made available so that he or she can act on that very important information and thereby save lives.

In the case of Walkerton, the medical officer of health did not get information for three days. During the course of three days every single person, children, parents and grandparents alike, in the community of Walkerton drank deadly water. Why, Madam Minister, did your Ministry ignore this warning?

Hon Mr Clement: As the honourable member is well aware, as indeed we all are, there is currently a comprehensive review of the events in Walkerton being undertaken by Justice O'Connor, and it would not be appropriate for either myself or any other member of the Legislature to prejudge or to draw conclusions in the absence of Justice O'Connor's conclusions, in the absence of the completion of the commission. So at this point we're looking forward to receiving his recommendations, looking forward to receiving his conclusions, as I believe the honourable member is and indeed all members of the Legislature.

Mr McGuinty: Let me tell you a bit about the sorry and sad tale of warnings that went unheeded. This notice was sent to the Ministry of Health. Jim Wilson sent a letter, as minister, to the Honourable Norm Sterling, Minister of Environment and Energy, saying that he had some concerns about this. The Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, who then became Minister of Health, responded to that. Then we had notice from the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors to the Honourable Tony Clement warning about the very same issue. Then we had the Honourable Dan Newman speak to the very same issue in correspondence as well. There were at least five ministers in the Mike Harris government who had it brought to their attention that there was a deadly gap in law, there was no legislative requirement being placed on the private water tester to put the local medical officer of health on notice in the event that the water was poisonous. The problem over there, Madam Minister, is that nobody then took responsibility for this issue. My question again is, with five ministers on that side who were aware of this deadly gap in time, why did you all ignore these warnings?

Hon Mr Clement: Indeed, these are the sorts of questions that had been raised by this same honourable member I believe a year ago in this House. So I thank him for reminding this House of his original allegations. I understand we have obviously a very comprehensive review going on by Justice O'Connor. If Mr Justice sees this as an important issue, I'm sure it'll get the examination that is required. I would like to end my remarks by indicating to this House, and through this House to the people of Ontario, that the very issue that was raised has been the subject of a regulation, so this issue has now been corrected.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the minister responsible for seniors' issues. Minister, I want to talk today about your government's plans to betray our seniors when they are most in

need, and that is when they are sick. Last week seniors in Ontario learned that they might face means tests when they need care in their homes. You were silent on this issue. Over the weekend, we learned that your government is also considering forcing seniors to pay for drugs. We haven't heard you speak to this issue yet. Now is your opportunity, as champion for Ontario's seniors, to express yourself. Will you now, without reservation, condemn your government's actions to impose these new means tests on seniors when it comes to their home care and their drugs?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Frankly, if he's relying on press reports to formulate his question, he has been badly misinformed. No decision has been made about the future of the Ontario drug benefit plan.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Jackson: I assume the members opposite would like an answer to the question.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Minister.

Hon Mr Jackson: What this government has said, and has said very clearly, is that the costs of health care in this province and all across Canada are becoming unmanageable for taxpayers, and part of the national discussion that's going on is about all aspects of health care. So it's clear that we are going to be discussing all aspects of health care. But no decision at this point has been made about the future of the Ontario drug benefit plan, a plan which I might add is one of the best plans in all of Canada. Ontario taxpayers are very proud of the fact that they are supporting this drug benefit plan without one single penny of federal government money.

1450

Mr McGuinty: It may be, Mr Minister, that no decision has been made. But what I want to know, on behalf of Ontario seniors—our parents and grandparents—is, what is your position on these matters? What are you taking to the cabinet table? We now have a proposal on the table that says the government is considering imposing new means tests for home care and drugs for seniors. You're the champion, duly anointed by Mike Harris, for seniors in Ontario. I'm asking you, on behalf of Ontario's seniors, on behalf of our parents and grandparents, what is your position on these new proposed means tests for home care and drugs for our seniors?

Hon Mr Jackson: Again, the member opposite is absolutely wrong. There is nothing on the table, as you propose there is. There is nothing on the table. What we have from the—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mr Jackson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to remind the member opposite that in the last election the sum total in your red book, your commitment to seniors in Ontario, was that you would form a committee and discuss long-term care. That was the level of your

commitment. I want to remind the member opposite what this government promised. It promised it would bring in 20,000 long-term-care beds, because the NDP and Liberal governments didn't build a single new long-term-care bed in this province for 10 years. That is a commitment, over \$1.2 billion. This government has increased home care by 72%—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Well, Ontario's seniors are in much bigger trouble than I originally thought. What they expected you to do today, Mr Minister, was to stand up and turn to your left, look at the Minister of Health and say, "No, not now, not ever. I'm the champion for seniors in Ontario. You can't do this." That's what they expected from you. At a minimum, that's what they expected you to say.

This government has as its overall inspiration to reduce corporate taxes so they're the lowest in North America. That's going to cost us \$2.2 billion. You are standing by while this Minister of Health is saying to Ontario's seniors, "Sorry, folks, you have to come second in line. Corporations come first. We want the lowest taxes in North America, and if that means you've got to pay money for your drugs, if that means you've got to pay money for your home care, then so be it." Do you know what? It's time for you now to stand up, do your job, earn your money and say no to this minister, you're going to stand up for seniors: no to a means test for drugs, no to a means test for home care.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Jackson: The honourable member and his entire caucus seem to forget that four years ago we had a federal budget which announced—you might find this interesting—a national pharmacare program. Do you remember the national pharmacare program?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We're wasting time.

Hon Mr Jackson: Seniors were never included in the Canada Health Act. Seniors were never considered by Paul Martin Sr in the Canada Health Act. There's no money from the federal government for nursing homes, no money for the drug program for seniors and no money for home care. What we've had from Paul Martin Jr is a couple of budgets where he promised he'd do it. But like every other Liberal promise in Ottawa, it was broken. The only government that's making seniors come second is your federal Liberal cousins in Ottawa. You should talk to them to pony up and pay for the health care services seniors need in our province.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health. In 1996 your government abandoned the minimum requirement of two and a quarter hours per day of nursing care for seniors in nursing homes. Today our seniors are lucky if they receive 14 minutes of nursing care from a registered nurse in a nursing home.

Recently a coalition of health care and seniors' organizations released a report based upon hearings they held across the province and they said your government's neglect of seniors amounts to nothing less than elder abuse. Our health critic, Frances Lankin, attended those hearings and heard horror stories while participating in the forums across the province. Now an independent journalist confirms the horrific situations, such as seniors left for hours lying in their own excrement and urine. Minister, will you immediately restore at least a minimum of two and a quarter hours of nursing care per patient so that our seniors can live in the dignity they deserve?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to put before this House some other facts that might be of relevance; for instance, the 16% increase in the per diem rate for long-term-care facilities that was pursued by this government in 2001-02 in comparison to 1996-97, after we got elected. Indeed it is our position that for the first time in many years this government is providing not only operating funding, but also capital funding of an increased nature to our long-term-care facilities. We are reducing the waits. We are reducing the feeling that this is only for a privileged few. We are trying to open up the opportunity for more citizens to have a place in an excellent senior citizens' home, a nursing home, a long-term-care facility, whatever terminology you wish to use. Yes, this area of care has been chronically underfunded in governments gone by and years gone by. We are seeking to fix this problem as quickly as we can.

Mr Hampton: Minister, it's your government that has presided over the mammoth reduction in nursing care per patient. That's the issue, the quality of care patients are receiving, and your government has presided over a deliberate cut in that service. That's why our seniors are curling up and dying. That's why they're not getting the care they need. It really boils down to this: you've got \$2.25 billion in bloated tax cuts for corporations. Why don't you have the money to ensure that seniors get the level of nursing care they deserve? Why do they have to continue to be deprived by your government?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member is engaging in some terminology that some would find reckless or rhetorical, certainly rhetorical. The honourable member should be aware that in fact we have increased funding for long-term-care facilities, both operating and capital. We believe it is an essential component for our health care system. We believe it is important for the future of our health care system. We have been funding it to a greater extent than previous governments, not only on the operating but on the capital as well.

We have had to move forward, quite frankly, from the hole that was dug by the previous NDP government that did not invest either in capital or in operating to the extent that was necessary. We have had to fix the mistakes that were made by previous governments. It is a process that has taken some time. It would have taken less time if the honourable members, when they were in government, would have done the right thing.

Mr Hampton: The coalition of seniors' organizations and people concerned with home care brought forward a number of recommendations to you. They recommended that you restore the minimum level of nursing care to two and a quarter hours a day per patient. They recommended that you do something about the acute nursing shortage. They recommended an independent commission to look at the kinds of services that seniors need not only in nursing homes but in terms of home care.

The question is, Minister, are you prepared to do any of those things, or are you happy with the situation as it now stands?

1500

Hon Mr Clement: We will continue to invest in our long-term-care facilities. We will continue to build brand new facilities that are up to excellent standards. I myself have been involved in the celebration of new long-term-care facilities that are on-line, both the commercial ones as well as the municipal ones as well as the charitable ones. They are all being built; they are all open or in the process of being constructed for citizenry in Ontario. I encourage the honourable member to visit some of the new facilities. He will see, without a doubt, the best facilities that are being built on the continent. They are absolutely stupendous in terms of the new services they offer as well as the conditions in which our seniors will find themselves.

So the answer is yes, we are investing. Yes, we're investing in capital. Yes, we're investing in operating. It has taken us a while to get out of the hole that was dug by the previous NDP government, but I can assure the member that we are making progress.

WALKERTON TRAGEDY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. We've said from the beginning that your wrong-headed cuts to the Ministry of the Environment and to environmental protection led to the tragedy of Walkerton. You have denied that, but evidence mounts that that's the case. In 1996, cabinet was warned that cuts to the Ministry of the Environment would increase the risk to human health, but you didn't listen. You tried to deny it.

Now we know that in 1997, the Ontario chief medical officer of health and the health minister both warned that privatizing the testing labs meant that the medical officer of health wouldn't be told immediately of adverse drinking water samples. They asked you to change the legislation to protect the integrity of our drinking water. Your government didn't do anything. In fact, you denied there was a problem.

Minister, in light of the seven deaths and the over 2,000 people rendered seriously ill at Walkerton, what do you say now? What's your excuse for ignoring the advice that was so clearly given to your government in 1996?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): As the leader of the third party knows full well, our government has made protection of the environment

a priority. Also, Justice O'Connor, of course, is conducting an inquiry. As the member full well knows, it would be inappropriate for us at this time to prejudice the outcome of that inquiry in Walkerton.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Supplementary, the member for Toronto-Danforth.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Minister, it has now been confirmed that you were warned time and time again, yet you took no steps as the then Minister of Health to have the legislation fixed. None of you over there took any steps after you were repeatedly warned. Now not one of you will take any responsibility for the tragedy that happened in Walkerton. As far as I'm concerned, Minister, you all have blood on your hands over there. People died in Walkerton—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. You will need to withdraw that.

Ms Churley: I withdraw, Speaker.

It is time that somebody over there, with all the evidence we have, takes some responsibility for what happened in Walkerton. I'm asking you today as the now Minister of the Environment, who had been warned by the previous Minister of the Environment, Norm Sterling, about the problems there, and by the previous Minister of Health, Mr Wilson, and you paid no attention and didn't fix it, will you today at least own up to that?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government has introduced Operation Clean Water, and we have taken steps in order to ensure that the residents of this province have the cleanest drinking water possible. In fact, we introduced the drinking water protection regulation, which, as the member of the third party knows full well, is among the toughest regulations of water systems anywhere in the world. We take our responsibility seriously to not only the citizens in Walkerton but citizens throughout the province of Ontario, and we have moved forward very aggressively in order to ensure that all guidelines became regulations, in order to ensure that we could protect the public health of people throughout Ontario.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This is for the Minister of Health. Minister, I have in my hand a copy of the report you released today, prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers on Ontario's community care access centres. You've had this in your hands for six months now. I was surprised about what I did not find in here. To quote just a couple of the sections, it says, "Many CCACs are challenged to meet growing demands for service with their current funding allocations." Under "Areas for Improvement" it says, "need for more resources." It's got a section on recommendations, and it says, "strengthen CCACs; support CCACs; invest in CCACs."

Given the fact that you had frozen funding for CCACs, I have perused this report and if I'm missing it, please tell me where it is, but my understanding is that this report speaks in support of additional funding and

support for CCACs. Why have you ignored your own report?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The honourable member has done a good job of cherry-picking certain aspects of the report. Let me elucidate a bit further for this House some of the other findings of the report, which incidentally were arrived at in co-operation with the CCACs because they are absolutely a critical component of our health care in Ontario: "lack of common understanding among CCACs and stakeholders on the mandate and performance...; variability in CCAC policies, scope of services and practice"; waiting lists with relation to the variability and some difference in terms of which policies they are applying and which policies they're not applying; "service maximums and homemaking criteria different among different CCACs."

The answer to the honourable member's question is, yes, I'm willing to say that perhaps the 72% increase in the budget may not be the final answer when it comes to CCAC funding in the future for the province of Ontario, but before we go there, how about making sure that the money the citizens of Ontario spend on home care for seniors and the disabled is spent in the best way possible?

Mr McGuinty: I'm just wondering why you're ignoring your own report, Minister. I'll draw your attention to something found on page 145 under the recommendation entitled "Investment." It says, "The following findings suggest that the current CCAC funding allocation requires enhancement." They talk about the problem with waiting lists. They talk about the problem with deficits. Half of the CCACs were then forecasting deficits. They talk about how difficult it is for service providers to recruit and retain front-line staff. They talk about an aging population. They talk about growing consumer demand. They make a pretty powerful and compelling and cogent argument for increased resources for additional funding for CCACs in Ontario so that they can carry out their important responsibilities.

So again, I ask you, why have you ignored your own report, which asks for an increase in resources, and instead frozen the budget?

Hon Mr Clement: The absolute answer is we're not; we're simply reading all of the report, which I encourage the honourable member to do at his leisure. All of the report indicates, due to its recommendations, that we have to clarify the mandate, the accountability relationships, the performance measures that need to be in place. We have to enhance the financial management to improve on the inconsistencies in the services. That's what the report says as well.

The honourable member is, I think, guilty of selective reading. Maybe that's the way he'd like to run his government in the future; I don't know. But I encourage the honourable member that if he aspires to higher office, he should read all of the report, A to Z, one to 50, all of the recommendations, before he announces to the world what his judgment is, because in this case his judgment is fatally flawed.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, as you're well aware, the Fraser Institute recently ranked the mining industry in Ontario number one in Canada and third in the world. The province made significant gains in terms of world ranking, moving to third in 2000-01. This report recognizes the Mike Harris government's commitment to encouraging a vibrant mining industry in Ontario.

1510

Minister, my constituents are elated to see that the Mike Harris government continues to work hard for the mining industry in Ontario to create an attractive mining investment destination. Can you tell us what initiatives your ministry has taken to promote investment in Ontario's mining industry?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'd like to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for his excellent question. In the last couple of years the Mike Harris government has implemented various policies to make Ontario an attractive place to invest in mining. We have reduced the Ontario mining tax rate from 20% to 10% over five years. We have increased tax incentives provided for investors in flow-through shares. We've also introduced a 10-year mining tax exemption for new remote mines in our province. We are continuing to actively promote Ontario's mineral industry internationally, through Market Ontario. We provided \$3 million last year for advanced technologies for mineral exploration.

This is just a short list of what the Mike Harris government has done to make Ontario an attractive place to invest.

Mr Miller: I would like to thank the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for his response. Minister, I can assure you that those who work and invest in the mining industry are grateful for your hard work in making Ontario an attractive place to invest. Can you outline for us some of the programs your ministry is undertaking to promote growth in the mining industry?

Hon Mr Newman: I want like to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for his supplementary question. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has recently funded various programs to support the mining industry. These programs include an allocation of \$19 million for airborne and regional surveys for Operation Treasure Hunt; a four-year, \$27-million mine rehabilitation program; a contribution of \$6.8 million to a mining R&D program at Laurentian University; a contribution of \$1.6 million from the heritage fund to set up a world-class mining innovation centre in Sudbury. We've adopted information technology, like ClaimsMap II, to improve client service to the mining industry, and we've introduced amendments to the Mining Act to improve mineral exploration, mine rehabilitation provisions and to reduce administrative burden to clients.

We recognize there is still more to do and we will not rest on our accomplishments. We will not rest until we

are ranked not only number one in Canada but number one in the world.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): To the Minister of Education: Minister, let me tell you something about public education under this government. I've had the opportunity now to sit through some hearings in St Catharines and I strongly recommend the experience to you; that is, actually going to the front lines and hearing from real people about their real concerns about your new private school voucher. One of the things we keep hearing about is your cuts to education when it comes specifically to new textbooks for the grade 11 class for next year. You have cut the funding in half. The Lambton-Kent board last year received half a million dollars to purchase new textbooks for the grade 10 classes; this year they're going to receive less than half of that, \$244,000, for new textbooks.

Madam Minister, the question I have for you on behalf of Ontario's working families and their children inside the publicly funded education system is, why is it that you can find \$500 million in education dollars for private schools but you don't have enough money to ensure that students in the public system have textbooks.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): The honourable member has asked this question before. We've put forward the facts of the case. He doesn't seem to wish to reflect on those facts. Spending on the public education system for this upcoming school year has increased yet again. Over \$360 million in new dollars has gone out to our school boards to help them deliver quality education for our students. Second, we continue to provide textbook funding in two ways: (1) it is part of the foundation grant, as it always has been, and (2) we continue to put in special top-up money for new textbooks to reflect the fact that the new curriculum does require additional resources.

Mr McGuinty: The facts here are beyond dispute, Madam Minister. You've found \$500 million in education dollars for private schools but you've cut the textbook funding for public schools in half.

Your MPP for the area, Marcel Beaubien, made this observation in the Sarnia Observer:

"How many books do you need?" asked Beaubien, who suggested the board is spending the money on other things.

"A \$6,400 grant the province provides for each student in the public school system is more than enough," he said.

"I'm telling you it is properly funded. How do I know that? Because Christian schools ... do it for less than \$4,000 a student. And the kids coming out of there aren't dummies."

Madam Minister, I'm just wondering now, is this your new ideal? Do you think we should be funding students in the public system, all students in the public system, understanding that the public system must accept all

students including those with special learning needs—you telling us that you should now be funding public schools at the level of \$4,000? Is that what you're telling us?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, if the honourable member would like to put facts on the table, he should try using some. It might be helpful in the debate today.

Secondly, some school boards have chosen—as a matter of fact, some have reported publicly to their communities that they have chosen—to use money directed for textbooks for other classroom priorities. That is a decision those trustees have chosen to make.

Thirdly, we have provided resources as part of the regular foundation grants for curriculum learning materials and as part of new top-up money we have given every year for textbooks and learning materials.

But the other thing that is also important for the honourable member to recognize is that some of the materials that are currently in classrooms can be used for some of the new curriculum. They haven't rewritten Hamlet since we introduced the curriculum. So there are resources for those school boards to deliver quality education.

ACADEMIC TESTING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, if I may: unlike the Liberal leader, I know our education minister meets regularly with the front-line people involved in education, unless it's a photo-op for him.

Minister, as you know, back in January approximately 63,000 first-semester grade 9 students wrote the province-wide math test. The rest of Ontario's grade 9 students who are enrolled in the second-semester or full-year math classes are now completing those tests. These students and their parents are anxious to see the results of their efforts for a variety of reasons. For instance, they want to see how well they have learned the new material. A concern has been expressed to me that the students have not yet received the full results. Will you please tell me when the students will learn the results of those exams?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Thank you to my honourable colleague for mentioning the work I do in meeting with our front-line staff. Even in my own riding, when the Liberal opposition was out there playing politics, running around neighbourhoods, I was with teachers and students and parents, helping children to spell better with the wonderful Durham spelling bee. So we were out there helping kids to learn better while his folks were out there playing politics.

In the testing we do, the Education Quality and Accountability Office has been following the normal process. I would like to assure the honourable member that the exams that students have taken are being marked this summer according to the usual timelines, and those results will be available for parents and for schools this fall. It's an important source of information for students, for teachers and for parents to help children learn better.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, Minister, for that very informative and, I might say, timely response. Parents and students look forward to seeing these fairly marked this fall.

Minister, another step you took about a week ago was to announce a new reading program to help students prepare for the grade 3 test. Could you elaborate on what sort of support you're providing for these grade 3 students to do the test?

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's really important to recognize that the goal of our education plan is to improve student achievement. We've started with the test results. The testing helps identify where there are gaps so children can learn better. The testing has certainly confirmed what we knew, that our students were not getting what they needed in order to succeed, so we've got the new curriculum. We have the testing, and there's validity to that testing. We are now requiring school boards and schools to start setting improvement targets. We've done this with the grade 3 testing for this upcoming school year.

Second, we continue to invest targeted funds for this. For example, in this upcoming school year, there is going to be almost \$100 million specifically targeted for remediation, for helping students from kindergarten to grade 3, and for helping students in the higher grades to develop better literacy skills.

1520

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, I wrote to you in February about the circumstances confronting the steel industry in this province, telling you how difficult it was. You wrote back saying that you had talked to the federal government.

We know that in my community of Sault Ste Marie it is playing itself out very seriously and concretely. I am here today not to ask you for help but to suggest some things you could do that would bring some relief to my community as it struggles with this very serious and immediate challenge.

You could talk to your government ask them to give the hospitals the green light to go ahead and build the new facility they have on the books. You could talk to your government and ask them to work with the municipality to give them the permission they need to move on the building of the new sewage treatment plant and holding tanks. You could also come to the community and speak to the leaders of my community around the possibility of a trade adjustment fund.

Will you do some of those things to help my community?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): Both the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines have been in close contact with the company. We recognize the community's concerns. Both Minister Newman and I have spoken

at length with the president, Sandy Adam, from Algoma. Officials from both ministries have met with officials of the company. We are certainly trying to assist them in any way we can as well as the community.

Both ministers hope to be in the position of being able to visit the community in the near future to discuss the proposals you've mentioned here today and concerns surrounding Algoma and be of as much assistance as we possibly can in this situation.

Mr Martin: I thank you for that, Minister, but this challenge is immediate and serious. There are small businesses and industries in my community, there are working people and families who are in crises, because of the effect of the restructuring at Algoma Steel on the broader community. I am asking you, will you work with your government to encourage them to do some things that could have some immediate effect? Earlier today you talked about a consultation you're going to take around the province to look at new sectors that are emerging. I am telling you there are some sectors already existing that have served this province well that need protection. You need to be protecting jobs as well as developing new ones.

Will you come to Sault Ste Marie and talk to my community about the hospital, the sewage treatment plant and the holding tanks? Flow that money. Will you set up, with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, because he has \$157 million still left in the northern heritage fund—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Thank you. The question has been asked. Minister.

Hon Mr Runciman: This government certainly is concerned. Our actions over the past number of years to try and assist in the diversification of the economy of Sault Ste Marie are very tangible evidence of our interest and concern. In the past few weeks I've also met with federal Minister Pettigrew. I have spoken with the Minister of Industry, Mr Tobin, with respect to the federal government's lack of actions in terms of the number of trade disputes and flooding the market with cheap imports.

Clearly, we are concerned. We are taking action. We are trying to assist the community in every way possible. If the member can be a little bit patient, he will see some further tangible evidence of that concern this week.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, your government has tried to make the emergency room crisis go away by blaming it on the flu, hiding the number of hours that hospitals are on critical care bypass and saying repeatedly that you have fixed the problem once and for all. But the problem has not gone away.

Emergency room backlogs are worse now than they have ever been in the history of this province. The number of hours that emergency rooms in the Toronto area are on critical bypass is almost 100 times greater today

than it was in 1996 when your cuts started. The problem has become 100 times worse since you became the government.

On Friday you told hospital administrators to come up with ideas to fix the problem in two weeks. They have been trying for five years to tell your government what is needed. They need more beds, they need more nurses, and they need more money.

Minister, are you finally ready to hear what they've been trying to tell you for five years?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I can assure the honourable member that the hospitals in question have indicated quite a few things that they are working on, that we can work on together, that can be of benefit with respect to the issues you have raised so that this is a meaningful consultation. To characterize it as "Come up with all of the solutions and implement them in two weeks" is not the way I characterized it. I don't know where that characterization came from.

Secondly, the honourable member, in a rather dismissive way, mentioned our flu vaccine program, of which we're quite proud. It was one of the most successful programs in North America and it has, I think, had a meaningful impact in saving lives. So I would encourage the honourable member not to be so dismissive.

Finally, to look at one hospital in particular, the University Health Network, right in the downtown of Toronto, their capacity has increased by 33% as a result of the government of Ontario's investments in emergency rooms, which we will continue to do.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, listen to what Murray MacKenzie, the chief administrative officer of North York General, is saying. He says the system is extremely fragile, that long waits in emergency rooms will be even longer this summer.

Tom Closson, president of University Health Network, says the problem is getting worse, that they have never before seen people treated on stretchers in emergency room hallways while ambulances wait hours in hospital driveways to be able to deliver their critically ill patients.

Your parliamentary assistant says that you're going to try and solve the problem by hiring more private ambulances. Do you still not understand the problem? It doesn't matter how many ambulances you put out there when our hospitals are full. Seriously ill patients need to be admitted to hospital, and there is no room for them. It's as basic as that. That's why they're being treated in hallways; that's why they're waiting in driveways.

Minister, will you do what Dalton McGuinty has been calling for for a year and a half: stop closing emergency rooms and reopen at least 1,600 of the 2,200 beds you closed in Toronto alone?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member cites North York. Of course, North York General in September, 2000, opened a new \$3.1-million ER department as a result of this government's decision, so I think the citizens of North York have something very positive to say.

The honourable member, who is no longer with us, indicated, "What about St Michael's?" Well, in October of last year we announced \$4.5 million of capital funding to expand St Michael's ER capacity. Certainly the facts speak louder than the rhetoric.

The honourable member mentions the Leader of the Opposition and his plans. I can only quote the honourable member while he was aspiring for higher office when he said, "One of the things that we've got to do is this: to instill our hospital administrators with a sense of accountability to the system and not just to their own institution." I agree with that Dalton McGuinty; I don't agree with this Dalton McGuinty.

HIGHWAY 410

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

About a year and a half ago the ministry held a meeting with my counties of Bruce and Grey and the city of Owen Sound. They had all these great drawings there, lots of nice pictures and everything about the extension north of the 410 up to 10. As I say, that was about a year and a half ago. They promised it would start going very soon, and we had about a five-year plan. Now, I hope we're not down to more of this five years; I hope we're only down to four and it's going to be done.

What happened there? There were survey stakes put up about a year and a half ago, and I've been coming back here now for a year and a half, and nothing's happened. Mr Minister, I'd like to know what's happening out there. Are we going to get this extension up to 410?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): I thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his question. I have to state that the man is relentless in his advocacy for his constituents.

1530

On the issue of the extension of Highway 410, we've already undergone the environmental assessment process. We're now dealing with a cost-sharing partnership which is agreed upon with the region of Peel, and we've undertaken the extensive design work. The difficulty we now have and the reason it has slowed down somewhat is that we're now in the property acquisition phase. It has been a little bit slower than expected, but the negotiations are going well and we expect to resolve it soon.

Mr Murdoch: It's good to hear that you're still working on that, because we were getting concerned in Bruce and Grey and Owen Sound that maybe something got stalled and our money went somewhere else, and we didn't want that to happen.

OK, that's great. That will get Highway 410 to Highway 10. Then we still have a problem: we've got to get all the way up to Owen Sound on Highway 10. If you go from where Highway 410 meets Highway 10, there's quite a bottleneck there, especially right up through Orangeville and Caledon. I don't know whether you've ever gone through there, but I think probably some entre-

preneur could set up a hotdog stand at Caledon and make a lot of money, because it takes you about two hours to get through that intersection at night.

Mr Minister, what about the work from there on up? As I say, we had these nice drawings and they looked nice on paper, but that's as far as it has gone. When will we get started on Highway 10 from Highway 410 to Orangeville?

Hon Mr Clark: I thank the member for the question. The member is very well aware of the process in terms of how we actually put the highways in and get the shovels in the ground. We go through a needs assessment, we go through an environmental assessment. Then there's the design phase. That's where we're at with a number of these highways and in terms of Highway 10. Then, at that point in time, we also deal with property acquisition.

The widening of Highway 10: the plans are underway right now for that particular portion of it. I've actually met with the member, and he understands that. I'd be more than happy to meet with his mayor and the people from that community. It's important for everyone to understand that we have actually committed, over five years, \$5.3 billion for highways. When it comes to the north, since 1995 we've committed \$1.1 billion.

The Liberals keep heckling on the amount of money we've spent on highways, but in their best year they spent \$342 million.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is to the Minister of Health and no home care. Minister, I have a question for you about Quinte Healthcare, an organization—

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Chair has clearly indicated that you have to use the proper ministerial name when posing a question. That member is clearly out of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): I'm sorry, I didn't hear that, but could he withdraw?

Mr Parsons: It must have been a Freudian slip, Speaker. I withdraw that. This is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, your ministry has chronically underfunded Quinte Healthcare Corp, in spite of promises made to fund it. We have seen this board of Quinte Healthcare unprepared to make the cuts to services that would have brought this so-called reward or efficiencies money. I will give you an example of the crisis that you have created in my area.

You have introduced the triage system into the hospital which requires a patient to be assessed within 15 minutes. I applaud you for that. I applaud you for taking Dalton McGuinty's idea and putting it in place in our hospitals. You have funded not one penny of it. That has required the hospital to take nearly \$1 million out of the nursing operation and use it for triage. We now have the insanity that a patient can get assessed as to their problem within 15 minutes—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, on this side of the House we did act on Premier Harris's campaign commitment in terms of emergency room triage, as well as a minimum of 60 hours for those mothers who have given birth.

When it comes to the care at Quinte Healthcare, the honourable member mentioned our funding based on performance. It was based on a number of criteria, one of which was performance; another was on the basis of growth and another was that if we had just finished bailing you out the week before, we weren't going to bail you out a second time and double bail you out. It was a question of ensuring that the right money went to the right health centres.

I can tell the honourable member that we are currently in very meaningful discussions with Quinte Healthcare with respect to its operating budget. We will ensure that the honourable member's position is taken into account.

Mr Parsons: Minister, you didn't bail out; you provided money that should have been provided initially.

Within Quinte Healthcare Corp they have cancer care treatment. Surely nothing could be a higher priority than that. It served 4,900 patients last year, a 30% increase. Your ministry says this is not a priority program and you will provide no specific funding.

Minister, surely you need to have a plan that recognizes cancer treatment is a priority. Will you commit to properly fund the Quinte Healthcare oncology clinic?

Hon Mr Clement: Again, we are presently reviewing all the operating plans for all the hospitals, including the one in the honourable member's constituency, and we'll endeavour to do so in a fair and equitable manner. I can tell the honourable member that we also have regional cancer centres that we have been funding and building and creating at an increasing rate throughout the province of Ontario. I myself joined the Windsor members at the opening of the Windsor regional cancer centre. So these are not just my words; they are actually happening.

I can assure the honourable member's constituents that effective cancer care is a top priority of this government. That's why the budget for Cancer Care Ontario has increased by 42% and that's why we have been funding, at a record amount, hospital funding, including cancer care funding that occurs within hospitals.

TRAVEL INDUSTRY COMPENSATION FUND

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. Over the weekend I read an article about a tour operator declaring bankruptcy. I realize there are protections available to people who book tours through Ontario travel agents and later have the company they were dealing with fall into financial straits. Minister, could you please inform this House what protection is available to Ontario consumers who have booked tours and later had the company unable to provide the service?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): Consumers in Ontario—the citizens of Ontario—are very lucky in having travel industry legislation which protects them if something should go wrong with their holiday plans. In 1997 we set up TICO, the Travel Industry Council of Ontario. TICO has taken the insurance fund, which was then about \$2 million, up to about \$15 million at the present time, to protect future travellers who would go to other parts of Ontario, other parts of Canada and other parts of the world. Last year they were fortunate; there were very few failures. What happens in this particular system is it encourages retailers and the travel industry to be responsible. They only spent \$82,000 last year.

Mr Gill: I realize that in some rare instances Ontario tourists have had to deal with the fact that a tour they had paid for was not being provided. Acting in good faith and signing an agreement, these consumers are paying for a product that isn't being provided.

Minister, could you tell us what TICO has in place to help Ontario consumers deal with these rare occurrences?

Hon Mr Sterling: I think we should make it clear that anybody who phones a travel agent who is registered here in Ontario gets the protection. In fact, I have heard anecdotally of people calling in from states like New York, Michigan or Ohio and booking their trips here in Ontario to ensure that they had this travel insurance.

Payments are given to any single traveller up to an amount of \$3,500, and the insurance fund will pay up to \$5 million for any one event that should occur in terms of getting people back from a far destination, in terms of their accommodation and those kinds of things. The compensation fund, as I mentioned earlier, has grown significantly. Therefore it requires that the partners pay less and less into this compensation. It has been a great—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Thank you. New question.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to return to the issue of emergency rooms. Minister, in the members' gallery here there are a number of men and women from Toronto's emergency medical services. I want to ask you to come across the floor after question period and speak to them. I want you to hear at first hand what it's like sitting for hours in the driveways of emergency rooms waiting to take your patient in, what it's like to be transporting persons from one side of University Avenue to the other and having that patient die of a heart attack. I want you to tell them why you won't listen when all the experts are telling you that we need to fund more home care to keep seniors out of the hospital beds so that those beds are freed up for the patients they carry to the emergency rooms.

Minister, will you at the end of question period come across and speak with these men and women, the experts in the field, and hear what they have to say?

1540

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I regret to inform the member that I have a very important meeting with Canadian Blood Services, which I am hesitant to cancel, but I would undertake to meet with the individuals at a later time.

I can tell the honourable member that indeed we have been funding home care to a much more accelerated extent than the previous government. We have been funding long-term-care facility creation so we can move patients out of the acute care wings of hospitals into more appropriate long-term-care facilities. We have increased funding for our hospitals to \$8.5 billion, the largest amount of funding in the history of Ontario. So we are doing the things she mentions. It's also incumbent upon all of those institutions to ensure that the money goes toward patient care, that it goes forward accountably, and we have to work with them in that regard as well. If the honourable member has any suggestions in that regard, I would certainly take them under advisement.

Ms Lankin: What I would suggest is that the cuts that are being implemented in Toronto to home care as we speak, Minister, be halted immediately; that you give a direction to the CCACs to stop the cuts in hours and stop the elimination of hours, because those elderly citizens are going to end up in the backs of the ambulances that these dedicated men and women use to transport them and treat them on transport to our emergency rooms. When they arrive in the emergency rooms, they're going to be left in the driveways and then in the hallways, without access to the treatment they need.

If you immediately stop the cuts in services, I can guarantee you that you will not worsen the problem, you will not create more of a backlog, which those cuts will in fact do, Minister. All through this, you have debated and said that you've put more money in. I'm telling you that the cuts that are happening today are going to make a worsening of the backlog. Will you stop those cuts?

Hon Mr Clement: It comes as no surprise to the member that I would disagree with her characterization. In fact, the cuts she mentions are fictitious. If you look at 1994-95 fiscal year, we funded \$111 million to Toronto for home care. This year it's \$238 million. That hardly qualifies as a cut. Included in our increased expenditures was \$550 million to enhance community health services, including an extra \$64 million this year. That's a \$64-million increase this year. So the honourable member is barking up the wrong tree. We would certainly continue to demand accountability and excellent management practices for home care, but our commitment cannot be doubted.

PETITIONS

HOME CARE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): These petitions are a part of the petition campaign which has been launched by

Bob Fera, the chair of our community care access centre and immediate past chair of the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres. This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the need for home care services is rapidly growing in Ontario due to the aging of the population and hospital restructuring; and

"Whereas the prices paid by community care access centres to purchase home care services for their clients are rising due to factors beyond the control of community care access centres; and

"Whereas the funding provided by the Ontario government through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is inadequate to meet the growing need for home care services; and

"Whereas the funding shortfall, coupled with the implications of Bill 46, the Public Sector Accountability Act, currently before the Legislature are forcing CCACs to make deep cuts in home care services without any policy direction from the provincial government;

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

"(1) That the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to take control of policy-setting for home care services through rational, population-based health care planning rather than simply by underfunding the system; and

"(2) That the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to provide sufficient funding to CCACs to support the home care services that are the mandate of CCACs in the volumes needed to meet their communities' rapidly growing needs; and

(3) That the Legislative Assembly make it necessary for the provincial government to notify the agencies it funds of the amount of funding they will be given by the government in a fiscal year at least three (3) months before the commencement of this fiscal year."

Of course I affix my signature to this petition because I care about the sick, the frail and the elderly.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Manitoulin-Sudbury Community Care Access Centre delivers vital home care services to local seniors, the disabled and those discharged from hospital so they can remain in their own homes;" and

"Whereas the Manitoulin-Sudbury Community Care Access Centre needs an additional \$1.8 million from the Ministry of Health this fiscal year just to deliver its current level of health care services; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has refused to fund this necessary increase and has further failed to provide the CCAC with equity funding last year and this year, despite a 1998 promise by the former Minister of Long-Term Care, Cam Jackson, to do so; and

"Whereas this deliberate underfunding by the government of the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC has forced the CCAC board to adopt a deficit-reduction plan which severely reduces the home care services it provides; and

"Whereas this reduction has a drastic impact on clients who cannot afford to pay for these services and will be forced to go without necessary care;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Conservative government immediately fund the additional \$1.8 million requested by the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC this year, and further, provide the equity funding which was promised"—by this government—"in 1998."

Of course I agree with the petitioners. They are from my riding. I've affixed my signature to this.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition here 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 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."

Thank you very much for providing me with the opportunity to present his petition today.

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

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

"Whereas the government's plan is to give parents a \$3,500 enticement 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 as follows:

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

I sign my name to this petition.

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

"We the undersigned students, teachers and parents are in opposition to the Ontario Progressive Conservative's proposed Bill 45, which would see public tax dollars used to fund private schools through a system of tax credits. This bill promotes a two-tier education system with one set of schools for the wealthy and one set of schools for the less privileged; undermines the concept of a public education system equally accessible to all, regardless of social class, religion or race; encourages segregation and isolation of religious groups, therefore undermining the multicultural aspect of Ontario's education system; paves the way for future privatization of public services,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, oppose the passage of Bill 45."

It's signed by James Sandham, who collected these signatures, a bright young Crossley Secondary School student from Fonthill, and 351 others.

1550

PROTECTION OF MINORS

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

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

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

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"Whereas the government plans to give parents a \$3,500 enticement 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.”

In support, I add my signature and deliver the petition to Meera to take to the desk.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Petitions?

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): 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.”

I’m pleased to submit this on behalf of Stan Baker, who is actually the principal of one of the independent schools in Oshawa, and other constituents of mine in the riding of Durham.

The Deputy Speaker: Petitions?

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

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

“Whereas the government plans to give parents a \$3,500 enticement 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 take 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.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I’m getting thousands of names on a petition against tax credits for private schools. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the government plans to give parents a \$3,500 enticement 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.”

I will gladly affix my signature to this petition.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a petition signed by hundreds of individuals from Dave Levac’s riding of Brantford. I’m sure he’s going to be very interested in this.

“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.”

As I say, this is signed by hundreds of individuals from the riding of Brant, and I too affix my signature.

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 Blenheim, Morpeth and Chatham, and I have affixed my signature to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AMBULANCE SERVICES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001

SUR LA NÉGOCIATION COLLECTIVE DANS LES SERVICES D'AMBULANCE

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 7, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 58, An Act to ensure the provision of essential ambulance services in the event of a strike or lock-out of ambulance workers / *Projet de loi 58, Loi visant à assurer la fourniture des services d'ambulance essentiels dans l'éventualité d'une grève ou d'un lock-out de préposés aux services d'ambulance.*

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I guess I could say I'm pleased to have an opportunity to address this bill today. I'm pleased that the Minister of Labour is here in the Legislature to listen to my remarks, although he has by now heard the remarks from the member from Niagara, our critic in the area, and I think he has put forth some very good arguments as to why we at least need substantive public hearings on this bill. We see it very

much, as do many others in this province, as an unnecessary bill. It's a series of attacks, and this is yet again another attack by this government on the rights of workers in this province to engage in free collective bargaining. It removes the right to strike by the backdoor. That is what the government is doing here.

1600

The NDP sees no reason for doing it. It is an absolute insult to the paramedics, the ambulance workers, who have demonstrated time and time again—and I know the minister knows this—that they are committed professionals who will not and never have put people's lives in jeopardy in this province under any circumstances. Whether they've been in labour disputes or whatever else has been going on, there is absolutely no demonstrated proof in the history of Ontario since these workers have come into being that they have allowed a person to die or have been unable or unwilling to go and pick up somebody who's ill and take them to a hospital. There is absolutely no evidence of it. That is what is so alarming and so puzzling about why this bill is before us. This is a group of professional people who have never ever demonstrated at any time the need for such a bill to be brought forward.

Very recently, CUPE had a convention. I know government members expressed outrage about some of the so-called militant language coming out of that particular convention. I say that this government continues to provoke unions and workers in this province time and time again. This is an example again of the government coming forward with a bill that is unnecessary.

The minister introduced this bill on May 17, 2001. We're not talking about a very long time ago. The bill forces the bargaining units of ambulance workers, paramedics, to negotiate an essential services agreement with their employer before they can legally strike, and “if” sounds OK. If the parties fail to reach an agreement, they can apply to the OLRB to mediate or to impose an agreement. Then if an essential services agreement leaves a bargaining unit with too few non-essential workers to mount an effective strike, the union may ask the board to deem that they are all essential and refer the contract dispute to binding arbitration. This bill will effectively remove the right to strike for many workers.

The minister has said they'll have the right to arbitration. What I want to point out yet again to the minister is what a slap in the face it is to these workers, the way this bill is framed in terms of the workers' rights to fair and just arbitration, because what happens is that to get arbitration Bill 58 requires that ambulance workers go on strike first, but they can't go on strike unless they have bargained an essential services agreement, and when they do go on strike, if they want arbitration, they have to apply to the labour board for it. There's still no guarantee they will get interest arbitration. Then if the board thinks the strike has dragged on long enough, it then has several options. It can order the parties to continue negotiating a contract, confer with a mediator, order all matters to arbitration or whatever it thinks is appropriate.

This bill establishes new, heavy-handed rules for arbitration. It takes the fairness out of arbitration that has been a part of the history of this province for a very long time. These rules are only for ambulance workers, for paramedics. Other emergency service workers are not subject to them. Then if the parties can't agree on an arbitrator within seven days, the Minister of Labour will appoint one. There was a time under the Arbitration Act when all parties had the right to agree to who that arbitrator was, but in this case the Minister of Labour will appoint one. It's very possible, I suppose, that the Minister of Labour could appoint a fair arbitrator, but it takes away a right that other workers still have.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): When?

Ms Churley: The minister should listen because he's asking when. I've read his bill; it's right here. That's what it does. The minister is not required to appoint a trained arbitrator, or even someone who is remotely acceptable to both parties. It could even be an employer representative. Minister, why in the world would you do something like that? The minister's decision in appointing an arbitrator cannot be challenged in court. The minister's word is law on this. That is because the courts recently blocked the government when it tried to appoint retired judges to hear arbitration for hospital workers. So they've taken care of that one.

Now, all arbitrators in Ontario are required to consider certain criteria when making an award, for example, ability of the employer to pay. However—and listen to this, Mr Speaker—under Bill 58, arbitrators will also have to consider criteria not found in any other law. If the case involves a public sector employer, the arbitrator will have to compare its labour costs with those of private operators. If the case concerns a private operator, the arbitrator will have to compare its labour costs with those of other private operators.

Now, you know what that does, and I'm sure the minister knows what does. The effect of this will steer employees to privatization and the lowest possible wages. There is a real danger here. I'd like to hear the minister say that he wants to have hearings and he wants to have amendments. If he insists on going forward with this legislation—of course, the NDP position is to scrap it. It's not necessary, it is not needed. But if he insists on going forward with this bill, we want proper hearings so that the people who are most affected have an opportunity to tell the minister and a legislative committee what their concerns are, because this is one of their major concerns and they need to be heard on it.

The bill applies to municipally based services, as well as services operated by private services on contract to upper-tier municipalities. It could apply to air ambulance services if those are privatized, and dispatch services if those are downloaded.

The bill maintains the patchwork of labour relations rules that cover ambulance and dispatch workers. Ambulance and dispatch workers in hospital-based services are not affected, because they are subject to the hospital labour disputes arbitration. So you have two different sets

of rules for people doing the same job. Several OPSEU services have agreed that contract disputes will go to voluntary interest arbitration under the Labour Relations Act, so they are not subject to the unfair Bill 58 rules either. Air ambulance, paramedics and dispatch are under the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act. So with the different sets of rules, there will be different standards of pay and working conditions for different paramedics doing the very same essential work, depending on their bargaining rules.

Minister, you tell me how that can possibly be fair, when you have a whole bunch of different rules set out for people doing the same work because they're under different unions?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It's always been like that.

Ms Churley: The minister is responding. He will get his two minutes. He's saying, "It's always been like that." This is an opportunity. What the minister is doing here is making things fundamentally more unfair. I would say again to the minister that this bill should be withdrawn. It is absolutely not necessary. Now, if the minister refuses to withdraw the bill, at the very least we need amendments, and I hope the minister will agree to that, to give the right to fair arbitration.

There have been amendments set forward that I believe are important. I don't know if the minister has any idea about some amendments that we'd like to put forward. These have been put forward, I believe, by OPSEU.

Number one, guarantee access to fair interest arbitration. The process should work to ensure a good contract as quickly as possible. When a union applies to the board for a declaration that there is no meaningful right to strike, the board should only have to decide if that is true. If it is, then the board should order arbitration. There should be no requirement for the board to determine if the strike has lasted long enough, nor should the board have the option of ordering the parties back to negotiations or mediation. The parties would have exhausted those options during bargaining and conciliation. That makes sense to me, Mr Speaker. I hope it does to you, and I hope it does to the government members who are pushing this bill forward as quickly as possible.

1610

Another recommended amendment is fair powers of appointment. The legislated power to appoint an arbitrator for ambulance workers should be the same as for fire or police workers. Where an appointment is needed, the minister should be required to appoint a trained or experienced arbitrator. The nature of the arbitration process requires that arbitrators be impartial and independent, and the government should never, ever interfere with that. Not ever. This is something that is absolutely essential. I say again that if this bill is pushed forward, this amendment is absolutely critical.

Another suggested amendment is to require arbitrators to use the same criteria as for fire, police and health care workers. Several years ago, the government changed the criteria arbitrators have to consider when making an

award. These require arbitrators to consider factors such as the employer's ability to pay, the extent to which services may have to be reduced if taxation and funding levels are not increased, the economic situation of Ontario, the municipality in which the bargaining unit resides and others. There is absolutely no need for more criteria that apply only to ambulance workers.

I still cannot understand why the government has chosen to set forward this bill when it is so absolutely unnecessary. It doesn't make sense, and I'm not quite sure why the minister is doing it except that it seems to be another outright attack on organized labour in this province.

The ambulance workers and the paramedics have not been the ones who have been responsible for the deaths that have happened in this province recently, the deaths we've all talked about and heard about, the shocking death of a man who died of a heart attack going from hospital to hospital because of this government's policies and the lack of funding and their lack of a plan to fix the emergency services, their lack of a plan to deal with the long-term-care crisis we have right now. Indeed, what is really going on here and what the government needs to fix are those crises. I do not understand why we're standing here debating this unnecessary bill instead of debating what we should be debating, I believe as an emergency measure, and that is the crises in our hospitals and our ambulance services due to the fact that the government's policies and cuts to the CCACs are actually creating a problem in our hospitals where we do not have enough people in the hospitals to attend to real emergencies.

That, indeed, is what happened to the gentleman who unfortunately and tragically died in an ambulance. The workers, the paramedics, were taking care of that man. They were the people doing their job, trying desperately to get this very ill man admitted to a hospital, and right here, a few blocks away, he was being shuttled back and forth. That is the real issue here. That's what we should be dealing with here.

What we have while this is going on is a Minister of Health who just announced—just told all the CCACs across Ontario—that they're going to stop funding their deficits. Let me speak about that for a moment, because it is so relevant to the bill before us today. That is what we should be talking about. That is the real crisis we have in Ontario. What we should not be doing is standing here today yet again attacking the professionals who work so hard, who do their job and do it well and, in fact, are the ones who in many cases are stuck in those ambulances when they can't find a hospital to bring a patient to and are the ones in the ambulance who are keeping these people alive while they find a hospital.

That is the reality of what our ambulance workers and paramedics are doing today as we speak. So what does the government do? The government announces it's going to stop funding CCACs. That means, for instance, in my riding of East York—it's Toronto-Danforth, and part of that riding has East York in it and we have a

CCAC. What's happened over the past several years is that they've been responding to community needs. Many people are frail and elderly and need housekeeping services.

Studies have shown that when people are kept out of hospital—a very recent study from British Columbia has shown, and it's evident now, there's no argument, there's no debate about this any more—if services are provided to people with disabilities and to frail, elderly people in their homes, just a few hours in some cases, they are actually able to stay at home longer. What that means is a couple of things. It means they have the dignity of staying in their own home and the ability to be in their own community and to live independent lives, which makes them live longer and gives them the ability to have healthier lives. That's what it does.

But beyond that, it frees up beds in hospitals. That is what we should be talking about here today instead of this bill. Why are we debating a bill that we don't need? Why are we debating this bill and pushing it through when we have a crisis in our health care system and a crisis right now in the ability for those caring people out there to provide the housekeeping and home care services that keep people in their own homes and keep them healthier longer and keep them out of the hospital?

So what we have here today, I say again, and I can't say it more strongly: there's no other reason why this bill is before us today except for this government to keep on doing what it's been doing since it came to office six years ago, and that is an unrelenting attack on workers of this province.

I'm going to read a letter—I believe all MPPs got this particular letter. It's about this bill. It reads:

“Dear MPP:

“I am contacting you on behalf of the Ontario Paramedic Association. Bill 58, Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act 2001, as it stands now, is of great concern to the paramedics of Ontario. As professionals and patient advocates, we see the need for the government's move to make paramedics an ‘essential service.’ It will ensure that the public's safety is always protected. However, the bill as it is currently written falls far short of providing the paramedics of this province with a fair and equitable system of binding arbitration to adequately compensate for taking away our right to strike.

“We would like to request that Bill 58 be sent to a committee and public hearings, to afford our profession the opportunity, which we have not yet had, for some consultation on the issue. We have suggestions for amendments to the bill, which would basically include the recognition of our profession with an arbitration system similar to other ‘essential services’ in this province such as police, firefighters, nurses and other health care workers.

“Presently, Bill 58 will clearly put Ontario paramedics at an extreme and unfair disadvantage in the collective bargaining process. We ask, out of respect for our profession and the ‘essential services’ that we provide, that you take the time to consult with us, listen to our

specific amendments, and provide a more equitable and balanced bill for paramedics.”

This bill, in my opinion, shouldn't even be before us. But at the very least I would ask the minister to confirm that he will have public hearings and consult with the people this bill will affect.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Comments and questions?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): It's a wonderful opportunity that I have right now to respond to the member from across the way. I was one of the co-chairs on the land ambulance implementation steering task force, which dealt with a number of issues, one of which was the funding formula, which we ironed out over a four-week period, that the municipalities and the province agreed to on a 50-50 cost-sharing basis for a number of fees and services that were not originally covered.

1620

Next we had to deal with this very issue of essential service agreements. The LAISC committee, overwhelmingly from the municipalities, was concerned that there was no essential service agreement. They were concerned they didn't have the same position that was there previously when the province was involved in ambulance, before the transfer. So they asked us—more importantly, I would argue, they were pleading with us—to provide for essential service agreements. They were consistently asking the Minister of Labour and myself at the time. That's why this bill is here.

I hear the hyperbole and I hear the concerns that come from the member across the way, but she doesn't point to the facts in terms of actually where everything is now with land ambulance. Her entire caucus stated that this was a drive to privatize ambulances; the reality is that the majority of ambulances were privatized beforehand. Hamilton, for example, was private ambulance; now it's under the city. Right across the province we've gone from private ambulances to municipally run ambulances. They don't mention that. They just keep talking about this as a drive to privatize, one more wedge issue.

Quite clearly the government has acted reasonably, rationally, with a pragmatic approach, to bring forth a solution that the municipalities were asking for in order to provide clear and concise safe, efficient ambulance services for the province of Ontario.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm really pleased to rise for my short duration here to speak on this bill. It's one that appears to me as a make-work bill for the Minister of Labour, because the bill does neither of two things. It neither declares paramedics an essential service, nor does it really provide or, if you want to call it, maintain their right to strike. It really does neither. It brings about this very complex, kind of made-for-one-group bill that does neither. I don't believe it does justice to the professionals who have to work under these circumstances. If you take a look, if you're listening to what they have to say, and if you're also listening and if you're protecting public safety and if you intrinsically believe

that paramedics are an essential service, then why not do the simple thing and just declare them an essential service? Why go through this convoluted, very complex bill that does nothing?

Again, I speak to this bill because I believe the government has systematically eroded the morale of every sector in this province by conducting themselves in this fashion. They don't listen to the people who have to provide the service. They're fixing what isn't broken. They're certainly not making it better. So I don't understand why we've got this bill here that we're debating this evening.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Let me just help the member for Sarnia. It's pretty simple: we don't want paramedics to go out on strike. That's why we're fixing the bill. She doesn't understand. That's a pretty short synopsis; I'm sure you understand that. If they go on strike and the paramedic doesn't show up at the house should somebody be having a heart attack and they die—see, it's not complicated.

To the member for Riverdale, it's breathtaking how little you know. It's unbelievable that you could stand in your place and argue that this is some kind of attack on the working person in Toronto with respect to the paramedics. You were on city of Toronto council. Didn't you—

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I'll ask the visitor to leave. There's no responses allowed. Order.

The Minister of Labour has about a minute left.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I was trying to get into, the member for Sarnia says—I don't think she understands the bill. Right now, under the present circumstances, the member for Sarnia, before you start yapping again, a paramedic can strike. If a paramedic goes on strike, someone has a heart attack, they die.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't know, am I being heckled? I think I am.

As far as I understand, that's why we're passing the bill for essential service. The member for Riverdale, you keep going. You didn't understand the bill. That's the bill; pretty simple. If you want them to go on strike and for people to die, let that be your position.

To the member for Riverdale, Toronto is the city that has had this exact formula for 35 years. So when you were in office, why didn't you change it? They had an essential services agreement with the council; they had a meaningful right to strike; outside workers would go on strike; whatever they collectively negotiated, the paramedics would get. The union agreed to it. That was their idea of the way that they system should work.

We're just insinuating it into law. So you stand here with this hyperbole and rhetoric, without an ounce of fact or credibility. You just play to the crowd. You were on Toronto council. Why didn't you change it when you were there? You could have. You didn't, because it

worked fine. The only reason you're opposing it is because we're putting it forward. What an opposition.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I want to congratulate the member for Toronto-Danforth for her comments. I think she brought a great deal of sense to this debate.

You know, it's been very interesting to hear members of the government try to defend the proposal, "We're going to create essential service for one sector, but we're not going to give them the full right to arbitration." That's essentially what they're saying. They're looking for a backdoor way to deny paramedics their rights.

We believe that they are an essential service. I know the paramedics believe that they're an essential service. They're as essential as nurses, as firefighters, as police officers. We cannot allow them to go on strike and put the lives of people in jeopardy; they perform that valuable a service. But if you're going to designate a group of workers as essential, you have to give them the right to go to arbitration. That's what essential service is all about.

This is a backdoor way—

Hon Mr Stockwell: Then why did you do it?

Mr Caplan: I say to the Minister of Labour, you can caterwaul all you want, you can talk about "that was then, this is now," but the reason that it was never this way before, and I can tell you this, is because it was under provincial jurisdiction and the province could always legislate back-to-work. You should know that very well.

Of course, the reason it has been thrown off on to municipalities is because the Harris government has decided to download services and to download the costs on to municipalities. That's clear. Whether it's public health or land ambulance, whether it's housing or transportation, you've downloaded it. They don't have the tools to deal with it, so now you're going to come in and say, "We're going to go a backdoor way to creating essential service, but we're going to take away and we're not going to provide people with the rights that they have, or ought to have, of a fair and binding arbitration process."

It's not unusual to have members of the government say one thing and do another. Back in 1993, this particular Minister of Labour supported the social contract. He voted for it. He spoke in favour of it. So it's not unusual to see him changing his position—

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Speaker: I want to tell him, on second and third reading I voted against the social contract. Maybe Mr Caplan can get his head around that.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr Caplan: On a point of order, Speaker: I've got the vote right here. You voted for it, sir.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order. I remind the member for Don Valley East that, had I recognized him, that would not have been a point of order either.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'd like to warn the member for Don Valley East, the minister and the Solicitor General that we can't have this talking back and forth.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Maybe I could have the attention of the member for—the Minister of Labour, I don't want to have to do without—

Hon Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I keep on being heckled. It goes on all day.

1630

The Acting Speaker: No. I wanted to remind the member for Don Valley East that I don't intend to stand up here all afternoon and warn people. I wanted to also make that very clear to the Minister of Labour and to the Solicitor General.

The Chair recognizes the member for Toronto-Danforth. Two minutes to respond.

Ms Churley: The outrage expressed by the paramedics here should make the minister stop and think for a moment that there may be something wrong with this bill before us today. I think the minister knows that when there is legislation before this House that I think is good or even halfway good legislation, I will support it. In fact, I spoke in this House the other night about the brown-fields legislation. With some amendments we can turn that into good legislation. But the minister doesn't seem to understand that what he is doing with this bill and why the paramedics are so outraged is that he is denying them the right to strike and he's denying them a fair arbitration process at the same time. That is what's wrong with this bill.

Let me point out again that I don't quite know what the Minister of Labour was referring to when he talked about—I think he was trying to blame the death of the man who died of a heart attack on ambulance workers. I hope that's not what he said.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I didn't say that.

Ms Churley: OK, if he didn't say that, that's fine, because I thought that's what he said. But let me point out again to all of you that not one time in the history of this province, as I said in my earlier speech, has a paramedic or an ambulance worker caused the death of any person—I defy you to find that evidence—or refused to get somebody to a hospital who needs to go to a hospital. That is the fact, Minister.

So I come back again to what this legislation is all about and why you are basically repealing the Arbitration Act as we know it. You are trying to relieve pressures on the municipal sector, which you've downloaded on to the point where you're afraid that a fair arbitrator may grant too big an increase that municipalities can't handle. That's what's really going on here, Minister, and we know it.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I'm thrilled to be able to follow the member for Toronto-Danforth, and the member for Sarnia, who doesn't seem to think there's any rationale behind Bill 58. Let me quote from the

StarPhoenix, a paper in Saskatchewan, which I think is run by the NDP government. This was two days ago, the second day of the province-wide health care strike out there. The lady I'm quoting is described as sitting in a wheelchair outside the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in Regina. Lynne Rieben wondered about her next meal. Rieben, who has lived at the centre for more than four years, said she normally eats in the cafeteria, but with the strike on it was closed to residents.

"I'll have to see for supper what they send up on the belt line," she said. Rieben also said many of the patients missed their weekly bath.

"We only get a bath once a week and unless you have a family member, come in, 'bathing has been put on hold.'"

Guess what has happened since last Thursday in the province of Saskatchewan. Under the right to strike—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Don Valley East on a point of order.

Mr Caplan: I think there should be a quorum to listen to the member. Could you please tell me if one is present.

The Acting Speaker: Would you check and see if there's a quorum present.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The Chair recognizes the member for Etobicoke North.

Mr Hastings: It's a good thing Liberals can count occasionally.

Anyway, to get back to the rationale of Bill 58, why would one present, as I have, an actual situation from a hospital, the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre? Why do members opposite talk about the non-essentiality of Bill 58? "If you just ignored it, everything would be fine." It's the usual mantra across the way. They pretend that they have read the legislation, but when you start listening and reading the comments of the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, of the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, I start to wonder, what bill were they reading? There is no doubt that if you look at the provisions in Bill 58, what the government is attempting to do is to formalize a form of fundamental fairness in terms of all the plethora of situations across the province of Ontario.

Before we arrived here, you had, and still do, a number of situations where 26 of the ambulance service providers in Ontario had the right to strike, 32 services operated by the hospital sector had no right to strike and 30 services operated by crown agencies had a conditional right to strike. So you had a whole series of situations.

What Bill 58 sets out to accomplish is to create a flexible balance in those situations and also to ensure that we don't have what is going on in the province of Saskatchewan: a wide open, province-wide strike by health care workers of all types. Is that what the folks across the way are advocating? Surely not.

It would appear that they want to have the protection of public safety—they certainly don't want at their door-

step any particular individual having a cardiac arrest when they arrive at an outpatient or an emergency room of a hospital—but they're very strong in espousing the right to strike. So my question is, especially for members of the New Democratic Party, the old socialists, would they prefer to have today in Ontario what they are experiencing in Saskatchewan—we've never heard that from them—and all the potentially tragic consequences that can arise in that kind of a situation?

They weren't able to come to an agreement. They're in day three. Tomorrow they will be in day four. Neither party to these negotiations seems, according to the most recent media reports, to be able to settle on a conciliator to get going on all the issues.

So I think one of the key things we have to look at in Ontario, which has a population that's at least 12 times the size of Saskatchewan, with all the great beauty that province has and how inherently valuable it is in Confederation, is that you have wide ranges of geography in the northwest down to the more concentrated urban areas of the greater Toronto region, London, Ottawa, Windsor. I couldn't begin to contemplate, to imagine, if what Saskatchewan is experiencing was going on in Ontario today. I could just hear the phones ringing off the wall to members opposite, demanding that they come and support the government of the day to prevent a continuation of a strike which could lead to potentially adverse, almost catastrophic consequences. That has not happened, thank goodness, in the province of Saskatchewan.

But what these folks across the way are advocating is, give them the right to strike, almost an untethered right to strike, and they won't strike. Well, if I were a paramedic or an ambulance worker and I had an untethered right to strike and I wasn't satisfied with what the parties in the negotiation on management side were offering, guess what? I'd vote to strike. That's the right of any member in a unit under a collective bargaining agreement. I'd be within my rights to do so.

So I think what has to be realized is that the fundamental rationale for Bill 58 is to create a situation which prevents what is occurring in Saskatchewan at the present time, yet on the other hand provides, after you have set out an essential services agreement, the right in some circumstances for workers to go on strike, but not until you have an essential services agreement in place.

1640

Not having lived in Saskatchewan and not having been able to find—I don't understand but it would seem to me, and I may be wrong on this point, that there does not appear to be in the present strike circumstances in Saskatchewan any kind of an essential services agreement in place between the paramedics or the ambulance workers and the respective hospitals, rehabilitation centres and other types of facilities that are expected to take in those cases of emergencies.

What we have set out in Bill 58 is not only a flexible balance to protect against that set of circumstances arising, the one the member for Toronto-Danforth alluded to across the way and tried to create the impression that

somehow or other paramedics were responsible for those unfortunate deaths on University Avenue. Let's set it on the record. Never once would anybody in this government make that kind of point about paramedics. It is, to say the least, irresponsible, if not downright deceptive.

Ms Churley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't know if you heard, but the member just accused me of being deceptive in the Legislature and I want him to withdraw that.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member to withdraw and try to phrase—

Mr Hastings: I withdraw that, Speaker. I'll substitute the words "despicable" or "bizarre." I think those two words are quite adequate to describe this situation, and I will not withdraw—

Ms Churley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would say that coming from that member, to be called "despicable" is an honour.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order. The Chair recognizes the member for Etobicoke North.

Mr Hastings: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's fine to make those kinds of statements. I've more than seen them occur with other members in other so-called debates in this House.

Let's lay it on the line that there is no doubt that this bill does not in any way, shape or form—you can stand there and bay at the moon or call the cows blue until they come home or fly across the moon, but if you look at the clauses in the legislation, it's pretty clear what is set out in Bill 58. If you want to read it, it certainly doesn't say anything in the preamble, and if you go to the clauses, it doesn't say, for example, as the old socialist across the way would maintain, something like, "The government intends to attack workers through this process." That's the kind of language they use.

What it does say in the preamble, and I'll quote, is, "The bill ... provides for the employer to be able to call additional ambulance workers in to work for a temporary period for unanticipated emergencies"—for a temporary period of time—"that arise during a strike or lockout." Strange. We're told by members across the way that this is an attack on workers to undermine the right to strike, to prevent a lockout, that kind of situation, when in point of fact the reality's completely the reverse.

When the member for Toronto-Danforth stands in her place and maintains that this is an attack on workers in terms of the way in which you would have a conciliation, mediation, arbitration process arrived at, again let me remind the member that if you go just to the notes—but you can go to the sections, to substantiate the description that's set out in Bill 58 or any other bill for that matter—this deals primarily with the role of the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

"Either party could apply to the board for a declaration that the agreement would deprive employees of a meaningful right to strike or the employer of a meaningful right to lock employees out. In such a declaration, the board"—that is the Ontario Labour Relations Board—"could order various remedies, including amending the

agreement, appointing a mediator, and referring the dispute to final and binding interest arbitration."

That's what the bill establishes, and if you look at the sections dealing with that, it's clearly established, it's clearly set out. How is that an attack on workers? It's astounding to hear the stuff across the way regarding the misconceptions set out by people who ought to know better, particularly the member for Toronto-Danforth, who served with distinction on Toronto council for so many years, where they had an essential services agreement in which there was a whole set of understandings arrived at by Metro council that if other members of CUPE got a bargaining increase in salary and benefits, those paramedics and ambulance workers got the same. Was that an attack on workers? If it was, it's a strange kind of target you would think about.

I think the folks across the way need to go back and reread this legislation, because what it's trying to do is to find a meaningful way in which you have set out a menu of choices and recognize the circumstances that can arise when you have bargaining disputes between management, whether they be hospitals, rehabilitation centres or municipalities, and their respective unions, in this case OPSEU. It's a clear recognition that Ontario isn't one big box where everybody's the same. It's trying to be adaptive to the different circumstances across the province, and it has a history and a tradition based on that. That's what has been attempted by the Minister of Labour and this government in dealing with this issue.

If the response and alternative across the way is that we don't even need this legislation, then I'd like to hear for once, one time, from the members across the way, are they advocating a complete situation like we have in Saskatchewan?

Finally, I want to make some comments based on my limited observations both municipally and provincially about long-term care in this province and about the whole emergency room situation in hospitals. Prior to 1995, as far as I can see, sitting on the old city of Etobicoke council, we did not see much in the way of substantial monies—when I say "substantial," we're talking about millions of dollars—for any kind of long-term-care assistance to families, the disabled and seniors, in the west end.

If you look at the fiscal record, the financials, of the Ministry of Health between 1992 and 1995, if there was any money for long-term care, where would you find it expended? Primarily in the old city of Toronto. The suburbs were abandoned. In fact, to this day I'm still trying to fight for some \$850,000 that should have been allocated to Etobicoke. I don't want to be too parochial about it. That money, allocated to Etobicoke, ended up in the old city of Toronto. No wonder sometimes you'd think people in the west end or the east end or the north or the south have not been treated equitably and amicably in these issues. You could pretty well say that the New Democrats didn't have any kind of formalized care in place prior to 1995. Even if you look at some of the imperfections of the community care access centres, at

least we have a framework in place to try to alleviate some of the problems that have built up in the hospitals.

1650

Our friends in the official opposition, the “gliberals,” have constantly advocated reopening hospital beds: “You should never have actually closed one hospital or one hospital bed. Everything was essential.”

Interjection.

Mr Hastings: But guess what? They did. Not only that, I’ve seldom heard—in fact, I can’t recall once in this place where the leader of the official opposition got up and joined the Premier or any of us, even the members of the third party, and said, “The federal government wants to be a major player in health care in this country.” It wants to sort of manage and regulate all the standards under the Canada Health Act. But when it comes to the money, “Forget it. You ain’t gonna see it, because you don’t need the money. Eleven cents out of every dollar is fine. That’s all we need to pay up.”

If you go back to the old days of the establishment of the Canada Health Act, guess what? Ontario got nearly 50 cents on the dollar. But do we hear anything from our folks across the way about this? Not a word, although we’ve heard the present health minister advocate new programming in pharmacare and in long-term care. But I have never been at a long-term-care opening. There’s going to be one in my riding soon where the federal government contributed a penny.

There is no doubt that when you look at Bill 58, it reflects different geographic circumstances. It tries to value and reflect and respect the right of essential workers—paramedics, ambulance people—under this bill. If you don’t read the bill, then you haven’t done your homework and you should talk about what alternatives you have, rather than what you would probably imply but you won’t say openly is happening today in Saskatchewan.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Some day, on that last issue, I’d like to discuss with the member for Etobicoke North about tax credits that have been received from the federal government, as opposed to specific transfers. We’ll get to that another day.

I’d like to point out a couple of comments from a letter I received today which relate to this particular bill, strangely enough. It’s over the signature of Roberta Scott, of the Ontario Paramedic Association. She points out in this bill, knowing full well that the government will use its majority to move it on, “We would like to request that Bill 58 be sent to a committee and public hearings to afford our profession the opportunity, which we have not yet had, for some consultation on the issue.” It surprises me that this government hasn’t had any consultation with the paramedic association. If they have, I’m sure the minister will clear that up.

This letter also says, “As professionals and patient advocates, we see the need for governments to move to make paramedics an essential service.... The bill should become one that formally recognizes and declares para-

medics as an essential service, while providing them with an acceptable system of binding arbitration.”

I can’t think of anything simpler. What they’re really asking in this letter from the Ontario Paramedic Association is, I believe, that they be treated the same as police, nurses and other health care professionals: just treat them exactly the same; give them the same rights under the auspices of being an essential service.

Ms Churley: The government’s rationale for this bill doesn’t hold water, no matter how the member for Etobicoke North twists and turns trying to justify it. It just doesn’t. Let me tell him the facts here.

The fact is that CUPE members, OPSEU members and SEIU members who work as paramedics at paramedic services across the province have always historically demonstrated that they can and have—they do—reach essential service agreements through free collective bargaining. There’s nobody who can prove otherwise. That is a fact.

What this bill does is deny the right to strike and also deny the right to fair arbitration. They are denied the same rights as other emergency personnel. That is a point that they repeatedly try to make. We were hoping the minister would hold public hearings so that they have an opportunity to make that very clear. I wish the member for Etobicoke North would listen to what the workers who are most affected have to say, if he doesn’t want to listen to me; he clearly doesn’t.

Let’s once again get to the bottom of what this bill is all about. At a time when there is more and more pressure on municipalities after all of the downloading, particularly in this case the downloading across the province of ambulance services, and the costs are now directly on those municipalities, what this bill does is give them some kind of assurance that an arbitrator won’t step in and order pay increases that the municipalities may not be able to afford. That, my friends, when it comes right down to it—because I’ve been trying to find a way to see clear the justification for this bill, besides being an attack on workers, and I don’t understand why they’d want to attack ambulance workers—is what this bill is all about. That’s what’s disgusting and despicable.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Again the member for Danforth doesn’t know what she’s talking about. She doesn’t know what she’s talking about.

Ms Churley: I do.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, you don’t. You’re talking about downloading. We pay 50 cents of every ambulance dollar in Toronto now. Under your government, you paid nothing, not a cent. Furthermore, they had an essential services agreement in Toronto. Why didn’t you declare them an essential service and force their binding arbitration? You didn’t. You said they could have an essential services agreement. They’d have a meaningful right to strike, like this bill says. What that means is that the paramedics stay in if there’s a strike; outside workers go out. What they collectively bargain will be given to the paramedics. Why didn’t you change it when you were in

government? To the Libs, why didn't you change it when you were in government? This simply puts it into place. This puts the situation clearly into place.

Ms Churley: I'm talking across the province, Chris.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Member for Danforth, Toronto has been operating under this exact scenario for 35 years, exactly this scenario: an essential services agreement with the Toronto council, they can't strike and they're part of the outside workers' negotiating committee. Outside workers go on strike; they go to work. What the outside workers settle for is given to the paramedics—exactly what's in the bill.

Ms Churley: It's not.

Hon Mr Stockwell: What are you saying, it's not? Then get up, for God's sake, and tell me how different it was for the 35 years. I was there. I was on council. That's how we negotiated. That means the only reason you oppose this bill is because we introduced it, no other reason. You just say no because you can't think. You can't say, "This was how it was. They're just ratifying the way it always was. Why don't we go along with it and debate something meaningful?" Do you know why we don't debate anything meaningful? Because you tie us up in this stuff, which you agree with.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'm worried about the health of the Minister of Labour after that outburst. I think we all have some sympathy because—

Mr Caplan: I hope you don't need a paramedic.

Mr Bradley: I like that line. I hope we don't need a paramedic after that speech, because the minister is exercising himself.

Let me just say to the member that I think this is a bill which should offer either one or the other. Either you offer the right to strike, which is unfettered—the government says that can't be because we have people's lives and their health in jeopardy. So I understand that. But if you're going to take away the person's right to strike, it seems to me then you have to give them appropriate arbitration. That's what's not in this.

You do that with the fire department; people agree with that. You do that with police; people agree with that. It makes a good deal of sense. These people are essential in the service they provide. I think most people agree with that in terms of health care workers. Nurses are essential. So what happens is, if you're going to take away a pretty fundamental right, the right to strike, then you have to give them appropriate arbitration. I think that's what would make sense. I would be supportive of the government if indeed it were doing that.

1700

I know you can say that others didn't. I heard the Premier say in this House more than once, "We're not the government; we're here to fix government." So I challenge the Minister of Labour—I'm sorry, to the member for Etobicoke North, that I tend to be directing my remarks more to his seatmate—if you're here to fix government, you have the opportunity to fix this particular situation, now that the ambulance situation has changed

significantly in Ontario now that municipalities have responsibilities for it. I hope the minister will accept the amendments that have been proposed by the people who are the ambulance workers. They have given them to each member of the Legislature. I'd be pleased to see the minister accept those amendments.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Etobicoke North has two minutes to respond.

Mr Hastings: I'd like to thank the members for Essex, St Catharines, Etobicoke Centre and, to a lesser extent, unfortunately, Toronto-Danforth, because I don't think she has read this bill. I don't think she understands what's going on here. She says I don't understand what's going on here. I've read the bill. I went back over it again. I refer to the notes at the introduction. It talks about where you could have potential strikes or lockouts in these circumstances. There is an array and a menu of choices that can be undertaken: conciliation, mediation, interest-range arbitration, final-offer selection. To me, that pretty well encapsulates all the methodologies we have in collective bargaining today.

She then turns around and says that any of these things is an attack on workers. That means that existing collective bargaining agreements in place where you had negotiations, where you had arbitration, where you had mediation, where you had final-offer selection—guess what? They'd all be, under her interpretation of Bill 58, direct attacks on workers. It doesn't make any sense.

We didn't hear, as I issued the challenge—perhaps we'll get it from the member for Don Valley East or the member for Sarnia—would they advocate what is occurring in the province of Saskatchewan, where you do have an unfettered right to strike, where you do have 14,000 workers out right now? It's going to be a dickens of a problem in that particular province if they don't get this thing settled with their plethora of methodologies in settling strikes.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Back in high school, I read a book called 1984, which I found kind of interesting, but I thought it was so unbelievable that it would never, ever take place in our society. If George Orwell were alive right now, he would be suing the drafters of so many bills for plagiarism.

We can listen to the rhetoric on this. We can read the bill. Health care is important in Ontario, and we know from this bill that ambulance personnel are so important that they need to be essential, but they're not important enough that they really need to be there. They have the right to strike, but it has to be a strike in a manner that doesn't interfere in any way with the service to the community. They have a right to arbitration if they're unable to strike an agreement, but it must be arbitration in a manner that is different from everybody else. So they're a full part of the team except they're not really part of the team. They're essential, but they're replaceable.

There is a craziness: in the event of an accident, we have absolute assurance that a fully qualified, trained

police officer will arrive at the scene; we have the assurance that at the hospital end there will be fully qualified nurses and doctors; but we're not so assured that you'll be able to get from that accident scene to that hospital.

In a rural community, ambulance service is absolutely essential to us. We're not looking at people who drive a vehicle from the scene of the accident or from your home to the hospital; we're looking at highly skilled, highly trained individuals. In our rural areas, we're talking half an hour or an hour to get to the hospital. That individual in that ambulance team must be fully qualified.

I had a discussion with a volunteer firefighter some weeks ago who said to me that when they are called on a health issue, he always hopes and prays that the ambulance people are there first. He said, "Although we're trained, we're not anywhere near as skilled as the ambulance staff."

I need to take a moment here and give some praise to the people who work in our ambulance services. I cannot imagine what they experience at times when they come to some horrific accidents. I cannot imagine at times what they face when they come to certain homes or particularly dealing with a tragedy involving a child. This is not a job to them. Whatever they saw and experienced that day, they take home with them that evening, or perhaps for even longer.

There is no question that we have a dedicated, committed group of people in our ambulance service. In fact, we had a great ambulance service in Ontario. The situation wasn't broken. We had the assurance that no matter where you were in Ontario there was a standard of ambulance service to expect, a standard of vehicle with the right equipment in it, because the province operated, through all of rural Ontario, the ambulance service. We knew when we paid taxes they weren't disappearing into a black hole; they were paying for quality ambulance service along with quality health care and quality education, at that time.

Things have changed. Now we're seeing a desire to fragment it, and we're seeing a desire to download on to municipalities. That's what precipitates this bill. So now the quality of your ambulance service, whether you'll get to hospital in the right manner, can potentially rest with the low bidder. So, you're better off if you're going to have an accident—and heaven forbid you have one—in a municipality with a high tax base. Maybe municipalities need to post what their assessment base is so that you have some sense of what's your quality of health care when you go through it.

We're seeing all of health care under attack, and we're seeing labour under attack, whether it be union or non-unionized. We can look at this bill, and it very, very clearly doesn't deliver the absolute commitment that this service is essential. It uses the word "essential" lots of times, but we're not seeing it. We're seeing legislation that is primarily anti-labour. The working families in this province have become the enemy, and I find that dismaying. They're not essential and, in fact, it infers at replacement workers. I don't know where you find fully

qualified replacement ambulance workers. We're not looking for people to drive the vehicle; we're looking for fully trained ambulance workers. This allows it to come in.

Take and replace that with a nursing bill that would allow them to bring in just anybody to do the job, and it would scare the daylights out of us. But health care, which we may primarily think of as, perhaps, hospitals, is so much more. Health care is certainly in the hospitals, but we're also talking about doctors and the acute shortage of them that we have here in Ontario, we're talking about nurses and the acute shortage that we have in Ontario, we're talking about access centres and the acute shortage we have to access centres—which seems kind of ironic—and we're even talking about the environment and the acute shortage we have of regulation enforcement in the environment. The whole picture together is somewhat scary. We're seeing a fragmentation. We're seeing a breakup of what we believed in Ontario should be our health care system, which we were so proud of.

This particular bill says that the employees must work with the employer to define how the service will be covered while they are on strike. Surely if there is a requirement that the service has to be covered, the service is in fact essential. It is ludicrous to provide this whole process when in fact we know it's essential, though there is a reason from this government as to why they're following this process, and it's money. It's money-driven and it's anti-labour-driven. I have seen some large industries go on strike in this province, and even during the strike I never once heard the president of General Motors say, "My employees don't work hard enough. We make a lousy car. They're not doing a full day's job while they're there, and they make a lousy product." I don't hear that. But I hear repeatedly that the services offered by the employees of this government are not adequate. I don't accept that. I don't accept that the teachers are not doing their jobs in Ontario.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Give me an example. When did we say that?

Mr Parsons: I don't have enough paper here to list the number of days that this government has said teachers are not doing their jobs.

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So we've got a so-called collective bargaining process taking place where the employees have to help designate how they will provide the service during the strike. That makes a farce of the word "strike." Obviously, if the services are going to continue, then the strike has no effect.

I can assure everyone that no one wants to go on strike. No one wants to willingly go out on the street and give up a paycheque and benefits unless they sincerely believe there are things that need to change. Those issues may be money, but it's not always money. Sometimes it's working conditions.

The working condition for an ambulance attendant is the health condition for me, if I'm riding in that vehicle

or if that vehicle is there or not there. I am dismayed to see now in the Toronto area that the expansion to the emergency rooms is parking an ambulance out in the driveway for three or four hours and seeing what treatment they can do there to keep the patient well enough to get in. I don't think that's really an expansion of the health care system at all.

There's no plan. I guess the bottom line is, there is no plan on how we're going to correct health care in Ontario—"Let's try this, let's try that." But this one strikes me too much that the first priority is, "Let's see how cheap an ambulance service we can get in Ontario." This is a race to the bottom on, "How cheap can we do it? What's the lowest possible cost that we can still have a vehicle with four wheels and a human somewhere in that vehicle to get it there?"

I haven't talked to anyone, anywhere, who wants the cheapest health care or the cheapest education system. They want there to be accountability. They want to get what they pay for, but they don't want the absolute, rock-bottom price on services. They want proper services at a reasonable cost. The emphasis in this is, "How cheap can we get the service?"

Bill 58 allows for a strike; however, for full services to be provided during that strike. However, if the union feels, having started a strike, that no meaningful strike is occurring, they can go to the Ontario Labour Relations Board—isn't that one of the boards that's going to be amalgamated into like a million other boards, so that we've got fewer boards, which I suggest would translate into fewer services provided.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board, if it's still there, can make recommendations on how the strike can be made more meaningful. There has to be a certain irony in that. The board can amend certain things: they can ask them to go back and do negotiations, they can provide for mediation. I can say, with all assurance, that the ambulance workers would have explored all those routes before they got to that point. There isn't a fire within the union movement to go out on strike—"Let's give up our salary for a week or two, or a month."

They would have striven in every way they could to ensure there was a good process in place and that there was a satisfactory negotiation. Everyone wants to satisfy it by negotiation. However, there is a possibility that the Ontario Labour Relations Board can order arbitration. Everybody knows arbitration. That's where a nice, neutral individual sits down and says, "This party or that party is right here, and we'll strike a balance between them." That's what you would think. That's what most people would expect.

Mr Bradley: That's not what it is?

Mr Parsons: No. I'm shocked when I read in the bill:

"In appointing an arbitrator or replacement arbitrator, the Minister may appoint a person who,

"(a) has no previous experience as an arbitrator."

That's how important ambulance services are to this government. There's no need to put in a qualified arbitrator to expedite the settlement. This could be like a

trainee position, "No experience. We can learn and see if we can bring this together. There's no need for experience in an arbitrator; it's only ambulances."

"(b) has not previously been or is not recognized as a person mutually acceptable to both trade unions and employers."

Would they do this with the doctors. Would they say, "Let's put a trainee arbitrator in, even though one side doesn't like it"? No. These are only ambulance people; these are only the people who get you to the hospital and save your life. It can be someone no party likes, so I suggest that probably it would be someone the employer likes.

"(c) is not a member of a class of persons which has been or is recognized as comprising individuals who are mutually acceptable to both trade unions and employers."

This is kind of, "Let's take a chance and try somebody new because it's only a semi-essential service."

"In appointing an arbitrator or replacement arbitrator, the minister may depart from any past practice concerning the appointment of arbitrators or chairs of arbitration boards..." This is kind of interesting. Even though we've found and evolved over the years things which we know work, we have proven practices—I think most things we do, whether in this Legislature, in a company or in a government ministry, have evolved with a reason; there's a sound reason why we do everything—this says, "There's no need to learn from history. We're going to write our new history."

"Selection of method: The minister shall"—not "the minister may"—"select the method of arbitration and shall advise the arbitrator of the selection." So the arbitrator's got both hands tied behind his back going in, and this is the process he's going to follow. There's probably somewhere between the lines, if we could get some of that magic fluid that shows hidden writing, that the minister will provide the final arbitration report. I'm suspicious it's there.

We can go on and on. "The method selected shall not be final offer selection without mediation." Surely if we're going to allow a mediator to resolve it, the mediator should have the freedom to do what is right. The mediator will be in the room, though maybe the minister will be there in a sense too, I guess. Although the minister may not actually be occupying a chair, the minister will be there with the arbitrator, guiding and informing them on each and every thing they can do. That is dismal.

The municipalities have problems. The government knows the municipalities will have problems funding ambulances, because the government created the problem municipalities are going to have funding them. Municipalities were not consulted about ambulance down-loading, and when they were, they said, "No, it won't work." There is a provincial responsibility to provide safe and adequate ambulance services, but the municipalities were given ambulances whether they liked it or not. That's the way the partnership works in Ontario with this government. They were ordered to take it on. Although

the province assured them that they will have adequate funding from their tax base to deliver services, the government knows they can't. Once again, we see the municipalities stuck as the bad people in between, trying to find a resolution to protect their citizens and having access to a bill they didn't ask for that could seriously hurt people in ambulance services.

What happens if the bill is bad for individuals who work in the ambulance services? Let's look at education, where, as this government has condemned hard-working teachers, has condemned schools that are delivering a fine-quality product, the number of young people going into teachers' colleges and the number of young people staying in education is decreasing. It used to be that if a teacher got a probationary contract for two years, they were in the teaching profession probably for quite some time to come. That's not happening now. Some of our brightest young people are saying, "No, the working conditions are such that this is no longer tolerable." I suggest that your making the working conditions for ambulance people bad enough won't attract ambulance people, so I guess, by definition, you have found the cost savings this bill purports to do.

What's the answer to this? The answer is to make it an essential service, exactly the same way we treat police, firefighters and nurses. We know it works, we know that with the police and the firefighters a resolution is ultimately found that satisfies everybody. Give them access to the same process. They are just as important as the other essential services. Don't play games; call them essential services. If they cannot negotiate, then give them fair arbitration—not stacked, one-sided arbitration, but fair arbitration—and allow the arbitrators to have the same access to the same criteria as for police, fire and health care workers.

Without fair arbitration, we're going to see pressure coming on to reduce the costs. We're seeing the privatization of our ambulance people. We're seeing the privatization of Ontario, quite frankly. But this particular one, when we have the private arbitrators—and we're seeing municipalities under great pressure to lower their costs or to keep their costs down—they're going to be tempted or even forced to do things similar to the community care access centres. We were told some years ago that privatization of community care access centres would produce tremendous savings, while improving the service. Well, the events of the last few weeks have told us that hasn't worked.

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We are seeing a race to the bottom among our community care access providers, and I thank the member for Etobicoke North for introducing the topic of access centres and comparing it to the ambulance people. The firms that are providing access centres are being forced to pay lower wages to their nurses than the hospitals pay. We're seeing them forced to not pay mileage to their staff who go out to the homes to deal with our sick and our fragile and our elderly. And we're seeing a lowering of their ability to attract qualified people to their service.

In a large urban area there may not be a lot of travel time involved in going from one client to another, but in rural Ontario, which is the majority of the province, it may require an employee for a service to have to travel for half an hour from one to the next. They're doing it on their time, and they're doing it with no compensation for mileage. And even though this government pledged with their gas-busters to wrest the cost of gas to the ground—I'm not sure how it's going, but I know in my area it's about 50% higher than last year—so I don't think we've absolutely defeated the gas prices yet. In fact, it seems to have gone off the radar. For these employees, we're seeing a great deal of loss of quality, and we're seeing the client suffer that. I don't know whether it means there's a day coming when ambulance people will have to provide their own ambulance and put their own fuel in it, because we are experiencing in this province a race to the bottom, without any respect of how we will maintain employees in the system or how we will maintain the services.

For the people in these ambulance services, their working conditions really are our health conditions, and we're seeing a fracturing of what truly was a world-class health care system in Ontario, bit by bit by bit. I'm saying maybe there wasn't planning on this, but we were told that there would be a crisis created in education, and it happened. I'm wondering if perhaps we weren't made knowledgeable as to the lecture that was given on the crisis being created in health care. But this is one more brick in the wall that is being built to impede quality health care in this province.

This is a bad bill. This is a bill that does not do justice to the dedicated individuals in the ambulance service, and therefore it does not do justice to the citizens of Ontario who rely, whose lives literally depend on, there being quality health care available from the instant that ambulance arrives at their door to the time it's at the hospital.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Ms Churley: I am pleased to be able to respond to the comments made by the member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

I want to particularly respond to his comments about the need to build in a just and equitable process for both the selection of an arbitrator and the criteria under which that arbitrator works. The government members, including the minister, who have spoken to this bill have still refused to respond to this, and it is absolutely critical that they do so, because should they insist on bringing this bill forward, which they plan to do without any public hearings and without having consulted with those who are most affected, that is an answer that we want to have.

Why is it appropriate, I ask the minister, that these hard-working, dedicated paramedics are treated differently from other emergency workers, like police or nurses or fire service workers? These workers have access to binding arbitration that is fair and just and that has a different selection process for arbitrators and a different set of criteria.

A fair and experienced arbitrator is supposed to duplicate what they would have gotten under free collective bargaining. I want to remind the labour minister and all of the government members that that is what arbitration is all about. When a service is deemed to be an essential service and they are denied the right to free collective bargaining, the process that's put in place—that is, the selection of an arbitrator and then the criteria for that arbitrator—the whole purpose is that that person be selected by all and be fair and be able to give a just resolution to the issues at hand.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Just briefly, I was really disappointed with the member for Toronto-Danforth. She was going to stand up and explain how this bill was different from the way Toronto has been operating for the last 35 years. She was heckling me and saying, "Oh, yes, it's very different; it's really different. I'll get up in my next two-minute and explain how different it was." Well, gosh, you must have forgotten. I can only hope that you get another opportunity for a two-minute hit so you can explain to me how this bill is any different from the way Toronto has operated for the last 35 years. I hope you get another chance, because I'd really like to hear how it's different. I know full well it's not different and I'd like to know what your take on it would be.

As far as the member from eastern Ontario, I will say to him a couple of things. Ask yourself, why is it people want to go to arbitration? Think about it: why is it people want to go to arbitration? I sat on a local council. I know my friend from Wellington sat on a local council. I think there was a day when even the member for St Catharines sat on a local council many years ago.

You wonder. On these arbitrated settlements, the cards are truly stacked against the taxpayer. You know? The taxpayer loses on arbitrated settlements. It's better if you can have a collective bargaining agreement.

Over the last 35 years in a lot of municipalities in Toronto they've attained that collective bargaining agreement by letting people who have a meaningful right to strike, like in Toronto—they can let everyone go on strike and what they settle for will be given to paramedics. Right? They get what they actually go out for. The paramedics were happy, unions were happy, councils were happy. The taxpayers didn't lose.

But if you sat on a local council—I don't know if you did or you didn't, or if you sat on a school board, or where you came from—you learned early on that arbitrated settlements end up costing the taxpayers a lot of money. I don't know who you are representing. I'm representing the taxpayer.

Mr Bradley: I want to ask the member about some amendments he might suggest or what he thinks of these amendments. They have to be framed appropriately, but would he agree with a guaranteed access to fair interest arbitration? The board should only have the power to judge if no meaningful right to strike has occurred. If this is found true, then the board should immediately order arbitration. The other options provided in the legislation, such as further negotiations and mediation, would likely

have been exhausted during the primary conciliation process.

A second would be fair power of appointment. Where an appointment of an arbitrator is needed, the minister should be required to appoint a trained or experienced arbitrator. The nature of the arbitration process requires that arbitrators be, as he would agree, no doubt, impartial and independent. There should be no governmental interference in this.

Third, would he agree that we should require arbitrators to use the same criteria as for fire and police and health care workers, for instance? If it's good enough for them, then it would be good enough for these individuals.

Bill 58 tacks on some additional qualifications that must be dealt with by the arbitrator, so what you may see is in fact a race to the bottom, with the amount of privatization we see taking place.

I'm curious as to whether the member for Prince Edward-Hastings would agree with this. He's a reasonable person; he's had some experience; he's balanced in his approach. I would be very interested to see whether he is, frankly, interested that, because I think that could solve the problem. That would improve the bill considerably.

If the minister were in a conciliatory frame of mind, the minister then could say, "Do you know something? Those amendments seem eminently sensible. I'm going to adopt those amendments." Then I think you'd have all members of the House agreeing to this piece of legislation.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The member for Toronto-Danforth has been rising all afternoon trying to explain to Tory backbenchers what's really at issue here. Please, you have to read the bill. You call it arbitration, but it's the farthest thing in the world from arbitration. What you have done is rewritten centuries of arbitration law.

One of the most fundamental observations is that the Ontario Arbitration Act does not apply to arbitration proceedings under this act. You've taken the Arbitration Act and you've tossed it out the window. You call it arbitration, but it isn't. You've seized, you've gutted arbitration in the scheme here of any sense of natural justice, any sense of equity, any sense of fairness.

1730

Look at subsection 21(5): "The arbitrator shall determine the procedure for the arbitration." You see, you don't understand that in real arbitration, the parties determine the procedure, subject to the sacrosanct six, *Scott v. Avery* and on, that are part of the Arbitration Act that cannot, even by consent, be bargained away during the course of an arbitration by the arbitrating party. You reserve the right to pick the arbitrator: hand-picked.

You see, in real arbitration, the parties to an arbitration pick the arbitrator. That's what gives the arbitration some legitimacy. You've gutted centuries of arbitration law. This isn't arbitration any more, it's as simple as that. Any fair-minded person who has any sense of what a neutral adjudication is, is aware of that. You have revoked the

right to strike, for all intents and purposes, and you similarly have not given even anything akin to real arbitration to those workers. You've gutted the Arbitration Act. You've directly attacked the right to strike. These workers will be subject to the whim of you and your municipal hacks.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Prince Edward-Hastings has two minutes to respond.

Mr Parsons: I thank the member for Toronto-Danforth and the Minister of Labour and the members for St Catharines and Niagara Centre for their comments. The problem that has caused this is that there is no amalgamation, there is no downloading anywhere that saved costs. In fact, I would suggest in many cases it has raised them. But if arbitration is so bad that it's always against the taxpayer, as suggested by the Minister of Labour, then why do we use it for the police? Why do we use it for the firefighters? Would the arbitrator just be bad to the taxpayers for ambulance people, but the arbitrator can be fair for any other group? No, of course not.

In fact, without getting into specific details, I could bring up instances where the arbitration has not produced anywhere near what the unionized groups want. I have enough faith in the individuals in this province who are appointed as arbitrators—and let's be frank: the system we're advocating for is an arbitrator who's satisfactory to both parties. The ambulance people aren't asking for an arbitrator appointed solely by them. They're asking for someone acceptable to both. History has shown that we've been able to find individuals acceptable to both parties who have in fact produced a fair settlement.

The concern the government has is not that the arbitrator be fair but that the arbitrator keep costs down by any and all means, and so the deck is stacked. It's not an open process, a fair process. If this government supports the process it does for police, if it supports the process it does for firefighters, if it supports the process it does for every other group, then what is so evil or bad about our ambulance personnel that they should not have access to the same services that everyone else does? Of course they should. This bill must be amended to provide that fairness to the wonderful people who work in that industry.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): I'm very pleased to join debate on Bill 58, the Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act, 2001.

Mr Bradley: He's going to speak on behalf of Conrad Black.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I hear the member for St Catharines beginning to barrack about Conrad Black, one of my constituents. You seem to have this adversity to somebody who contributes a lot to this country and pays a lot of taxes, which would be typical of the Liberals. You really don't like anybody to succeed, and it shows all the time with all of your efforts. When you were the government, you certainly did everything you could to wrestle this province down to the bottom. In fairness to the NDP,

and it's not too often that I say this, the NDP took over an utter mess from the Liberals. You were the worst government that has ever been in this province. The bills came due when the NDP became the government, and they got a lot of blame for actions which your government, Mr Bradley, enacted. The bills came due when the NDP came in.

This proposed legislation will safeguard public health and safety. It's an even and balanced bill, and a balanced bill that in fact confirms the existing situation, which existed throughout almost the whole of Ontario, that ambulance workers did not have the right to strike. Why are we concerned about ambulance workers having the right to strike? It's very simple. We don't want people to die. That's a pretty basic reason.

Bill 58 creates a framework for resolving labour relations disputes. The bill would require the negotiation of an essential ambulance services agreement between the employer and the employee. Consider that in Toronto this arrangement has existed for the last 35 years, and yet here we've got opposition parties that are speaking about something that essentially was the status quo. You had an opportunity. Both the Liberals and the NDP were in power for five years. Did they do anything about it? Did they change the existing arrangement that prohibited ambulance workers from striking? No, you didn't, and the reason for that is very simple: you need to protect people from the difficulties that arise if an ambulance is not available.

It's interesting to note that, of course prior to our government coming along, in the case of Toronto, Toronto got absolutely no dollars for their ambulance service from the Liberals or the NDP. They now get 50 cents on the dollar. You juxtapose that against the situation with the federal government, which used to pay 50 cents on the dollar for health care and came down to 11 cents on the dollar. It was only by publicly chastising them on television that we ever got them back to the table, because they had to buy an election: "Let's get some silence." When fully implemented, it will go back to 14 cents on the dollar on health care that the federal government will be contributing. That's a long way from the 50 cents on the dollar that existed when the Canada Health Act came in, and it's still an awful lot less than the 17 cents on the dollar that was contributed by the federal Tories when the Mulroney government was around.

The collective bargaining agreement is clearly the best arrangement to have with any union and this bill does not prohibit any collective bargaining. It encourages it. The arrangement that existed, for example, in Toronto was that the municipal politicians bargained with the workers in the community in all the other trades that existed, and whatever agreement was reached in terms of a pay raise was passed on to the ambulance workers. That seems pretty reasonable to me, and the reason for that was that we needed to protect this service. So the agreement would have to be negotiated prior to a strike or lockout. The essential ambulance services agreements to be

negotiated must ensure public health and safety, and a withdrawal of ambulance service that would jeopardize public safety would not be possible.

The interesting thing is that during the debate this afternoon, there was discussion from the NDP member for Toronto-Danforth about how outrageous this was. She was speaking about the fact that we were continuing the practice that existed when she was a member of the governing party. She spoke against the arrangement that existed when she was a member of city council in Toronto. The fact is they always had a prohibition on striking. Both the Liberals and the NDP had an opportunity to change this arrangement, but they decided not to. Thank goodness, because we need ambulances to be available.

1740

I want to say very clearly that the good people who operate our ambulances are people I've got great respect for. They work very hard. Since I've become Solicitor General I've had an opportunity to speak to a lot of the people who operate emergency services in this province. Often they put their lives on the line and they work exceedingly hard. Our government has nothing but respect for these workers. That is very clear. The arrangements that we're proposing with this bill do not in any way diminish from that argument.

OPSEU asserts that Bill 58 will force ambulance workers to go on strike before they can apply to the OLRB for a meaningful right-to-strike declaration. That is absolutely, patently wrong. Let me say this about this bill: Bill 58 would require the employer and bargaining agent to negotiate an essential ambulance service agreement prior to being able to engage in a legal strike or lockout. At any time after the agreement is struck either party may apply to the OLRB for the declaration.

Bill 58 would not require a bargaining unit to go on strike before it could apply to the OLRB for a declaration. The word "dispute" in the proposed legislation does not mean "strike." It refers to the entire collective bargaining process from the start of negotiations to the signing of a new or renewed collective agreement. The OLRB would exercise its discretion to determine whether it had enough information to allow it to make a decision on whether there was a meaningful right to strike or lockout. This may include allowing a strike to begin or to continue, but the board would be able to make such a declaration without there being a strike or lockout. Bill 58 would not guarantee arbitration, because uncertainty of outcomes within the collective bargaining process is generally seen to promote negotiated settlements, and negotiated settlements are clearly in the best interests of taxpayers.

I see one of the Liberals nodding his head. You wouldn't understand anything in the best interests of taxpayers, because we know your record on school boards and how profligate you were. So you wouldn't understand the concept of being responsible to taxpayers.

If either party believes in advance of bargaining that they have an advantage to going to arbitration, they may

not have incentive to bargain but would rather go straight to arbitration, and that is clearly something which is to be avoided.

So this is a solid piece of legislation which will indeed protect the citizens of Ontario to make sure that a service that—let me say, if we were to go out and ask everybody in the province what they thought of it, with the exception of a few people who had a political axe to grind and a few hard-line unionists, everybody, including the ambulance workers, would say, "Yes, it makes good sense that we cannot go out on strike, because we want to support the good people of Ontario in providing this essential service."

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Bradley: I go back to the point that I think the opposition has made consistently with this bill. My problem with it is that you wish to tamper with the right to strike without giving arbitration. What the ambulance workers are essentially saying is, "Look, we're prepared to be declared essential so we won't have the right to strike, but if we're going to do that, in response we would ask that the government provide the same kind of unfettered arbitration, for instance, that members of a fire department would have, or a police department or the nurses in the province."

They're not actually saying that they want to have the right to strike, because I think many of them recognize—and you paid tribute to them for the work they do—that they do provide an essential service, that when they're transporting someone from perhaps an accident scene or from a home to the hospital, or perhaps from one hospital to another hospital, there are a lot of duties they have to perform. It's not simply driving the vehicle, but it's also ministering to the ill, and sometimes their early intervention is what saves a life or perhaps prevents a worse injury or a sickness from deteriorating. In essence what they're saying is, "We understand that we're an essential service." I certainly would think today, whenever, that they are an essential service. So I would say, if you were to adopt some of the recommendations they've made for amendments to the legislation, that you would probably find even those individuals would be supportive of the legislation.

I think it's the fairness of the process they're looking at. I don't deny that the government wants to ensure that service is going to be available at a critical time, but I think it's important to have that service available on a fair basis and have a fair arbitration to go with taking away the right to strike.

Ms Churley: Both the member for Don Valley West and the Minister of Labour have been outrageously insulting to me and to ambulance workers who were here earlier today. They both said things like, "If you want them to go on strike and people to die, then let that be your position." These dedicated workers have never allowed anyone to die or go unattended in this province, even under labour disputes. Let that be on the record.

I would say to the Minister of Labour and the member for Don Valley West that when asked about, and when

they both talk about, how the city of Toronto had this same legislation or worked under this for 35 years, they are incorrect, and the Minister of Labour still doesn't get it. I have said repeatedly and I will say again, and let me say it clearly: the difference is in the arbitration process. They have had the ability, under their essential service agreements, to get fair and just arbitration. That is what I'm talking about and that is what the government members, including the Minister of Labour, still don't understand and still don't get, that that is at the heart of what we are discussing here today. The Minister of Labour is incorrect. Let me say it as mildly as I can. So let that be your answer, Minister of Labour. That is the stark difference between what went on and is going on at city council, at city hall, for the past 35 years.

Let me say that that minister had also been a member of Metro council and he should know that. He stands here today and repeatedly insults me, when he's the one who is absolutely, clearly wrong on this. I would say to the minister again, if you are going to bring in this legislation, bring in fair arbitration.

Hon Mr Stockwell: First of all, let me say off the top that suddenly this member would suggest that anyone is being unfair to anybody in this House after question period today, suggesting that this government had blood on their hands with respect to the Walkerton situation, and then they suggest that we are being unfair when we categorize her position as leaving paramedics out on strike, thereby putting lives in peril. I think that to juxtapose those two statements is hilarious, that suddenly now you're so upset about a comment that this side makes, after the absolutely unfair, scurrilous attack you made against this government during question period. I think if you're going to have a method to apply to this House, before you start applying it to this side, try applying it to yourself, and then we'll see what's in order and what isn't.

The bottom line always was the same. If the two parties want to go to arbitration, they can, and over the years they could. In this situation, if the city of Toronto wants to agree with paramedics to go to arbitration, they can.

Ms Churley: You still don't get it.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Listen. Before this bill, they could agree to go to arbitration too, or they could agree to take the collective agreement from those people who went on strike—absolutely the same; no difference. This bill does not preclude anybody going to arbitration. But the point is very clear: it must be—

Ms Churley: You are wrong.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Listen: it must be by agreement. If the paramedics want to go to arbitration and the municipality wants to go to arbitration, they can. All this bill does is put in place the same thing they've done for the last 35 years.

1750

The Acting Speaker: Your time has expired.

Mr Caplan: I was looking for the Solicitor General to give us intelligent comments about police and fire service

in this province of Ontario, both of which are deemed to be essential services and both of which fall under the Ministry of the Solicitor General. So I expected that what the Solicitor General would come here and talk about with respect to paramedics was simply that police are an essential service. They're governed by a particular process, one that's fair. Firefighters are an essential service. They're governed by a particular process, one that's fair. Paramedics are an essential service, but they're being treated by a process that is entirely unfair, different than police, different than the fire service.

If the Solicitor General wants to stand in his place and tell this House and tell the paramedics that he respects them, but he's going to put in place an unfair process—give us a break. Tell us how you're going to treat people who are deemed to be essential in a fair and consistent way, my friend, because until you do that, all the stuff you talked about for 10 minutes is meaningless; it's completely untrue. The only reality in this piece of legislation, in Bill 58, is that the government has decided that yes, paramedics are essential, but no, they will not have the same rights as police or the fire service.

I ask you, sir, is that fair? I ask you to stand up and defend that. I ask you to tell the paramedics of this province that they are not essential and not deserving of the same rights the police and fire service have—and nurses, for that matter. That's the core issue. You can stack the arbitration any way you want. Your Minister of Labour can set up whatever process, whatever parameters he wants—it is entirely different. Consistency, my friend, is all that paramedics in this province are asking for. I ask the Solicitor General to stand up and talk about why this government refuses to do that.

The Acting Speaker: The Solicitor General has two minutes to respond.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I've heard a lot of sanctimonious rubbish this afternoon. With respect to why paramedics are different from police and fire service, it's quite simple: there are no comparables for them—be very clear about this—whereas the difference is that has always been the arrangement. For example, in Toronto, in which we live, it has always been the arrangement that the pay raise that is negotiated generally among the municipality then is applied to those workers. Of course, the big difference is that we are now paying 50 cents on the dollar, whereas before the federal government had never contributed anything to this health care. Also your government didn't contribute anything when you were the government.

With respect to the member for Toronto-Danforth, quite frankly, her arguments are completely spurious. The fact is there has always been the ability to go to arbitration, but you weren't allowed to go to arbitration once you were in that process which existed in Toronto.

The Acting Speaker: It being almost 6 pm, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1754.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
26	1284	2	53-54	Laughren, who was quoted in this well-known publication Inside Queen's Park as saying, "State-sponsored

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

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

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

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

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

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