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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 16 October 2001

Mardi 16 octobre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 October 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 octobre 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOME CARE

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): There is no question there is a crisis in home care in my riding and across the province and it's affecting some of our most vulnerable citizens.

In my riding, a 65-year-old woman has experienced a number of health problems over the years. Most recently she has been hospitalized with pneumonia and congestive heart failure. Once released from the hospital, she went home to discover that she couldn't get the home care service she needed. When she asked for further service, she was told that due to government cutbacks, she was not eligible for assistance and to go to a nursing home.

Home care was set up for people to stay in their homes longer. Now patients are being told they are unable to stay in their homes. This 65-year-old woman, who owns her home, should be in her home and not in an institution. Cuts to health care are an absolute disgrace.

Not only are the cutbacks to local CCACs affecting the chronically ill and seniors, but also younger children who depend on CCACs to look after their special needs. For months I have been working with Mr and Mrs Hambly of Ingleside. Their son Lucas has dyspraxia, which can be overcome if he has access to a speech pathologist. Lucas is not even on the waiting list yet because the waiting list is too long. If the government would cut out some of their advertising and spend some of the money to help our most needy in this province, things would be a lot better in future.

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I rise in the House today to honour a remarkable gentleman on this sad day, but also a day of new beginnings. I would like to give my very best wishes to the Premier of Ontario and to thank him for the many years he has served the people of this great province.

This morning the Premier mentioned that perhaps the greatest legacy of our government would not be visible for another 10 years. Mike Harris is leaving with us a legacy that will benefit the people of Ontario long into

the future, and he deserves to derive great personal satisfaction from that legacy long after he leaves this House.

Mike Harris restored confidence in our province as a place to invest and do business. He has laid a solid foundation for the children of this province to prosper long into the future.

Some may be surprised that the Premier announced he would complete his term as he started, as the MPP for Nipissing. If you will recall, he was sitting up here beside me in the backbenches last week. I guess he was just trying it on for size. It takes great humility and courage to do this, and it's a great example for all of us to remember the people who elect us into office.

Our Premier served in this House with my late father, Frank Miller, and he has said he considered him to be a mentor and a friend. I feel fortunate indeed that Mike Harris will be here for a while yet, and will serve in the same capacity for me.

The Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, has put our province on the right track. He has succeeded in making Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family. I think I speak for all of us when I say thank you to the leader of our province for providing a better future for ourselves and our children. I look forward to having him as a colleague for the next few years.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I want to talk a little bit about the challenges Ontario faces as we look ahead over the next few months. You will recall the budget called for 150,000 new jobs in Ontario this year. In just the last four months, before the September 11 tragedy, Ontario actually had lost 26,000 jobs. We heard from economists who are telling us now that Ontario will have the weakest economy this year, 2001-02, of all the provinces in Canada. We see in the budget that unfortunately we've added \$20 billion to the debt of the province. We find that we are the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the world, but our exports, obviously, are struggling.

We have found it unusual that the government has decided, with this uncertainty and the uncertainty about maintaining our services, to proceed with two very questionable policies. One is to invest \$500 million of public money in private schools starting in just a few months. The second is that corporate taxes in Ontario are 25% below the US. As we look at the need to compete with those jurisdictions for quality health care and education, in our opinion, 25% lower taxes than the US is unsustainable.

GENE DOMAGALA

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I rise to talk about an award that is given each year by Beach Metro News, a local newspaper in Beaches-East York, to commemorate or to single out a person who's made a lasting improvement to the quality of local life. This year that person is Gene Domagala, nominated for his contributions to heritage walks, for saving the boathouse, for saving the Leuty lighthouse and for making the Beaches a great place for people to live.

He's also active in the East Toronto Historical Society and in Heritage Toronto. Also, he is a person who contributes very much to the poor. He hands out Toronto Star boxes and works giving out Christmas hampers for Centre 55. He sits on the Beaches rec centre and works with the anti-racism group and anti-Semitism activists. He also volunteers for Corpus Christi school and St John's schools. As the editor of the Beach Metro News, Carol Stimmel, has so rightly pointed out, if something needs to be done, just give it to Gene and he goes off and does it. We congratulate him. He's a tremendous, tremendous citizen of Beaches-East York and I think a model to all of us of what we can do to help the community, what we can do to further the better cause of all of the people who live in our respective communities, but especially in Beaches-East York.

FEDERAL RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to express concern—concern for our country, for our safety and for the lack of meaningful action by our federal government.

The people in my home riding of Northumberland are disappointed, shocked and embarrassed by the reaction of the federal Liberal Party to the tragic events of September 11. The government has foolishly refused to accept the gravity of the situation, and with this latest attempt at damage control, they are in danger of making the problem worse.

Anti-terrorist legislation announced by Justice Minister Anne McLellan is like giving chicken soup for a cold. It's a feel-good exercise but everybody knows it doesn't really work. You cannot legislate to prevent terrorism. You must provide intelligence, funding and personnel to do the job. Then you must take strong, decisive action. On all these accounts the federal government has failed us. What will this new legislation do that is not already covered? We have the CSIS Act; we have new anti-gang legislation in place; we've seen the sweeping powers of the War Measures Act.

I call on the members of both sides of this House to send a strong message to Jean Chrétien and the federal government: stop the window dressing, allocate the needed resources and provide the leadership that this country needs. Join hands with our American cousins to fortify our borders and ensure the free passage of goods and services. Recognize that responsibility is a price that

everyone must pay for freedom, and then take that responsibility.

1340

CANADIAN FOSTER FAMILY WEEK

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): On the occasion of Canadian Foster Family Week, I would like to pay tribute to the hundreds of foster families that we have in Ontario. These are people, average working families or retired individuals, who take into their home and provide a home for children who need protection from their own natural family. In many cases for these children, it is a first occasion where they will have three meals a day. It is a first occasion where they will know affection. It is a first occasion where they will be dressed appropriately for the weather.

I have seen movies portraying foster families as problem families. I've never met one in all of my 15 years of fostering. These are people who truly make a commitment to the children in their care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Indeed, for families that foster, it is extremely difficult for them even to get babysitting or to get some days away with their natural children. Invariably, foster families take the children in and they become a close, complete part of their family.

I wanted to pay special tribute, though, to the children of foster families, who share their toys, share their home, share their family secrets and share their parents with these children. The only bad day for a foster family is the day that the child leaves. The bond is established, caring takes place, and the children return, hopefully, to a home that's been restored or to an adoptive home.

This province could not function without foster families, and I pay tribute to them today.

STUDENTS AGAINST IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Earlier today, the Student Life Education Company, along with staff and students at Westlane Secondary School in Niagara Falls, kicked off the third annual National Students Against Impaired Driving Day. In 1999, at a Youth Against Impaired Driving conference in Ottawa, over 500 participating high school students chose the third Tuesday in October, today, as the annual National Students Against Impaired Driving Day.

In its first year, National Students Against Impaired Driving Day 1999 had over 150 schools from across Canada participate. Some 250 schools participated in 2000, and today over 300 schools representing every province and territory were expected to join in the fight to stop impaired driving. I encourage any schools that are interested in participating to contact Student Life Now! at www.studentlifeeducation.com.

As proud hosts for this prestigious day, Westlane students and staff put together a great program. An assembly was held with the telling of a victim's personal

story followed by a student presentation. Some of the demonstrations included an impaired vision obstacle course and a computerized personal blood-alcohol concentration analysis.

I'd like to say congratulations to Westlane students and staff on their efforts today. It's important for students all over Canada to recognize the consequences of impaired driving and to look at ways to avoid drinking and driving.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): When this government came to power, it started to decimate government programs to the point of crippling our effectiveness. The cuts caused huge problems in various ministries. Look at environment. What comes to mind is Walkerton. Look at the Ministry of Health. What comes to mind is long lineups, services for seniors that have to be charged for and firing of nurses. Look at citizenship and education. What comes to mind in education, of course, is confrontation with our teachers. What about the Ministry of Citizenship? What comes to mind is the gutting of major programs and the foundation of multiculturalism.

So in this Ontario harbour are two boats. The Conservative boat is not inclusive. The Liberal boat is inclusive. It includes the rich and the poor. It includes those who are employed and unemployed. It includes the young and the old. It includes the employed and unemployed. So that's our boat.

What we want to do is, we have a captain. Our captain has a vision of Ontario, and that vision is to open the doors of this government, to open the doors to this Legislature and to make sure that every Ontario citizen who has an idea or wants to participate has a stake in the system. That's our vision. This vision, of course, will materialize this evening at 6 o'clock. I invite all of you to participate in the new Ontario.

PUBLIC LIBRARY WEEK

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I rise today to mark Ontario's Public Library Week. Libraries are important to the lives of many Ontarians. They are also a vital component of our education system. We don't often talk about libraries when we speak of education, but I know how important a library is to a student. A library is a portal giving access to knowledge and information for learners, young or old.

There are 1,215 libraries in Ontario, and 6 million Ontarians are active library users. In 1999, Ontario made 62 million library visits. In Ontario, our public library system offers books and other media to everyone equally. Less wealthy patrons can borrow information which they might never be able to afford to buy. They can use public e-mail and Internet terminals. This is an important method of levelling the playing field and spreading learning to all levels of society.

This morning I was happy to welcome Ontario's culture minister, Tim Hudak, to the Chinguacousy branch

of the Brampton Public Library in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for the launch of Public Library Week. Minister, thank you for coming to Bramalea and for recognizing the excellence and innovation of Ontario's libraries with the awards you handed out this morning.

I am happy to sell you the contribution of our librarians, the thousands of library volunteers and our library system as a whole to the quality of life in Ontario.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY APPOINTMENT

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a copy of an order in council appointing the Honourable Rob Sampson as a commissioner to the Board of Internal Economy, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from among the members of the executive council in place of the Honourable Frank F. Klees.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

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

Bill 56, An Act to encourage the revitalization of contaminated land and to make other amendments relating to environmental matters / *Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à encourager la revitalisation des terrains contaminés et apportant d'autres modifications se rapportant à des questions environnementales.*

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed. The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

VISITORS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Today we are joined in the gallery by the parents of our page from Kingston, Emma McGuire; Alan Compeau, her mother, Sandra McGuire, and her little brother, Henry McGuire. I'd like to welcome them to these proceedings.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Our first question is for the Minister of Health. We were given to understand he'd be here today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We did wrap up rather quickly. I'm wondering if maybe the second question could go first. Any clarification? Maybe go to the second question.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Education. Last session, you promised Ontario's working families extensive consultation on the implementation of your private school tax credit. Now we're learning that this consultation on the private school tax credit is going to be in secret. In fact, you are not going to make the results of these consultations known. In fact, the individual heading up your committee on consultation is going to take the report and hand it over to the Minister of Finance. In fact, he may not even write down the report; he may just go and knock on the door and give him the report verbally.

How is that you're going to allow the most significant change in education policy to be handed over in this manner to the Minister of Finance, where we and you, apparently, don't even get the results of consultation on the private school tax credit?

1350

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I understand that the honourable member is trying to create some great issue here, but this government said we would consult; we have consulted. We've received a lot of information and input. There have been meetings held. I know I've received a great deal of input from the education sector. That information is being reviewed. You might wish to ask the finance minister as to the next steps on your supplementary, if you will. That information is being reviewed by the government, as all of this input is on every issue. We will make the appropriate decisions about what accountability measures and changes in eligibility will be required for this particular initiative that respects parental choice.

Mrs Pupatello: First, to the Minister of Education, it's been about three hours since a major announcement in your caucus and you finally have not turned the question over to the Minister of Finance. Congratulations, first.

Second, let's just say this: we are hearing that Mr Hardeman will be turning over his report to the Minister of Finance. We are well aware, as is your caucus, of what consultation may have happened, who agreed and who didn't agree. The point is clear. Here's a document that you presented to your caucus, the back-to-school plan. In it, you described what was lacking in our public education system. You described to your caucus that we are lacking textbooks, that the schools are crumbling, that the children are failing the tests, that those test results are not improving.

In light of what you reported to your own caucus, Minister of Education, will you please now stand and say that this is not the time, nor may it ever be the time, for a private school tax credit in a public system in Ontario?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Given some of the strong answers this finance minister has given that opposition, I understand why she's afraid to ask him the question.

First of all, what I have told caucus, what I have told the public, is that this government has a strong priority on the public education system. We continue to invest new monies into public education because we think it's an important building block for our economic prosperity, for the future of our kids.

This government—she may find it terribly revolutionary over there—respects parental choice. We have done more on this side of the House to encourage parents, to give them a strong role, to give them a strong voice in the education of their children across the board, and this government stands behind that commitment.

Mrs Pupatello: Parents' confidence is at an all-time low. How do we know this as opposition MPPs? It's in the report you submitted to your own caucus. So all of the changes you have brought to bear in the public school system have not instilled confidence in the parents across Ontario.

When will you stand up to the Minister of Finance, who insists that this is the time for a private school tax credit? When will you agree with us that taking \$500 million of taxpayers' money and pouring it into a private system when you yourself, as the Minister of Education—not only did you agree with us; you put it in writing and you submitted it to your own caucus: you have crumbling schools; you are lacking textbooks; the kids are failing the tests. When will you stand up to the Minister of Finance and say, "That's enough. Money belongs in the public system"?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The positioning of the opposition party is just beyond belief. They sit here and say that somehow or other there's a secret report about whether kids are passing or failing our tests. We publicly report what is happening in our schools, how well our kids are doing.

We stood up in 1995 and again in 1999 and we said the education system needed to be changed. We said our kids weren't learning what they needed to learn. We said they needed a new curriculum and tests. You know what they said? They said, "No, not necessary." So when those tests showed that our kids were not getting what they needed, that what we were putting in place was needed for our kids to succeed, they stand up and say, "Oh gee, oh dear, isn't this dreadful?"

Public accountability is incredibly important in our public education system. We are not afraid of it. We encourage it. And unlike the members on that side of the House, we don't believe in respecting parents here and not respecting parents there, like the Liberal Party in this province.

MINISTER OF HEALTH

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Health. Today we had a significant announcement by the leader of your party. What

concerned us immediately harkened us back to last March when the Premier of Ontario gave you a specific rebuke because of your involvement in the Canadian Alliance and in its leadership race at the time. Last March, Mike Harris said specifically that being Minister of Health was a full-time job. He told you very clearly, "Do your job."

Our concerns are clear. We couldn't agree more. In fact, with everything that is happening in the health system, with hospitals across the board in deficit, with home care services not being implemented, with every sector of the health segment being told that they are under review, with you refusing to fund at appropriate levels, I ask you this: are you prepared to be a full-time Minister of Health?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The good news, Mr Speaker, is that even if I spent half my time on it, I'd do twice as good a job as she would do as Minister of Health. We're getting a real bargoon in this cabinet.

Let me say this: every single member of this executive council works 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the common sense Ontarians who want change in our health system, want better education, want more tax cuts, want an economy that works. We are proud of that. We'll give you our Daytimer or our Palm Pilot and we'll compare how much time we spend working for the people of Ontario against any one of you any day of the week. We're proud of that.

Mrs Pupatello: I won't be running against this Minister of Health in the next several months.

I've got to tell you, Minister, actions speak louder than words. You and I are fully aware that every segment of health is in trouble. Your primary care reform has stalled. Your hospitals are in deficit. Home care is not being delivered across the board. This is happening across the province. You have an opportunity to help, so you decide to boost your own political staff. You didn't boost your political staff with experts in health; you decided to hire Stockwell Day's EA and bring him in here as your communications director, some expert in leadership as opposed to an expert in health.

We actually agree with Mike Harris. We think the Ministry of Health needs a full-time Minister of Health. I want you to commit today: will you be a full-time Minister of Health or will you be traversing the province acting as a leadership candidate instead of taking care of the business that is the most important in the minds of working families in Ontario?

Hon Mr Clement: Let's take one day; for instance, October 1. Perhaps the honourable member would like to take that day. On that day I was with the Premier of this province in Windsor, Ontario, announcing that Windsor gets its new medical campus so that we have more doctors, more medical professionals. On the same day, the Premier and I laid the foundation stone for the brand new emergency wing for the new Windsor hospital. We were proud to be there. Where was Sandra Pupatello on that date? She was there folding her arms at the front,

saying, "This is terrible, this is horrible. How can Windsor take this?" Nobody was listening to her. Everyone was proud that Mike Harris and the government of Ontario were there for the people of Windsor. We are proud of that day, October 1. You cannot say the same thing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I say to all members, I know the going back and forth is fun-loving. There isn't any anger and there isn't yelling, but it is getting rather loud, even though we are doing it with a sense of humour on both sides. I hate to be one who tries to tone that down because it is done with smiles on the faces, but it does get a little bit too loud; if we could tone it down just a wee bit, because it is getting a wee bit too loud.

I believe we're on the final supplementary.

1400

Mrs Pupatello: Maybe the Minister of Health will recall that last week my leader asked you about a document on public health, and you couldn't remember the document. Not only could you not remember the document, you had already heard about it and had to respond to my colleague raising it at estimates the week before. You've been so busy that you forget what happens in your own ministry within the week. Your famous trip to Windsor—you forgot to mention that our hospitals are begging you. One hospital alone is suffering a \$20-million deficit. Let's talk about the facts of what you're doing in my city.

CCACs across Ontario are looking at a \$175-million deficit, and all you have to say is that you're going to see what happens in a report. That's what you've got to say to the people of Ontario. We're asking you a serious question. We are telling you today that we want a full-time Minister of Health. That last announcement three hours ago has changed things for you. We want to know just how committed you are to the major, serious health problems that plague Ontario families.

Hon Mr Clement: We are second to none in terms of our commitment to the hospitals in Ontario. The Ontario Hospital Association has been our partner. We want more accountability, we want more efficiency and we want better results for our hospitals in Ontario, and we are willing to pay for that kind of investment.

She brings the case of her leader forward. What did Dalton McGuinty once say was the solution to health care for Ontario? He said the system would be better, the problem would be solved, if people took better care of themselves and avoided getting sick. That's all they have to do, according to Dalton McGuinty, just avoid getting sick and everything would solve itself.

We know on this side of the House, just as common sense Ontarians know throughout Ontario, including Windsor, that the issues are tougher than that. They need tough and necessary leadership. That's what this caucus, this cabinet and this government have supplied year in, year out. You can pretend to know the answers; you don't know the first meaning of leadership.

TAXATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Restaurants across Ontario are about to start a wave of layoffs. You would know that hundreds, if not thousands, of servers and cooks are going to be out in the cold this winter, because they're on the front lines of the economic recession. The restaurant industry is taking a nose-dive and yet you continue to refuse to act on the NDP's proposal to cut the provincial sales tax from restaurant meals until January 1 to give this ailing industry a boost.

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: Obviously your backbenchers think this is a great idea. The NDP thinks this is a great idea. The people who work in the restaurant industry think this is a great idea. Why don't you act now and save these jobs?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The issue of tax cuts involves choices and which taxes one addresses. We know from experience in Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Harris since 1995, that the reduction of personal income taxes has a direct, long-term effect in encouraging consumer spending and in bolstering economic activity.

Corporate taxes also create more jobs, create more investment. Indeed, that was the approach taken by Floyd Laughren in his budgets, with respect to reducing payroll taxes, when he was the Minister of Finance for the NDP government.

Mr Christopherson: You assured us at the time, much against our criticism and opposition, that the measures you took would ensure that a day like today didn't arrive. We told you that you were wrong then, and we're telling you today you're wrong now.

The fact of the matter is that you've taken care of the wealthy in Ontario, you've taken care of your corporate friends, but the vast majority of ordinary working people and their families are about to be devastated by the recession that's affecting us.

The vice-president of research for the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association said in today's *Globe and Mail* that establishments that rely on tourism and business travel are bearing the brunt of the slowdown right now.

Minister, the proposals we are making to cut the provincial sales tax would stimulate that industry right now, and they would save those jobs right now. Why won't you act right now?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I appreciate the member opposite's dedication to tax cuts. I'm glad that that conversion has happened with you, as it has with the leader of your party. It took a long time for the New Democratic Party to come to the position that tax cuts actually help the economy, actually help the people of Ontario. What we're talking about now is which tax cuts are more beneficial in which areas of the economy.

I can tell you that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association is firmly of the view that the reduction in

taxes, the acceleration of tax cuts is the right way to stimulate the economy. In fact, they say it's the best thing to do in order to help boost business confidence and spur new investment in Ontario.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, the rhetoric wears thin when you're one of the workers in the restaurant industry. You have said that ensuring our tourism industry stays alive and thrives is important to you. We're offering a suggestion that works well with that. It will stimulate the restaurant business. It will save the jobs of servers, cooks, cleaners and other people in the restaurant industry, and it will do that now.

The article goes on to say that the vice-president of research also said she expects this industry—meaning the restaurant industry—to nose-dive in the fourth quarter. All your tax cuts for corporations and your wish and hope that it will all trickle down on front-line people like those who work in restaurants are not going to do a thing to save jobs today. Minister, on behalf of the NDP, I call on you again to cut the provincial sales tax for restaurant meals and save those jobs.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I certainly agree with the member opposite on the importance of saving jobs, of investing in the economy, of doing what we can as a provincial government in a time of economic slowdown to stimulate the economy, to create and preserve jobs. We've chosen to accelerate the corporate income tax cuts from January 1 to October 1. The Premier made that announcement. We've chosen to boost productivity through the reduction in the personal income taxes, moving those tax reductions from January 1 to October 1, and we've accelerated the capital tax change, which I announced in the budget on May 9.

All options are always being considered, and I appreciate the advice of the member opposite. We certainly feel that what we've done on the tax side as well as the announcements made by the Minister of Tourism to assist the tourism sector are important steps forward in a time of economic slowdown to help the people of Ontario and to preserve jobs.

LITERACY TEST

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. What an unfortunate way for you to kick off your Conservative leadership campaign. You completely mismanaged the security of the grade 10 literacy test, and quite frankly your bungling has wasted approximately seven million bucks that otherwise could have gone to our education system. How is anyone supposed to trust you as leader of a party or a government if you can't even keep a test safe?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): To the honourable member, I'll remember to put you down as undecided.

The EQAO, the Education Quality and Accountability Office, has security protocols in place. We have a case here where people deliberately flouted those security protocols, where they put the interests of students at risk.

This test is an important graduate requirement for these students. It determines whether they will get their high school certificate diploma or whether they will not get that diploma. What is important here is the validity, the credibility of that test because of its importance to students, but secondly, the fairness to all students.

So if the honourable member is suggesting that we should have allowed people to deliberately violate the security of that test, to deliberately undermine the credibility, and then say to high school students, "Your high school diploma depends on that," well, I reject that position absolutely. The interests of our students come first in this case. Police are investigating. There have been laws broken here. You may not take it seriously across the way, but this side of the House does very much.

1410

Mr Marchese: Madame, I know it's hard for you to appreciate this, but I'm just trying to help you. I've got to tell you that Mr Flaherty, another leadership contender, who is running the Minister of Education by remote control, is going to exact more cuts from all the ministries, including yours, due to the fiscal failures of your government.

I've got a suggestion for you. My suggestion is that you anticipate these cuts and that you abolish the Education Quality and Accountability Office. Save a whole lot of money so that you can send those savings back into the classroom. That's what I want to offer to you as a suggestion. What do you think, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: To the honourable member, if the NDP keeps helping us the way they've helped us in the past, we're here for another majority government, I've got to tell you.

It's really interesting that the honourable member from the NDP is saying, "Abolish the Education Quality and Accountability Office, abolish testing." So he is prepared to continue to put money in public education and not ever ask the question, are our students learning what they need to learn? Are they getting what they need to receive from our education system? Well, we think that education for them is so important that that testing allows us to know who's doing well, who needs extra help. The NDP is opposed to that. I'm rather shocked that they would be opposed to that, but they clearly are.

This government is going to continue to do what we said we would do: to bring in higher standards in our public education system, to help our students meet those standards, to improve student learning. That's how in this province economic prosperity and quality of life will continue.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday my leader asked you about cuts to public health programs. You accused him of, and I quote, "fearmongering and scaring and over-theatrics." You insisted that you didn't know what he was talking about. Well, Minister, you

definitely know a lot about over-theatrics, but you should also know something about public health.

On October 9 in estimates committee, I asked you about your ministry's plan to cut mandatory health programs. You clearly knew nothing about the issue then, but Dr Kurji from your public health branch did. He said, on the record and in your presence, that you are in the process of revising the mandatory programs and that you will bring some new ones in and you will drop some.

Minister, you were present when your ministry official said that. Why did you try to deny any knowledge of this issue?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Quite frankly, there's a difference between reviewing all programs—which we do as a matter of course in the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education or any other ministry in this government—and the leader of the official opposition's contention that we have a plan to cut, we have already made up our mind, we have already made a decision to cut. That is absolutely untrue. That could be the furthest from the truth. So that is the difference between what was asked of me yesterday and what you are asking me today.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, my information about cuts to public health programs came from a presentation made by Ministry of Health officials. I showed you these same documents from that presentation at the estimates committee. This document, Minister, discusses dropping one or more mandatory programs as a potential cost reduction strategy. Your official confirmed at that meeting on October 9 that you are in the process of revising the mandatory programs, that you plan to drop some and add others. It was also confirmed at that same committee meeting on that same date that you're planning to spend at least \$6 million less on public health programs this year than you did last year.

Minister, you weren't concerned enough about public health to follow up on this issue two weeks ago. You've now had another 24 hours to find out what's happening. Will you now tell us and tell the public what public health programs you are planning to cut?

Hon Mr Clement: There is no plan for this fiscal year for the programs that she is alleging we are cutting. That is far from the truth. Indeed, our portion of 100% funding—100% funding—for things like Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, speech, education and development has increased in the previous government from \$5.6 million to \$54.6 million last year alone. That is the commitment we've made: 100% provincial dollars. Not federal dollars, no federal money in there—100% provincial dollars. Not municipal dollars—provincial dollars, a ten-fold increase for these programs, because we think it is important that public health remain a priority. That is our commitment, and it continues to be our commitment.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question today is for the Minister of Northern Develop-

ment and Mines. As you know, on October 2, our Premier, Mike Harris, along with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Bob Runciman, kicked off Small Business Month. As the MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka, I'm very proud of the small businesses in my riding. Could you tell the members of this House today more about what you're doing to recognize small businesses in northern Ontario?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I want to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for the question. As indicated by our Premier, Mike Harris, and by Bob Runicman, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, some estimates indicate that small businesses create nearly 80% of all new jobs in our province. Our government has worked hard to create a climate of economic growth by cutting taxes, by reducing the regulatory burden and by making significant investments in infrastructure. In northern Ontario, I commend the efforts of all entrepreneurs who have taken risks and have worked hard to promote their small businesses. I know that our government will continue to make efforts to create a climate where businesses can compete and succeed, not just across the province but in northern Ontario as well.

Mr Miller: Many of the constituents in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka are involved in small businesses. I believe about 80% of businesses are small businesses. I'm proud to stand here today and represent them. I'm also aware of their tenacity and efforts. Could you tell my constituents and all members of this House today how you will be recognizing the efforts of all those hard-working northern risk-takers?

Hon Mr Newman: On Thursday, October 18, I will be attending the Northern Ontario Business Awards in Timmins. This annual event provides a forum for all of us to commend the efforts of those across the north who have made sacrifices in order to succeed. However, while there will be winners announced at the Northern Ontario Business Awards, each entrepreneur across the north should know that as their voice at the cabinet table, I am proud to represent them and I commend them for their hard work and their determination.

In advance of the awards I'd like to thank all of the volunteers, organizers and sponsors for making this year's ceremony not only possible, but I also know it will be another great northern Ontario success story. I can assure you that our government remains committed to working hard to build strong northern communities and I look forward to being in Timmins on Thursday night to recognize the north's best.

NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM PLAN

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I have a question for the Solicitor General. You'll know from the January 1999 report of the special committee on security and intelligence that the committee recommended that it be imperative for each province to actually sign the national

counterterrorism plan developed by the federal government. It further reported that the province of Ontario had not signed on to the national counterterrorism plan and, furthermore, that it had not provided its final response to that plan. On October 11, Emergency Measures Ontario indicated that that is still the case, that the province of Ontario still has not signed on to the national counterterrorism plan a full month after the events of September 11. Can you tell us why?

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): There are still some discussions going on with the federal government. Let me say we have done everything necessary to make sure that this province is safe. Not only have we done that, but we have co-operated very well with the federal government. I think you will find, if you speak to federal friends, that they will indeed say that they've been pleased with the support and co-operation from this province.

Mr Bryant: Even more troubling than this province's failure to sign on to the national plan was the finding by the special committee of the Senate that the Ontario counterterrorism plan, in its words, had "inconsistencies with the national counterterrorism plan that are troubling." These are the findings of the committee.

Can you tell us now whether the various conflicts and inconsistencies listed in January 1999, including jurisdictional conflicts over who is in charge of what during a terrorist incident—can you confirm today that these inconsistencies still have not been worked out, and that a full month after the events of September 11, Ontario's counterterrorism plan is not working in support of the national counterterrorism plan?

Hon Mr Turnbull: I think if you were to make a phone call to your federal cousins, you would find that they are very satisfied with the arrangements we've been making. Let me say that all the arrangements we have made to date have ensured the security of this province. We clearly recognize that from time to time there may be differences between the views of various bodies, and to that end we will work with the federal government to ensure that we have those finished. But let me assure you that Emergency Measures Ontario has worked very well, and the federal government has certainly recognized how satisfactory the co-operation with this province has been.

1420

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. In the throne speech, the government confirmed our commitment to introducing an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This is good news for the disabled community in Ontario and their families, and I fully support this important initiative. What programs does the government already have in place to improve the lives of people with disabilities?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I'm pleased to report

that Ontario is a national leader in terms of its support and services for persons with disabilities. It's an enviable record and one that we're building on.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Jackson: I know the member from Kingston trivializes the issues around the disabled community, but he should be listening to the facts, because it's gone unnoticed by him that this government has put \$67 million into housing for persons with mental illnesses, \$20 million into children's treatment centres, \$35 million into employment support services programs, an additional \$50 million for persons who have developmental disabilities, new dollars for autism, and the Treasurer has even put forward a new tax incentive for builders to build more accessible housing.

We know that the \$1 billion of additional spending by this government in the last five years has improved the quality of life for persons with disabilities. We know there is more we can do as well, and that's why we're committed. Within the next few weeks, we will be tabling in this House Ontario's first Ontarians with Disabilities Act, something that all members of this House will be proud of.

Mr Gill: A number of municipalities have advisory committees on disability issues and they have been implementing the committee's suggestions for helping disabled persons reach full citizenship. We should all salute their achievements. As we work toward equal opportunity and full access for the disabled, how would you compare our role to that of the federal government?

Hon Mr Jackson: When I began my consultations six months ago, the first city I went to in this province was Windsor. Windsor has had an advisory committee operating there for some 30 years. It's extremely effective; it has done tremendous work to not only remove barriers but to ensure that no new barriers are built. But even in Windsor, the concern was expressed that the national leadership for an Americans with Disabilities Act was initiated in Washington, DC, and that is why that model worked in the United States.

The fact of the matter is that we can fix all sorts of accessibility problems in our province. We can make our restaurants, our theatres and our hotels more accessible, but all that will be for naught if we don't have jurisdiction over things like airports and airplanes in this province. So there is clearly a role for the federal government, but we are getting no serious commitment from the federal government in terms of support for persons with disabilities. I remind every member that Jane Stewart has a larger budget for Human Resources Canada than our Treasurer has to run the entire province of Ontario.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): —is having a devastating effect on families, adults, children and seniors across this province. I had three full-house public meetings in my own community of Sault Ste Marie and everyone—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. The members couldn't hear.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): The member's microphone wasn't on. We didn't hear who he was talking to.

The Speaker: Yes, if you could start over. They didn't hear who the first one was for. It's on now; it just wasn't at the beginning. You can start over.

Mr Martin: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, the delisting of audiology services is having a devastating effect on families—adults, children and seniors—across this province. In Sault Ste Marie, my own community, I met three times—public meetings, full house—over the summer. Everybody I met agrees that your decision is having devastating effects on people's lives, especially in northern and rural Ontario, where underservicing already exists.

In Sioux Lookout, where 300 patients a year require audiology services, they're concerned that the whole system is going to collapse if you don't do something about it. In Thunder Bay, parents of children requiring these vital services are raising similar concerns. Will you today tell these families, tell these people, these children, these seniors, that you will do the right thing and reverse yourself on this devastating delisting of audiology services?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for the question. I always appreciate that if there are particular circumstances that honourable members feel deserve the attention of the ministry, that they bring those to my attention. I'm taking the honourable member's comments in that vein. I can assure this House again that hearing tests and other audiological services remain available in this province. They are done through either hospitals or qualified physicians and they are paid for out of OHIP. That is certainly the system we're supporting. There are certain areas of the province, we know—and we have been working to fix this—where there is underservice for particular specialist programs or functions. We've been working very hard in the north, for instance, with the new northern medical school, of which we're particularly proud, and all of the recruitment and retention programs we use for medical physicians. If there's a particular instance and a particular circumstance where we should work together toward a better solution, then I'm certainly willing to take the honourable member's suggestion under advisement.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Minister, if you want a suggestion, here's one. I've got a letter from Cochrane District Early Childhood Speech and Language Services. They provide services to the people of the northeastern part of the province. They're saying, "Going ahead with what you have done has put children at risk when it comes to the ability to identify a problem in the early years." They're saying that in the longer run, because they don't have access to services, because there are long waiting lists at the hospitals, we're under-

serviced as far as doctors in northern Ontario, these children are falling between the cracks and as a result we're not able to identify effectively in the early years the problem that's going to happen with these children when it comes to the ability to participate in the schools and to be able to learn.

Minister, we're saying to you, it's not just us, it's not just Gilles Bisson standing up as member for Timmins-James Bay; it's the people like Cindy Wilson from Cochrane district early childhood speech-language pathology who are saying to you in the end that you're wrong, you have to change your decision and you have to reverse yourself, otherwise these kids are going to fall between the cracks and we're going to have to pay a much higher cost at the end. Are you willing to listen to Cindy?

Hon Mr Clement: I do understand that the honourable member opposes the policy. It's a policy that's been in existence for 30 years; it's a policy that is based on the fact that medical professionals should have access to OHIP billing numbers. Under circumstances that has been expanded, but not very many circumstances. I understand their opposition to that policy, which was around, incidentally, when they were in power as well. But if the honourable member has a particular instance or circumstance where he thinks that there is a risk of someone falling through the cracks, give that information to me and we'll certainly take it under advisement.

AUTISM SERVICES

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, I ask you about lack of resources, support and programs for autistic kids in the city of Hamilton and, I would venture to say, across Ontario. In August you announced an expansion of the intensive intervention program, but that only covers kids up to the age of five. Frankly, after that, kids are left on their own, parents are left on their own and there is very little support available for them. The programs that are there are full, there are waiting lists for programs for kids, therapy is not covered, and parents who need a break on weekends and try to get some help can't get that help. So basically after the age of five, what you have said to these families and their kids is, "You're on your own. You take care of the problem."

Parents are getting frustrated. Last year, there was a \$75-million lawsuit launched against the government by parents trying to force to pay for therapy and support programs for kids beyond the age of five. You're clearly discriminating against these kids and their families. Will you commit today to look at and increase funding for programs, support service and therapy for kids who are autistic and their families when they go beyond the age of five, as it is covered right now?

1430

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children,

minister responsible for francophone affairs): Providing supports to young children with autism is something on which we've worked tremendously hard. Six years ago in Canada, no government was providing preschool supports to young children with autism. In the 1999 budget, we committed to spend more than \$19 million on the early intervention program because the Autism Society Ontario, represented at the time by Trevor Williams, came forward and made a very passionate argument to say that it would make a huge difference in the lives of these young children by making a strategic investment.

I think we would all have liked to have seen these investments made five, 10, 15, 25 years ago under any political party. We're pleased it was the leadership role that we've taken in Canada. We were able to double that investment this year in the budget with the support of the National Children's Agenda and the support of the federal government, which I think shows the benefits of all levels of government working together.

We spend considerable amounts of money both through the special education part of our Ministry of Education in education supports, as well as through supports to people with developmental disabilities, which got a really unprecedented increase of more than \$200 million in this spring's budget. But I'm happy to take the honourable member's suggestion under advisement.

Mr Agostino: Minister, your self-platitudes mean very little to kids beyond the age of five. You've known there's a problem here. Constituents of mine like Anna Ferrelli, who's struggling with two autistic kids, are doing a great job. She was in my office, frustrated at the lack of services. The programs that are now out there are at the limit. In Hamilton, you have Woodview Centre with a long waiting list with 50 kids in there right now. The Hamilton Association for Community Living, which provides support on weekends and evenings, are at their limit and have a waiting list. The special services at home program that your ministry operates has 15 families currently on the waiting list. That clearly is a problem.

You've been told about this before. We can't let this situation continue. Parents should not have to be forced to take this government to court to get the most basic therapy and support for kids over the age of five. If it's good enough and right to provide those therapy and support programs for kids under the age of five, why isn't it good enough to provide those same services and support to those families and those kids beyond the age of five?

Minister, I'm not asking you to take it under advisement. I believe you know that this request is fair and reasonable and right. Will you today commit your government to increase the funding so that these kids beyond the age of five get the support and help they need in order to go on and become productive citizens, and help their families and help these kids so that they can go on and have the kind of future we all want for our kids?

Hon Mr Baird: I'm certainly prepared to take any suggestion from any member of the House, including the

honourable member, under advisement as we look at the expansion of supports to people with developmental disabilities and children.

The member asked a number of questions. The first question he asked was why we singled out young children under the age of six. It's because the Autism Society Ontario came forward and made a very powerful statement: "We could do so much with these young children, with the malleability of their brains in terms of what we can do at that early age to make a huge difference in their lives."

Not too long my colleagues and I went to the treasury and said, "This program is an outstanding success." We doubled it from \$19 million to \$39 million a year. We said we could do more to help people with autism, people with Down's syndrome and people with other developmental disabilities. In the budget presented by the Minister of Finance not more four months ago we got an unprecedented commitment to this area, the biggest increase in supports in Canadian history to people with developmental disabilities.

They said they wanted not only a budget increase this year but a multi-year funding commitment, which was made. Step by step we're making some tremendous progress in this area and we're continuing to work hard to improve the lives of people with autism and other developmental disabilities, regardless of their age.

PROJECT TRUTH

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): My question is for the Attorney General. During the Leduc trial in Cornwall in the months of February and March of this year, a previously sealed Ontario Provincial Police file was left open for over 24 hours. Mr Leduc is a lawyer in Cornwall. He'd been charged with 16 counts of sexual abuse of children. He's also the lawyer for the Archdiocese of Alexandria and was the lawyer when they paid over \$32,000 in hush money to have a criminal charge withdrawn. People with access to that previously sealed file have reported over 30 sections were included, each one pertaining to an individual under investigation by the OPP. Some of these people have been charged with criminal offences and some have not. Of those who have not been charged, one is reported to have contained over 1,000 pages of evidence and another 600 pages of evidence. Interestingly enough, some of those who were charged are reported to have files limited to less than 30 pages.

You reported in August that there would be no further charges forthcoming. I have to accept that. I haven't seen that file; you have. But I would ask you today, sir, if you would assure the House and the residents of eastern Ontario that this file, this evidence, will be secured and remain in the hands of your department pending criminal cases before the courts, civil actions before the courts and any private prosecutions which might follow.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): As the member is

undoubtedly aware, the Project Truth investigation has concluded that at this juncture there are no further criminal charges to be laid. That conclusion was made after consultation with the Attorney General's office. That is a usual way of proceeding. The crown was asked for some advice; that advice was provided. But ultimately, it is up to the investigating police officers to decide whether or not to lay a charge. In this instance, the decision was to not lay any further charges.

I will say to the member that any information that was shared with the crown attorney's office was returned to the police, as is the usual course. But I will also say to you that the crown attorney's office will maintain and retain copies of the files, as is appropriate, pending completion of the court process that's in place now and for any additional period of time that is appropriate.

Mr Guzzo: If I have an undertaking from the Attorney General that this material is going to remain in his hands, I accept that. I think it's rather significant, though, and very important to notice that it's difficult: it's obviously difficult for the crown and the police to get convictions on matters that are 30 years old, even if in fact the alleged victims went to the police and crown attorney 25 and 20 years ago and were rebuked by the people in the CA's office and the police department at that time. But we also know that some of the corroborative evidence that is necessary was destroyed. The films that would provide the corroborative evidence were destroyed. They were illegally seized; they were not returned to their appropriate owners and they were illegally destroyed. You have this evidence and you have control of this evidence, and it's for that reason that the people of eastern Ontario look to you, sir, to maintain not copies but the originals that will aid in other prosecutions that might come forward.

Hon Mr Young: I can assure the honourable member that any information shared with our ministry in the course of the investigation will be appropriately retained pending completion of any and all court proceedings relating to this matter. I also say to you that this material will be retained for an additional period of time as is warranted.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In my riding, the CCAC that serve the area of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington was forced to restrict the admission of new patients for community care services. In Hastings and Prince Edward counties, the CCAC regrettably has had to reprioritize the eligibility requirements of their patients who might qualify for home services. My offices have been deluged with calls from people who have had home services reduced or denied.

The decision to freeze CCAC budgets at last year's levels is, in reality, a reduction in the dollars that you actually provided to them last year. Since this regressive

policy decision, people in need of community health care in my riding and throughout Ontario have been made to suffer because of your lack of commitment to provide for the care they need and deserve. The additional dollars you have invested in CCACs since 1995 have not kept pace with the demands within the community.

Minister, you have a responsibility to recognize the crisis in community health care and act immediately to provide the resources that CCACs require to meet the needs of the sick people of Ontario. Will you do it?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'll refer it to the associate minister.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. As the member across knows, there has been unprecedented funding in the CCACs across the province since 1995. I'd like to remind the member that the budget of her CCAC has gone from \$20 million to \$25 million and that those dollars have gone to improve the quality of care in her area.

I also want to remind her that we have undergone a review process, because we have some concerns about the way that funding is spent in CCACs. When we did an operational review in Hamilton, there were some concerns about management, there were some concerns about expenditures, the equity funding across the province, so we've entered into a review because we intend to make health care in the province of Ontario stronger, and a better quality of care for the people of Ontario.

1440

Mrs Dombrowsky: Let me tell you about the quality of care in my area. Last week, in the Kingston Whig-Standard, Tanya Ambrose, from the riding of Leeds-Grenville wrote about her 75-year-old mother, who was released from hospital after surgery. The patient was released into the care of her 85-year-old husband. She returned to emergency the next morning because her incision was open, bleeding and draining profusely. The doctor cleaned her wound and sent her home again. Ms Ambrose requested that a nurse visit just twice a week to check on her mother's progress and she was told that all new home care visits had been terminated in order to save money. Ms Ambrose wrote to the Whig-Standard:

"My parents worked all their lives, helped others selflessly, paid taxes honestly—and now, when they should be able to expect some of those taxes to pay for a few hours of nursing care, the government slammed the door in their faces." Further, in her letter she states, "A year ago, the Ontario Conservative government told us that we had such a budget surplus that it could afford to send \$200 [cheques]....Even today the government can afford to give ... a tax cut. Where are its priorities?"

Minister, will you make the pressing needs of CCACs a priority and provide the resources they need to help sick people?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me be very clear that this government has made community health care and community care access centre funding a priority. The dollars have increased—

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Johns: I think you should listen. The dollars have increased—

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Johns: You're not interested in this, are you? The dollars have increased in community care access funding, in community spending, 440% since the Liberals were last in power. We have a commitment to making sure that we fund community care access centres.

Let me say that the community care access centre in this area chose an unprecedented way of controlling health care in their area. They said that they would stop funding within the community care access centre and would only fund for people with cancer, palliative care and elderly patients. In this particular example it sounds like they should have received care, because that's what community care centres are all about—ensuring that people get the care they need in their home when they need it. That's why there's been a 22% increase in funding in this area and that's why this area has a 34% increase in funding over every other area in the province of Ontario.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. As a citizen of this province and as a representative of the people of Perth-Middlesex, I know that environmental protection is of paramount importance, particularly water, air and soil, as the quality of the environment has a direct relation to quality of human health. I would ask the minister if she could describe to this House what specific actions and programs the provincial government is carrying out to ensure that environmental quality is maintained—

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): You could at least wish her a happy birthday, Bert.

Mr Johnson: —even in Kingston and the Islands—and compliance with the regulations is enforced.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): Certainly, the environment is a very significant issue for our government. We take the issue very seriously. That's why we have increased the number of individuals, in order that we can better enforce the rules and regulations. We've hired an additional 130 individuals in investigative and enforcement-related activities. We've introduced the SWAT team. This is a highly mobile compliance inspection and enforcement unit and it is the very first team of its type in Ontario's history. They have been conducting a province-wide compliance and enforcement program and they have primarily been focusing on those individuals and those companies that deliberately pollute our environment.

Mr Johnson: My supplementary is in two parts. The first one is, if today is your birthday, Minister, can I, on behalf of all of us here, wish you a very happy one?

The other part of it is, due to the SWAT team being made permanent, there's been an increase in government staff in the field of enforcement and investigation. Could

you please comment on how the statistics and figures on the number of fines and charges laid have been altered in relation to this increase in enforcement staff?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We've increased the number of individuals who deal with enforcement and investigation since the year 2000 by 130. The SWAT team comprises 65 people. I'm very pleased to say that as a result of the increased enforcement and compliance activities, in the first six months of this year, the number of fines has increased by \$1 million, or 118%. The investigators also laid 23% more charges in the first six months. The number of charges laid in 2000 increased by 48% from 1999.

Thus, I am very pleased to say that as a result of the additional resources, the new SWAT team and the activities that are ongoing throughout the province of Ontario, we are better protecting the natural environment and public health.

COLLÈGE DES GRANDS LACS

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) : Ma question est adressée au ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones. Monsieur le ministre, vous savez la grosse controverse qu'on a présentement avec le Collège des Grands Lacs. Un conseil d'administration a décidé de prendre une décision, quand il n'y pas même eu un quorum à leur meeting du CA, pour fermer le Collège des Grands Lacs ; un CA qui dit qu'il va y avoir un meeting demain soir du CA sans avoir aucune participation par le public, ce qui est contraire à la loi, comme vous le savez bien, qui gouverne ce collège.

La question qu'on a pour vous est très simple. On a présentement avec nous aujourd'hui ici à l'Assemblée des représentants des étudiants et autres du Collège des Grands Lacs. On vous demande, êtes-vous préparé à intervenir dans ce dossier directement pour les étudiants pour les assurer qu'ils vont continuer leur éducation à un établissement ici à Toronto pour finir leur éducation ?

L'hon John R. Baird (ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones) : On savait très bien que le conseil du Collège des Grands Lacs a lui-même pris une décision. J'ai eu l'occasion et mon bureau a eu l'occasion de parler à mon bureau avec le directeur de l'école. Je suis toujours prêt à travailler avec toute la communauté francophone pour être sûr que les étudiants ont une place où continuer leurs études, si c'est possible. Je suis toujours prêt à parler et à travailler avec ma collègue la ministre des Collèges et Universités dans le domaine de la provision de bons services en français. C'est bien sûr une décision qui a été très difficile pour le collège, et c'est un grand problème pour les étudiants qui sont là. Je suis heureux de travailler avec le député du Nouveau parti démocratique et avec ma collègue la ministre des Collèges et Universités sur ce problème.

M. Bisson : Monsieur le ministre, j'ai un peu un problème avec votre réponse. Vous savez, comme moi, que le Collège des Grands Lacs a un budget d'au-dessus

de six millions de dollars. Avec ces six millions, certainement ils sont capables d'offrir des programmes aux étudiants ici à Toronto.

Si j'entends bien ce que vous me dites, vous dites que vous acceptez la décision du CA. Comment êtes-vous capable de faire ça quand la loi est claire ? Il y a eu une décision qui est contraire à la loi, selon la loi qui gouverne les meetings du CA. Il n'y a pas eu de quorum. Là, ils veulent se rencontrer à huis clos, sans la participation du public, fermé complètement au public, ce qui est contraire au règlement sous la loi elle-même.

Je vous demande simplement deux affaires. Premièrement, je veux qu'on se rencontre avec les étudiants cet après-midi après la période des questions. Oui ou non ? Deuxièmement, êtes-vous préparé à intervenir pour les assurer qu'ils vont continuer leur éducation ici à Toronto, non à Sudbury ?

L'hon M. Baird : Je suis, bien sûr, toujours prêt, comme j'ai dit dans ma première réponse, à continuer de travailler avec le député du Nouveau parti démocratique. Ma collègue la ministre des Collèges et Universités a eu une lettre qui avait été écrite par le chef du conseil qui a dit qu'il y a eu un quorum dans la réunion dont le député a parlé.

Bien sûr, c'est très important. Ce n'est pas seulement les 60 étudiants qui allaient au Collège des Grands Lacs ; c'est l'avenir des études en français dans le sud de l'Ontario, pas seulement ici dans la ville de Toronto mais dans le sud-ouest, dans les régions de Hamilton et de Niagara et, bien sûr, dans la région du grand Toronto.

Cette décision que le conseil a prise, c'est leur décision. C'est une décision qui a été très difficile pour les membres du conseil à prendre. Notre challenge était de travailler avec tout le monde pour—

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

1450

SILICOSIS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I want to ask you about a very alarming issue in the Hemlo Gold Mines in my riding related to the issue of silicosis. Silicosis, as you know, is a disabling, irreversible, often fatal disease that we all thought was part of a bygone era. Yet at the Hemlo Gold Mines in the last few years we've seen an extraordinary increase in the number of cases of people who have been diagnosed with silicosis. In fact, there were five authenticated by the Ministry of Labour last year. We think there are many more. There is a great deal of concern about this, because it shouldn't be happening.

We're also very concerned about the actions that have been taken by the government. We know, for example, that this trend has taken place when we saw the medical monitoring that was controlled by the Ministry of Labour decentralized, which we think was a big mistake. In fact, the mine management and the union people all agree on

that one issue. We also know that the air monitoring has been very inconsistent and is often being done with lots of warning being given, which we don't think is a good idea, and often in places where there is no equipment.

My question to you is, because this is an issue of extraordinary concern to many of my constituents, what are you doing about this? Have you been involved in this? Will you at least work with the Minister of Labour to see that the medical monitoring is returned to the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour? Clearly that is one of the reasons why this has happened.

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I do share concern with the member on this issue. I know the Minister of Labour can best answer that question.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): We certainly agree that it's a very serious issue. I think everyone understands the importance of the health risk and those issues that go with it.

I will note that I've spoken to you about this issue personally; we've talked about it. You were quoted very recently in the paper as saying that you're hearing good things about how the ministry is dealing with this from workers and unions and officials in the north. I thought that we had a relationship, that we were trying to work to the same ends. The ministry's inspectors have been in there. I've also had my opportunities to meet with Nancy Hutchison and deal with the issue straight up.

I'm not here to make any political partisan points; I know you aren't as well. If you'd like to sit down and chat about this—we'll update you on how we're monitoring, how many more inspectors are going in, how we're dealing with the issue—I'll be very happy. This is not a political issue. I know you treat it that way. I feel the same. Let's sit down and see if we can work out an arrangement.

PETITIONS

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): To the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities are unregulated and unlicensed in the province of Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals needs more power to inspect and control animal kennels or breeders;

"Whereas Ontario consumers have no way of knowing if the animals they purchase as pets have been abused;

"Whereas there are no provincial penalties to punish people guilty of abusing animals that are bred and sold to unsuspecting consumers;

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

"That the province of Ontario pass legislation that outlaws puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities and also strengthens the powers of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to establish a provincial registry of kennels and breeders subject to SPCA inspection, and to allow the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to impose fines and jail terms on those found guilty of perpetrating cruelty to animals for the purpose of selling these animals to an unsuspecting public."

I affix my signature to this petition.

OHIP SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition sent to me by Dave Johnson, who is the recording secretary for the United Steelworkers of America, local 677, in Kitchener. I thank him for it. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Harris government's decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

"Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

"Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

"Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, electrotherapy, magnetotherapy, nerve therapy stimulation and biofeedback; and

"Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

"Whereas delisting these services will have a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers; and

"Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services."

This is signed by hundreds of people in the Kitchener area. I agree with the petitioners and I've affixed my signature to it.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's entitled:

"Listen: Our hearing is important.

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

“Whereas the new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

“Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario”—such as northern Ontario—“and

“Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services.”

I affix my signature to this petition, as I am in complete agreement with it.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities are unregulated and unlicensed in the province of Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario SPCA needs more power to inspect and control animal kennels or breeders;

“Whereas Ontario consumers have no way of knowing if the animals they purchase as pets have been abused;

“Whereas there are no provincial penalties to punish people guilty of abusing animals that are bred and sold to unsuspecting consumers;

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

“That the province of Ontario pass legislation that outlaws puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities and also strengthens the powers of the Ontario SPCA to establish a provincial registry of kennels and breeders subject to SPCA inspection, and to allow the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to impose fines and jail terms on those found guilty of perpetrating cruelty to animals for the purpose of selling these animals to an unsuspecting public.”

I affix my signature, as I am in complete agreement with this petition.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the recipients of benefits under the Ontario Disability Act have not received a cost-of-living increase since a \$2.50 increase in 1987; and

“Whereas the cost of living in Ontario has increased in every one of the years since, especially for basic needs such as housing, food, utilities, transportation, clothing and household goods; and

“Whereas disabled Ontarians are recognized under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, and as such have the right to have their basic needs met, including adequate housing, a proper and healthy diet, a bed that does not make them sicker and clothing that fits and is free of stains and holes; and

“Whereas their basic needs are no longer being met because the Ministry of Social Services has not increased the shelter and basic needs allowance of disabled Ontarians eligible to receive benefits under the Ontario disability support program to reflect the increased costs of shelter and basic needs (and in fact have reduced these benefits for those recipients who receive a disability benefit under the Canada pension plan); and

“Whereas a new Ontarians with Disabilities Act has yet to be introduced to help protect the thousands of vulnerable people in Ontario who are dependent on others for their basic needs and care and who are eligible for benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, request the Ontario Legislature to urge the government to respect their own definition of basic needs and provide a cost-of-living increase to recipients of benefits through the Ontario Disability Support Program Act that is sufficient to cover the increased costs of their basic needs as of 2001 prices, and that this benefit not be reduced as a result of increases in the Canada pension plan benefit.”

As I'm in support, I add my name to those of the petitioners.

1500

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the November 2000 announcement of massive privatization of Ministry of Transportation services will have a significant detrimental effect on citizen road safety, confidentiality of citizens' information and on the economy of Ontario; and

“Whereas the employees of the Ministry of Transportation are recognized in writing by the provincial government to have provided excellent service on the government's behalf; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario is taking away the livelihood and decreasing the standard of living of thousands of employees and families by its actions both directly and indirectly through spinoff effects; and

“Whereas citizens of Ontario are entitled to safe roads, consistency in driver testing, and competent inspection of trucks, school buses and vehicles carrying dangerous goods; and

“Whereas communities continue to need to retain decent-paying jobs if they are to maintain viability and vibrancy; and

“Whereas we taxpayers have entrusted the provincial government with the maintenance of public safety with

an apolitical and efficient public service, a service free of profiteering and protected from conflicts of interests; and

“Whereas privatization is an abdication of such public trust;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to place a moratorium on all further privatization and to restore and promote public service as being of significant value in our society.”

I have signed this petition.

OHIP SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that has been sent to me by the AWIC Seniors’ Club here in Toronto. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the provincial government’s decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

“Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

“Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

“Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, electrotherapy, magnetotherapy, nerve therapy stimulation, and biofeedback; and

“Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

“Whereas delisting these services will have a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers; and

“Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services.”

I agree with the petitioner. I have affixed my signature to it.

HOME CARE

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

“The government of Ontario is reducing homemaking hours for the elderly and special cases. It is also reducing stays in hospital after surgery or illness by promising more homemaking at home, and yet the government is reducing those hours. The elderly are on a fixed income and cannot afford to pay privately to supplement the lost services.

“We, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario review their intention to revise their home care

policy and we also request that they reinstate the services withdrawn to this point.”

That’s signed by 1,100 of my constituents.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have more petitions from the town of Wawa.

“To the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources called for proposals with respect to surplus northeastern Ontario hardwood;

“Whereas Wawa Forest Products submitted a proposal for this surplus northeastern Ontario hardwood which included the building of a manufacturing facility in Wawa within the township of Michipicoten;

“Whereas on April 6, 2001, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced allocations of a portion of the surplus northeastern Ontario hardwood to Grant Forest Products in Timmins and Englehart, and Algoma Mill Works in Blind River;

“Whereas the residents of the township of Michipicoten believe that the proposal submitted by Wawa Forest Products is viable and will result in a desperately needed economic boost to the community and provide the industrial assessment needed for the continued viability of the community;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Natural Resources arrange a meeting between officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Wawa Forest Products and the township of Michipicoten. The reason for such a meeting is to coordinate a consensus on minor differences that may exist in the plan submitted by Wawa Forest Products. It is the hope of the township of Michipicoten and its residents that such a meeting would result in the construction of the Wawa Forest Products mill in Wawa.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

OHIP SERVICES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Further petitions from Hamilton:

“Whereas the Harris government’s decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

“Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

“Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

“Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, electrotherapy, magnetotherapy, transcutaneous”—that’s why we’ve all avoided

that one—"nerve therapy stimulation and biofeedback; and

"Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

"Whereas delisting these services will have a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers; and

"Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services."

I add my name to this petition.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre is a world-class academic health sciences centre serving people throughout southwestern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has forced the London Health Sciences Centre to find \$17 million in annual savings by 2005; and

"Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre has agreed to cut 18 programs in order to satisfy directions from the provincial Ministry of Health; and

"Whereas these cuts will put the health of the people of southwestern Ontario, and particularly children, at risk; and

"Whereas these cuts will diminish the London Health Sciences Centre's standing as a regional health care resource; and

"Whereas these cuts will worsen the continuing physician shortages in the region;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike Harris government take immediate action to ensure that these important health services are maintained so that the health and safety of families and children throughout southwestern Ontario are not put at risk."

I'm in full agreement and will affix my signature hereto.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 65, An Act to permit the Minister of Transportation to delegate to persons in the private sector powers and duties and responsibilities to deliver services relating to road user programs, when Bill

65 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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

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

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

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

1510

I'm very pleased today to rise in the House and bring forward a motion for time allocation on Bill 65, the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. The honourable members of the House know that our government believes that the essential and proper role of government for the most part is to manage public services rather than deliver them directly. We have promised to explore alternative approaches to service delivery. We said so in our 1999 Blueprint document. We repeated that promise again in this year's speech from the throne. Bill 65 builds on that promise. We also made it clear, in bringing this bill before the House for first and second readings, that if passed this bill will deliver on some key issues that Ontarians have come to expect from their government. Those issues include better customer service, protection of privacy for all citizens and continuing support for road user safety programs in this province.

We believe that a clause-by-clause examination is not required, as this bill has already undergone extensive scrutiny. Since this bill was first introduced in the House, it has been significantly changed to address the feedback that we have received. We have met with our stakeholders, such as the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. We have listened to their concerns. We have also heard and responded to the concerns of the opposition. We have amended the bill to reflect these concerns and we believe no further amendments are called for.

We believe that time allocation will ensure that this bill will not be held up in repetitive debate, and if this bill is passed, the people of Ontario will realize its benefits. We believe it is in the best interests of the people of Ontario to move this legislation forward.

This legislation is, first and foremost, about better customer service. Better customer service is and always has been our intent. Bill 65, which we have before us now, would deliver on our goal to improve customer service in this province through alternative service delivery. It's all about customer service. It's also about accountability. Alternative service delivery of public

services is an important part of this government's commitment to accountability. We have also pledged to provide high-quality services to Ontario's taxpayers while ensuring that they receive value for their money.

Our actions are also about strengthening the economy. Premier Mike Harris reinforced that pledge recently when he stated that this government will continue to take the strong action necessary to keep Ontario safe and prosperous. That included a commitment to greater security province-wide and to protect Ontario's trade and economic growth potential, a call for harmonization of rules and customs procedures with the US as well as meetings with other leaders to boost trade and reinforce relations.

As members know, the government has also accelerated the timing of personal income, capital and corporate income tax cuts, which were originally planned for January 1, 2002, and implemented these tax reductions immediately.

Alternative service delivery would build on those measures designed to improve service and boost the economy. Alternative service delivery would ensure that the services received by taxpayers are modern, safe, efficient and cost-effective.

I can tell you that we have worked hard to make the promise of alternative service delivery a reality. We currently have more than eight million licensed drivers in Ontario, out of a population of 11.5 million. Increased growth in population is estimated at an additional two million more by 2015. There are currently more than nine million registered vehicles in the province. These numbers continue to grow every year. A large part of that growth is due to the overwhelming economic success of this province. It demonstrates that this government has put the right economic building blocks in place by focusing on sound financial management, a competitive economy, jobs and growth. And as our population continues to grow, we will find increased demand for driver services.

The Ministry of Transportation is responding to an established need. By permitting my ministry to transfer the delivery of some road user services and programs to other providers, this bill would improve customer service to the public. At the same time, my ministry will still be mandated under the proposed legislation to protect the public interest.

The bill includes important provisions to protect the privacy of individuals and to safeguard the confidentiality of their personal information. Yet some concerns have been raised about the bill, especially with respect to privacy. I would like to put some of those concerns to rest right now. For instance, it has been suggested that personal information in databases would be at risk in the hands of the private sector. The fact is that MTO would retain custody and control of all databases related to driver and vehicle information. Service providers would have access to limited information only. They would only be allowed to see the information required to conduct specific transactions, as delegated by my ministry.

Another opposing point is the argument that the public, rather than the private, sector can better protect privacy. This is patently not true. Privacy would be protected to the same level under Bill 65, as it specifically ensures that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act applies to all new service providers. Therefore, the applicable records would always remain under the control of the ministry.

One of the first initiatives under this proposed legislation would be the transfer of driver exams. Yet it has been suggested that privatization would result in the inconsistent delivery of these exams. Again, the facts speak for themselves. To ensure a consistent approach and to ensure effective contract management and adherence to consistent standards, Ontario would seek one service provider to deliver driver examination services across the province. The ministry would maintain a strong role in ensuring that the new service provider fulfills its obligations as per its contract with the government. As well, the government would continue to set and enforce standards.

Some detractors would also suggest that driver licence testing is, by its nature, strictly a public service. The truth of the matter is that there is nothing in the concept of driver licence testing that makes it inherently a public service. Many professionals, such as teachers, doctors and lawyers, are licensed under a variety of systems, including private institutions. We have also heard the erroneous accusation that under Bill 65, patronage would be rampant—again, not true. Every contract awarded under Bill 65 would be awarded through an open, competitive and fair process.

To those who might suggest that privatizing road safety and driver examination services risks safety, I would like to offer my assurances that at no time will road safety be compromised. Under new service providers, the ministry would continue to develop policies, legislation and regulations, just as it does today. We would continue to safeguard the public interest at all times, regardless of what services are delivered by ministry staff or other service providers. My ministry's role would be one of ensuring the service providers meet all legislative and contractual obligations. We would continue to establish standards and set curriculum, as well as train the service provider trainers.

The risk of increased incidence of fraud and corruption has also been raised as a possible problem with respect to the bill. On that issue, it should be noted that measures are currently in place to address the issue of fraud, and those measures would continue under any new service provider. We would also institute a performance management system that ensures accountability. We would rigorously audit and monitor the service provider to ensure standards are met. And, as it is dealt with today, any instances of fraud would involve a police investigation and ultimate prosecution.

Under the proposed legislation, alternative service providers would be required to abide by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Act with respect to their actions on behalf of the ministry. Additionally, alternative service providers would be mandated to create the position of privacy officer. The privacy officer would be responsible for securing all customer records related to the delegated business. I am very pleased and proud to advise the members of this House that this legislation has received accolades from Ontario's own Information and Privacy Commissioner. In a letter to me, dated June 11, 2001, the privacy commissioner states, "The manner in which private service providers have been made subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is laudable.... This legislation, as well as the process through which privacy has been addressed, will serve as a good example to other government institutions, in the event they decide to provide services through private service providers."

1520

We're proud of this support. As well, we have received support from other parties interested in protecting the public interest. The Canada Safety Council president, Emile Therien, says, "Privatizing driver testing makes a lot of sense. It will improve safety by providing testing when it is needed. Driver testing is a government function which can and should be privatized in the interests of safety." That from the Canada Safety Council president, Emile Therien.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada had similar praise. Mark Yakabuski, the bureau's Ontario vice-president, says, "Allowing alternative service delivery for driver examinations will solidify the enormous success that Ontario's graduated licensing program has already achieved in its few short years of existence. We hope that other jurisdictions will emulate Ontario's leadership in this important area."

I again want to stress that as we transfer the delivery of services to other providers, road safety in this province will not be compromised. Indeed, the safety of all road users remains a high priority for this government and for the Ministry of Transportation. In terms of road safety, I am pleased to let the honourable members know that Ontario has moved into first place in Canada; in fact, in North America, Ontario is second only to Massachusetts. Even though there are more vehicles and licensed drivers on our roads than ever before, Ontario has the best record in Canada, with the fewest number of fatalities per 10,000 licensed drivers.

The priority this government has placed on road safety in the past several years has contributed to this important milestone. We have implemented new road user safety programs, including an immediate 90-day suspension for drivers who have been drinking, impoundment of any vehicle being driven by a person who is suspended under the Criminal Code for driving-related convictions, impoundment of critically defective commercial vehicles and higher fines and sanctions for a wide range of offences. Our fatality rate in 1999 dropped to 1.10 per 10,000 licensed drivers, marking the 11th consecutive year of improvement.

It goes without saying, however, that even one fatality is too many. Clearly, road safety is a priority that must be

addressed through a commitment by the ministry to the highest standards possible in developing and delivering effective programs. Part of delivering effective programs is providing quality customer service. The ministry has already made some significant customer service improvements that would address the growing population of Ontario drivers. In 1999, for instance, the ministry introduced several measures designed to effectively address customer service issues at our provincial driver examination services. Under those new measures, the ministry hired more than 300 driver examination staff on a temporary basis. The ministry has also opened temporary driver testing facilities and expanded the hours of operation at several provincial testing centres. As a result, the Ministry of Transportation was able to offer more road tests and we have reduced the average waiting time province-wide for driver examinations.

But it was also clear that we needed to do more. That is why the transfer of driver examination services to a new service provider is being considered as the first major initiative under this bill. It is clear that alternative service delivery of driver examinations would bring innovation and greater flexibility in the way the services are delivered. Under a new service provider, the ministry is committed to reducing the wait time for road tests to six weeks or less across the province.

As all of the honourable members know, this government has already taken a number of measures to address the growing service pressures around driver examinations. In particular, we have sought to reduce the long waiting times faced by people in some parts of the province when booking their driver exams. We have made clear progress in this regard, but we also believe there is further room for improving service delivery. By transferring the ministry's driver examination business to another service provider, the Ministry of Transportation would build on customer service improvements that have already been achieved and offer enhanced service to the public in the future.

The Ministry of Transportation has done its homework and has studied how driver exam services have been improved by the private sector elsewhere. Jurisdictions like Alberta and Michigan report high customer satisfaction after adopting alternative service delivery models. The ministry learned from other jurisdictions' successes and from their failures. As a result, we can be confident that our made-in-Ontario solution for the delivery of driver exams will reflect the best of all experiences.

Although the transfer would affect many ministry staff, we can also be confident that a new service provider would need and want to take advantage of the considerable skills and professionalism of our existing staff. A new provider of driver examination services would need a flexible, multi-skilled workforce, people who can perform in a high-demand environment with new and changing relationships. It has been suggested by some that we are dismantling a service in which vital civil service jobs would be threatened. There is no dismantling. In fact, we are strengthening my ministry's role

in the delivery of services, as I mentioned earlier, through maintaining a strict control over how private sector agents would do business.

With respect to jobs, it should be noted that job offers, as required under the collective agreements of those affected staff, would be a mandatory part of any contract with a service provider and many ministry driver examination staff may find opportunities with the new employer. This has been fully discussed with the governing union.

As I advised the House when I introduced Bill 65 for first reading, the proposed legislation has been written to address a number of important issues. For example, as part of the driver examination model, provisions would be in place to ensure that driver testing in Ontario continues to be fair and objective. As well, checks and balances would be in place to ensure that drivers who receive a licence from the province of Ontario continue to be required to meet our high standards for driving skills, as well as knowledge of the rules of the road.

Clearly, a new service provider would ensure consistency and support for our driver examination programs. For instance, the new system would provide support to, and enhance, Ontario's graduated licensing system. In itself, the graduated licensing system has been an unparalleled success story since it was introduced six years ago. A new service provider would help this program continue to build on its successful track record.

To ensure that driver testing in Ontario is delivered consistently in all parts of the province, the ministry would seek a single service provider to deliver driver testing services province-wide. Taxpayers would know exactly who is responsible for providing these services and who is accountable for their timeliness, cost and quality.

Under this new service delivery model, MTO would continue to play a vital role in the licensing of drivers on the province's roads. The ministry would establish the standards and curriculum for driver licensing. It would also train the service provider's trainers, and MTO would ensure the service provider's compliance with all of its legal and contractual obligations. As the service manager, the ministry would continue to develop policy, legislation and regulations on driver examination services, just as it does today. Moreover, the government would continue to set regulated fees for driver testing.

Under the new service delivery model, the service provider could elect to offer new value-added services to the public and would have the right to determine what fees it would charge for those value-added services. However, those services would first require approval by the Ministry of Transportation before they could be implemented. It should be emphasized again that no new services would be allowed before my ministry has had an opportunity to review them.

As I said earlier, alternative service delivery is all about serving customers better and finding more flexible and innovative ways to deliver the services. It's about dealing with growing demand in ways that are smarter

and more effective. The Ministry of Transportation will continue to be accountable for establishing quality standards throughout Ontario's transportation sector and for ensuring that every driver—every driver—who receives a licence is qualified to hold one.

Our government remains committed to examining the province's assets and the services it provides to the public, and if there is a better way to deliver those services, rest assured we will pursue it. This bill would bring us closer to that goal, and I therefore ask for the full support of this House.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further debate?

1530

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate on the time allocation motion. The minister has talked a lot about the advantages of privatization. I just want to talk about the one that the government quotes most often, and I will tell the people of Ontario my experience with it, and that is the 407.

This was a deal where the provincial government sold the highway for \$1.6 billion more than it cost to build. How were they able to do that? They were able to do it by essentially selling 407 toll road users down the road. It was no coincidence, by the way. If you look at the 407 press release, which I have here—when do you think the closing date was on the 407? When do you think the cheque was dated for the extra \$1.6 billion? May 5, 1999. The day the election was called, \$1.6 billion came in for a pre-election slush fund for the Harris government. The taxpayers may say, "Isn't it great that we sold it for \$1.6 billion more than it cost to build?" Believe me, the only way that was able to happen was because the users of the 407 are going to pay for 99 years. I remember the discussion here in the Legislature—and the reason I'm raising this is that the minister has indicated the great advantages to the public of privatizing these things, but we were told in the Legislature that the 407 might be sold for 30 years and then revert back.

I want to go over several things we were told at the time when it was sold that then turned out not to be the case. This is what the government said when they sold it, "Tolls can be adjusted by 2% per year plus inflation for the first 15 years and thereafter by inflation only." This would mean that tolls could increase by about three cents per kilometre over the first 15 years; in total, after 15 years, up three cents a kilometre. Lo and behold, as I say, the thing sold on May 5, 1999, and then the 407 owners—and I don't know how they were able to do this, because the government told us they couldn't do it. The first big increase was on September 27, 1999. This was like five months after they bought it. The next big increase was on May 1, 2000; the next big increase, January 1, 2001. In most cases the tolls went up by 57%. You remember what I read, and the government said, "Listen, trust us. Tolls are only going to go up three cents a kilometre." They've already gone up four cents a kilometre.

Originally the peak hours—and this is when you pay the extra money. The peak hours when the road was originally sold were from 5:30 am to 9:30 am and from

4 pm to 7 pm through the week, five days a week. Do you know when the peak hours are now? The peak hours are now every single day from 6 am to 11 pm. That's the peak hours now, seven days a week, Saturdays and Sundays. The cute little arrangement here, the 407, in my opinion, is ripping off the poor users of the 407.

The minister mentioned that you can use freedom of information to find out. The 407 owners have been raising money on the market and in that prospectus there's a paragraph that says, "In order to understand this prospectus"—it's about that thick because they're raising hundreds of millions of dollars—"you must come to our office and read something called the 'tolling agreement.'" I phoned them and said I'm coming out to read the tolling agreement. I told them who I was, an MPP, and I'd like to read the tolling agreement. The vice-president said, "All right, come on out, but you have to be prepared to invest." I said, "That's possible." "Yeah, but it could be \$100,000." "All right." Then when he realized he was trapped, he said, "Oh, by the way, you have to sign a confidentiality agreement saying you will never reveal anything that you see in this deal."

I have been fighting now for a year and a half, coming up to two years, to get access to that tolling agreement. I would just say that every investor in Ontario who has \$100,000 has access to it, but I and the public can't get it. I smile when the minister says, "This is all subject to freedom of information." I've been at it almost two years to get access to something that investors who have \$100,000 can get. I would just say to the people of Ontario, the great 407 privatization has been for the users of the 407, a 99-year rip-off, and I feel badly. What should have happened in that case was that the road should have been sold for cost to whoever would guarantee the best long-term deal for the users—they deserve a profit—but that isn't what happened.

The reason I raise it is because the minister today said, "Privatization is a huge advantage." I'd say that is not the case for 407 users. "Don't worry about freedom of information, because we'll make sure you get it." I've been trying. I still have appeals over there. I'm fighting the best lawyers that toll road users' money can buy to keep me from getting that information.

I might add, I have reason to believe—again, I can't find this out—that the 407 owner pays Ontario \$5 million a year for confidential information on people's driving. As I read their prospectus, it appears to me that they are acting on behalf of toll road owners in the US to collect tolls up here for them and in turn get them to collect tolls down there for Americans who have used the 407 tolls. So when the minister says, "Trust us on privatization; this is all a great deal," I would just say to the 407 users, beware.

The minister also talked today about, "This is simply part of our economic plan." I have the budget here, and in the budget the government says that in Ontario we're going to see job growth this year of 150,000 and job growth next year of 175,000. I would just say, in the last four months alone—and the statistics that came out were not influenced by the September 11 tragedy—Ontario has

lost 26,000 jobs. We haven't been gaining, we've lost, and this was before September 11. Two major banks have done their economic forecasts for Ontario and over the two-year period, using their numbers, Ontario is going to fall between 200,000 and 250,000 jobs short of the predictions in the budget. I raise this because with September 11, obviously, the problems have been exacerbated, but before that we were running into problems. So the minister said, "Trust us on the economy."

I would also say I do pay attention to the budget. For those who are interested in it, for those who like finances, it's worth looking at. But I look back: when the Premier became Premier, the debt of Ontario was \$90 billion. Today it's \$110 billion. The debt has gone up by \$20 billion. I say we have funded many of the tax cuts by deciding we would borrow money for them. The government doesn't like to hear that and we get into a big argument about it, but if you talk to economists, the money for the tax cuts—and, by the way, you will never find an economist anywhere who says tax cuts pay for themselves. I'll buy dinner for anybody who can find that, because the economists say, "Tax cuts don't pay for themselves. That's fiscal foolishness." But the Premier has decided to add \$20 billion to the debt of the province.

I would also add that in 1990, the credit rating of Ontario was AAA, the best you can get. Today, after six years of the Premier, it's two rating points below that, still substantially below what it was in 1990. Again, I make that point because when the minister talked about the advantages of these things, it is because that's how they have run the province: 26,000 job losses in the last four months and \$20 billion more in debt in Ontario.

If you look at the economic forecasts by the major banks, of the 10 provinces, Ontario will be the weakest in terms of economic performance in 2001 and 2002. This gets me to the concern about a couple of policies the government is pursuing that I think will exacerbate our fiscal problems. One is deciding that we are going to spend \$500 million each and every year funding private schools. Believe me, our public education system, now and in the future, is struggling. It needs support. Yet, starting in now less than three months, we are going to begin to spend \$500 million a year.

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Finally, I would say that the other policy is that the government has decided that corporate taxes in the province of Ontario are going to be 25% lower than our competitors' in the US. I have this thing in my mind where I see Governor Ridge of Pennsylvania. He's saying, "Come to Pennsylvania because we have the best education system around." That's how he's competing. And we've decided we're going to compete on the basis of corporate taxes 25% lower than the US. In our opinion, that makes our health care system and our education system fiscally unsustainable.

I appreciated the minister's comments on it, but for those reasons we have some significant concerns on this legislation and the time allocation.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It gives me great pleasure today to rise in this House to speak about

the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. As many members already know, the proposed legislation is designed to allow some Ministry of Transportation services to be delivered by another service provider. This is in keeping with a promise that this government made, in its Common Sense Revolution and Blueprint, to ensure a smaller, more efficient government. This legislation fulfills that promise.

It is a bill designed to improve customer service without compromising safety. It gives the Ministry of Transportation the authority to transfer the delivery of some road user programs and services to other providers. This legislation also ensures that the Minister of Transportation would continue to safeguard and protect the public interest.

The bill, if passed, would lead to significant improvements in the delivery of customer services to the Ontario public. It reflects the government's intention to focus on setting quality standards, effectively managing services, and monitoring and rigorously auditing service providers to ensure that they comply with the legislative and contractual obligations. Better customer service is what Bill 65 is all about.

I know that due to time allocation this government is working hard to get this bill passed so that all Ontarians may realize its benefit as soon as possible. I know too that since this bill was first introduced in the House, it has been significantly changed to reflect the feedback it has received from various sources. This government worked hard to listen to all parties involved. Meetings took place with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union on the issue of jobs, and the government heard from the opposition and took into account its concerns over this particular bill. I understand the bill now reflects these concerns and I believe that it certainly needs no further amendments. In fact, it's in the best interests of the people of Ontario to move this legislation forward.

As I have said, the bill's benefits are great, for in addition to providing better customer service, Bill 65 would continue to vigorously maintain the privacy so important to Ontarians. Bill 65 would ensure a continued commitment to road user safety in this province.

Members know that driver examinations and a range of related services are currently provided by the Ministry of Transportation. For this government, keeping pace with change has meant making the right decisions.

Despite recent concerns over a potential economic downturn, our province continues to grow, thanks to the efforts of this government. Since 1995, we have put the right economic building blocks in place, with sound financial management and a competitive economy that stresses job creation and investment.

Our economy has grown by almost 25% since 1995. More than 550,000 new jobs were created in Ontario between 1998 and the year 2000. That's the best pace of job growth in our province's history. All of this positions us for continued economic success as we go into the future.

Certainly this government has paid attention to maintaining and improving our transportation infrastructure, which is key to our growth. Ontario's first-class highway system, a cornerstone of our economy, handles more than \$1 trillion in goods every year—that's \$2.7 billion per day—and we continue to invest in Ontario's transportation system to make it safer and more efficient to get goods across our province and to our international trading partners. For example, by the end of this year, the Harris government will have invested more than \$6 billion in highway capital programs, a level unprecedented in Ontario's history.

This government is working to integrate transportation, infrastructure, planning and investment to ensure a strong economy, strong communities, job creation and a healthy environment for future generations. It's an approach that will ensure continued prosperity for this province and it gets the economic climate right for continued growth. Continued growth means keeping this province on track to achieve its goals. Doing better than before and continuing to apply excellent standards of service is what alternative service delivery is all about.

It should be emphasized too that this legislation would ensure that road safety would not be compromised. MTO would continue to safeguard the public interest by regularly monitoring and auditing new service providers to ensure that they comply with all legislative and contractual obligations. Alternative service delivery reinforces and builds on that commitment. While there might be some opposition to the benefits of alternative service delivery, I can say that Bill 65 would make Ontario standards for customer service even better.

Of course, there have been detractors, those who oppose this legislation because they don't believe it would reap any benefits. There are those who insist that personal information and databases would be at risk in the hands of the private sector. The truth is that MTO would retain custody and control of all databases related to driver and vehicle information, and service providers would only have access to limited information; in other words, only the information required to conduct specific transactions as delegated by the Ministry of Transportation.

There has been a suggestion that the public sector can better protect privacy than the private sector. The answer to that is a clear and emphatic no. Under Bill 65, privacy would be protected at the same level as it is today. The applicable records would remain under the control of the Ministry of Transportation.

Some have said that privatization would result in the inconsistent delivery of driver exams. Again, an emphatic no. I can tell you that the Ministry of Transportation is dedicated to ensuring a consistent approach on contract management and adherence to consistent standards. That's why the ministry is seeking one service provider to deliver driver examination services across our province. MTO would continue to oversee all operations, ensuring that this new provider would fulfill its obligation as laid out in its contract to the people of our province.

There have been unfounded allegations too that public patronage would be rampant under Bill 65. Again, not true. Every single contract awarded under Bill 65 would be awarded through an open, competitive and fair process.

An opposing point also states that privatizing road safety and driver examination service risks the safety of the people of Ontario. I can tell you that this government has made road user safety a major priority. That is why Ontario is in the number one spot in Canada in road safety and number two in North America, behind Massachusetts. We will continue to build on that record. Alternative service delivery would ensure that road safety is not compromised.

Under new service providers, MTO would continue to develop policies, legislation and regulations governing road safety, just as it does today. The public's interest would continue to be safeguarded at all times. This is regardless of whether services are delivered by MTO staff or by other service providers.

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Others have said, again with regard to the benefits inherent in this bill, that alternative service delivery risks privacy. Let me say now that after reviewing its contents, I believe the risk to privacy is absolutely nil. In fact, this bill has received accolades from Ontario's own Information and Privacy Commissioner. Consider that the commissioner heads an independent office responsible for acting independently of government to uphold and promote open government and the protection of personal privacy. My feeling is that if the commissioner states that this legislation is strong, well-written and more than sufficient in upholding Ontario's commitment to protecting personal privacy, then I'm also inclined to believe it. It's true, Bill 65 would require new service providers to abide by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, ensuring that the privacy of Ontarians would be protected. Personal information would be governed by this act, and contracts between this government and the new service providers would require the signing of a confidentiality agreement by each and every employee of the service provider.

To those who might suggest that this legislation would open up the possibility of corruption and fraud, this is just not true. Measures are in place right now to address the issue of fraud. Those measures won't change; they would continue under any new service provider. The Ministry of Transportation would also institute a performance management system to ensure accountability. The Ministry of Transportation would audit and monitor the service provider to ensure that standards are met. And, as it is today, any instances of fraud or corruption would involve a vigorous police investigation.

It is clear that if passed, Bill 65 would have many practical benefits. It would enhance efficiencies, reduce waiting times and build on the long-term effectiveness of customer service delivery in our province. Alternative service delivery would help sustain the significant customer service improvements we have already achieved while supporting greater innovation in service delivery.

The initiative builds on measures announced in the fall of 1999 to improve customer service and reduce road test waiting times. It is clear that Ontarians would not lose with alternative service delivery, because its direction and intent quite simply is to provide them with better service. Pure and simple, the goal is to improve customer service, and the people of Ontario would be the beneficiaries. Others have already spoken to the bill's benefits with respect to enhancing government accountability, boosting our road safety and ensuring greater privacy. All told, Bill 65 would bring better, more efficient and cost-effective services to the people of our province.

With the passage of this legislation, new service providers would work closely with the ministry to deliver top-level driver examinations and other driver services across our province. MTO would continue to manage and supervise delivery of these services and, as I mentioned earlier, would ensure that the new service providers adhere to a performance management system that maintains this commitment to excellence. In this way, the public would enjoy more efficient and cost-effective services and the ministry would be able to focus on its proper role of service management rather than service delivery.

I believe all members of this House should join me in supporting this bill. Like so many other changes we have seen over the years, this proposed legislation is designed to build on the steady progress we have made to keep Ontario strong and growing. I invite all members of this House to pledge their support for the proposed legislation.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments here today.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I'm pleased to stand in my place today and speak to Bill 65. The problem, and it hasn't been mentioned much by the government members, is that what we're really speaking to is a resolution to choke off debate. I've said time and time again, as this government has brought forward time allocation motions time after time, having observed this Legislature over the eight years I've been here and knowing of its operation even before that, this is simply another undemocratic move to cut off the opportunity of members like myself and others to debate the issues of the day. Nevertheless, that's what we have to deal with.

This legislation, or legislation similar to it, was brought in way last year and was allowed to die on the order paper. If the government was so concerned about proceeding with this quickly and with road safety, I guess they would have brought this legislation forward at that time and not let it die.

But since some of the issues with regard to Bill 65 have been discussed today, I'd like to make some comments on them as well.

The speaker just prior to me I think used the words that this legislation will provide for better, more efficient, cost-effective service. Well, goodness knows we need it. An example is in Essex county, in my riding. The only place you can get a driver examination is in the city of

Windsor or the city of Chatham, and both of those are woefully backed up.

The government is the one that has let it happen. There are several reasons for it that we warned them about. One was that with graduated licensing coming to its maturity of five years, any reasonable person would have known that there's going to be a great demand for driver examinations. But did they prepare for it? Did these great managers prepare for it? Not at all.

If you want to back up an argument for better, more efficient, cost-effective service, all you have to do is let the service you have go to pot, and that's what they've done. It would have been well within their control to have provided better, more efficient, cost-effective service with the driver examination centres that we have today and with the staff that's in those driver examination centres that we have today.

I'm concerned, under this legislation, that the profit factor will come into play. It's going to the private sector; the private sector is going to have to make a buck on it. I'm not at all convinced that those of us in rural Ontario are going to be better served by it. As I pointed out, constituents of mine now have to travel into the city. Frankly, in some cases, for some of my constituents, they have to be tested in a geographical area that they're unaccustomed to driving in. So I don't see at all where this legislation is going to help anyone in rural Ontario, because I can't imagine that any one of these private companies will want to set up shop in rural Ontario.

Government has a responsibility to provide services, and sometimes those services have to be provided at a cost to the general population. But no, they're going to say to these private companies, "You take it over," and what I fear is going to happen is that in fact if there are driver examination centres anywhere near rural or small urban Ontario, we might even lose those, that they are going to be moved into these big centres where that profit can be made.

So I oppose this legislation on the very notion and thought that it's not going to do a darn thing for my constituents, and if it isn't, then it's bad and I'll have to vote against it.

Road safety has been talked about with regard to this piece of legislation. I haven't the slightest idea how it's going to do anything for road safety. If in fact, as the government says, there will be regulations and stiff penalties and all those kinds of things on these private companies, that's nothing more than we would have expected of the government itself. So I don't see how it's going to improve on any situation that we have today. In fact, I think there's a danger that it might even be less safe.

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It was only a few months ago, quite by coincidence, that I watched one of the news information programs out of the US. They did some undercover reviewing of the driver's licence system. I believe it was in the state of New York, but it matters little where it was. It was the fact that it was a private organization. And what did they turn up? They turned up examiners who weren't

qualified. They turned up that some examiners were actually taking money for certain favours that could be done.

Yes, the speaker just prior to me said there will be penalties for that, but we know there were instances recently in this province where laboratories were privatized, and what happened? A tragedy in Walkerton. So I don't know why I should have any more faith in some profit-making private organization taking over the examination of drivers and that it's going to be any safer for anybody on the roads of our province.

It may result in higher costs to drivers. The government has said, "We're going to control prices." Well, I say to the government, if you're going to stick your nose in and control the prices, the examination fee, then I think you should be right in the examination business itself, where the accountability then is directly on your shoulders. I can imagine that somewhere along the way there is going to be a plea by one or more of these private companies that, "Well, government, we can't make any money at this. We've got to have higher fees." For goodness' sake, take for example the increase in fees there has been on Highway 407.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): It's a nightmare.

Mr Crozier: As my colleague says, it's been a nightmare. And you know why? Because the private sector came back and said, "Government, we can't make any money on this. You've got to help us out. We've got to make big profits so we can get some of those big corporate tax cuts that you've given out."

I've already mentioned the reduced service I think there will be for small urban and rural Ontario. I'm going to be most anxious to keep my eye on that, and I'm sure my constituents will help me do that.

Finally, I want to touch on the fact that there will be access to confidential information. We know that for various medical reasons—and it's obvious with me that I wear glasses. My driver's licence says I have to wear glasses. That's OK. But there is other medical information that is required when someone is applying for a driver's licence or has had a driver's licence suspended for medical reasons and wants to get that licence back. They may have to be re-examined. They will be questioned and there will be private medical information. That I think is intolerable. The only body that can be responsible for private medical examination in this province should be the government itself. I don't believe for a minute when we take the Province of Ontario Savings Office, which gave out private information—we know they are selling Drive Clean information. This government is in the business of making a buck off privacy issues, and I don't like that.

For that reason alone, along with all the others, I'm sorry, I can't support this legislation and I will be voting against it.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Again, for the second day in a row, we find that the government has come back with what is effectively a closure motion to push, by way of the legislative authority the government has, this particular bill through the House.

We were here yesterday. Where were we in this debate in second reading? I think we may have had one speaker in the NDP caucus left to speak on the bill. I don't know about the Liberal Party, but I don't think there was a whole bunch of members there either who were at the point of needing to speak on the bill. The opposition was not filibustering the bill. We were going to allow the bill to go to committee in order to deal with the issues it has to deal with there, and the government, by the way they normally do things here in this Legislature, said, "Well, let's bring in a time allocation motion on yet another bill."

I've got to say that I sat through the Parliament of 1990 to 1995, when I had the privilege of serving in government where I listened to members like the former Speaker, Mr Stockwell, and others who are here today, rail against the NDP government for having introduced time allocation motions a number of times, I think a grand total of 21 in our time in government in five years. I would argue, as I said yesterday, even 21 was too many for us. I think we need to find a more democratic way to work things.

But the point I make is, I've got to do some research, because I'm telling you, the number of times this government has moved time allocation in this House has got to be an all-time record. It seems to be that at least once or twice a week we're finding ourselves debating yet another time allocation motion. If it was a question where the opposition was holding up the bill, I would say, "I don't like it, but I understand it." But what you've got is a bill that we had basically used up all our speakers on. The bill could have gone to second reading, I would imagine, if it had come into the House for yet another day because, as I say, members of my caucus had pretty well spoken to the issues that they wanted to raise on this bill. As the whip of our caucus, I had canvassed the members to find out how many other speakers there were and there was but one who wanted to speak on the bill. Again I say, I don't know about the other side, the Liberal Party. I don't think they had a whole bunch either.

What is it? Is it a question that the government House leader is incompetent? I don't think so. I know Janet Ecker. She's going to make a fine candidate in her bid for the leadership race of the Conservative Party. I know she's not incompetent.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Are you endorsing her?

Mr Bisson: I wouldn't endorse any of them. I think they're all going in the wrong direction. Listen, it's not a question that she's incompetent. She's a very competent minister, as I said yesterday. I say to myself then, why is it that the government feels they've got to come in with yet another time allocation motion? It's beginning to appear that basically the government doesn't like the process of democracy. I really have to start believing that's what it's all about.

If you listen to the complaints of citizens out in Ontario as we travel around as citizens or parliamentar-

ians across this great province, if there's one thing that sticks—it's no longer going to be the Mike Harris government, because we learned today that Mike has decided to call it quits after being in politics for some 19 years. But the one thing that sticks to the Conservative government, the regime, is that it's not a regime that is extremely democratic. People say they don't listen. For example, when the citizens of the city of Toronto and all the boroughs and municipalities prior to amalgamation decided by referendum that they didn't want to amalgamate, the provincial government of the day, the Conservatives of the day under Mike Harris, said, "No, we're not going to listen. We're going to forge ahead." When people in the educational sector said the government was wrong when it instituted a number of changes in education that quite frankly were nothing more than picking a fight with teachers, the government just steamed ahead anyway. Example after example has been that this government is not prepared to listen in a serious way to the public.

The other issue I have is about how this Legislature operates overall. I raised it yesterday and I'll raise it again. I really believe that the system of government we have today, the old British parliamentary system that we operate with today, is antiquated, passé, a thing of the past and, quite frankly, should be gotten rid of. What we have is a system of government, because we have changed the rules in this House over a period of years—and that's not just the Conservatives, in fairness. As I said yesterday, Tories, New Democrats and Liberals have all added to the demise of how the rules operate in this House so that we have got to the point where we are now. I would argue, however, that the Tories have done about 75% of the work on their own. They've really gone a long way to limit debate, but here we have a situation where, because of the way the parliamentary system works as far as how we elect members and how the rules work once they get into the House, it's really the Premier, whoever he or she might be after this leadership race, and a few unelected officials who surround the Premier who basically have all the power. Because the Premier is the one who appoints who sits in cabinet, all of the people on his side of the House, if it's a him—on her side of the House if it's a her—basically fall in line. They are able to bloody well do what they want with either the executive council, meaning the cabinet, or with the caucus, and there is not a thing any of them can do about it. Our system of parliamentary rule says there has to be strict, rigid control of the parties once you're elected to government, because we say that if you lose a confidence vote on certain issues, the government falls. So for that and a whole bunch of other traditional reasons, the caucuses tend to rally around the leader and the power that's concentrated in his or her hands. I say to the government across the way that it is not a good way to serve democracy.

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I know, because I was in government, and I would argue that there are many Conservatives—not only back-

benchers, I would suspect, but also cabinet ministers and former cabinet ministers—who feel as I do that this system of British parliamentary rule that we have now doesn't work. Backbenchers of the government as well as opposition members don't feel they have the kind of effect they need in order to influence the decisions of a government, and feel they're quite stifled. If a government backbencher disagrees with a particular government bill or wants to have particular changes in the bill, the member is made to shut up, or else the Premier will look on you in a negative way, and I know government members resent that. I know my good friend Mr Murdoch will never get anywhere within the Conservative Party because he tends to speak his mind. I think the only one who was bright enough to speak his own mind and to weasel his way into cabinet was the former Speaker, Mr Stockwell. I think it's a great credit to him in the sense that he was bright enough to hold one over Mike so that he had no choice. It will be interesting to see if my friend Chris Stockwell actually runs for leader of the Conservative Party. I don't imagine he will unless he thinks he can win, but that's another story.

I ask, what can be done? I would argue that what we need to do is change the way this place operates overall. I would argue you have to do voting reform. I've mentioned this on a number of occasions and I will mention it again. I believe we'd be better served by a system of proportional representation. I believe in the system that basically says, "Any party that wins 44% of the vote in a general election should have no more than 44% of the seats in the House," and all parties should be apportioned the number of seats entitled to them by way of the percentage of vote they got in a general election. In the end that means, if in the last general election Mike Harris got 41% of the vote—I forget what the overall number was, but we'll say it was 41%—you wouldn't end up with what we've got now: 41% of the vote in a general election and 60% of the seats in the House. It's absurd. Democracy is not being respected. Some 60% of the people who voted against the government say, "Oh gee, I didn't want that."

Remember the Brian Mulroney election where we got into this whole free trade debacle? Over 60% of the Canadian population voted in opposition to free trade by voting against the Conservatives in whatever fashion. But because of the quirky system that we have that basically says that a party with 38% of the vote—as in the case of Brian Mulroney—can win 60% of the seats in the House and concentrate their vote geographically in certain ridings, he ended up with a huge majority in the House, was able to introduce free trade, passed it through, and it was basically done, even though over 60% of the people said no.

When it came to the amalgamation of the city of Toronto, I would argue, where a majority of residents in the old city of Toronto, the boroughs of North York, Scarborough and all the others, were opposed to it, they would have been able as citizens to exercise some pressure on their local members and say, "I'm not in

favour and I request that as my member you represent that view." Mike Harris would have had to sit down and take into account what people in those communities were saying. With 41% of the vote, he would have had only 41% of the seats in this House and he could not have moved on his own with his own party. He would have had to either smoke the Liberals out and have them vote for or against it or do the same with us as New Democrats, or a combination thereof. But at least then the public knows what their representatives are really doing.

The other downfall that we now have in this democracy—I don't even call it a democracy any more. It's a tyranny. What do they call it? It's parliamentary tyranny when it comes to the way this place works. At least under a PR system, one of the advantages in my view is that members are made to be more accountable because the government does not have a clear majority and has to rely on picking up votes across the House. It means that I as a New Democrat can't just vote according to what my party wants. I also have to take into account what my citizens want. If an issue is such that the community and the riding of Timmins-James Bay says, "Hey, Gilles Bisson, our representative, this is an important issue. We need you to represent our views on that," I must take that view not only to my caucus, but bring it to the floor of the Legislature by way of my vote. At the end of the day, if I vote against my constituents, they throw me out. That's a good thing, in my view.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Also, they're empowered, because then their vote is not wasted.

Mr Bisson: They're empowered; that's the whole issue. Exactly. Every vote is not wasted. It doesn't matter, at the end of the day, which party you vote for; when that independent person comes to this House as a New Democrat, a Liberal or a Conservative, they come in and their vote counts.

Mr Marchese: Each vote—each and every vote.

Mr Bisson: Each vote becomes important. The government of the day needs to depend on all the members of the Legislature to make things happen. I ask, what is wrong with that?

I know what the argument is going to be, because I've been down this road before. Governments in power don't want to move to proportional representation. They don't want voting reform. Why? Because it concentrates the power in the hands of the Premier's office. Why do I know that? Because I was a member of a government, and I remember at the time when I was first elected in 1990, one of the issues I brought to caucus was the whole issue of PR. My party, at the time, because they were the majority, said, "Well, it's a good idea, Gilles. Maybe in the second term we'll do that." Boy, did we get fooled. We never got one—for good reason, maybe.

But the point is I say no government in power and no party that is about to attain power should be trusted on this issue, quite frankly. I think the citizens have to take a certain ownership on this issue themselves and demand that their political representatives, no matter what party

they belong to, are able to push ahead the idea of moving and doing actual voter reform such as we've seen in Europe.

One of the arguments we get with people who are opposed to the whole issue of voter reform when we talk about proportional representation is they say it leads to instability; because you don't have a majority in the House at all times as a government, it leads to unstable governments. Well, let's take a look at what has happened. Europe—is Europe an unstable democracy? Germany? France? Italy, even—and we'll talk about Italy in a second. England and others? Are they unstable? No. Germany is the strongest economy in Europe, bar none, and they have had a system of mixed proportional representation for the better part of 50 years. They've managed to have some of the most progressive legislation on the entire continent of Europe, along with France, and they've done that under a PR system. There has not been a situation where the government has had a clearer majority in Germany—I don't think it has happened since after the Second World War. I'd have to go back and look at the actual stats. But the way they are able to govern is like what happened with Mr Schroeder and the labour party in the last election. They did not attain 50% of the vote and the labour party in Germany has to go to other members to get the kind of support they need to support the government to move the agenda forward.

So what does that do? It says the labour party can't just do what it wants. Do you know what? Maybe that's not a bad thing. Maybe you have to have some Tories in there, and maybe you have to have some others, Greens or whatever, in order to temper the labour party in Germany so they don't just go out and do what they want, so they take into account what the public has to say. What we've had in Germany is stable government, a strong economy and, quite frankly, a higher participation on election day by the voters and higher satisfaction, generally, of government.

I was in Italy about eight or 10 months ago, or whenever it was. I had an opportunity to go there with my youngest daughter. I like to travel every year. My wife doesn't fly, so I take one of my daughters with me. I was there with my youngest daughter, Nathalie, and I had an opportunity to speak to a number of German travellers who were in Venice at the time, along with my daughter and myself. It is very interesting when you talk to the Germans about politics, because their entire sense of government is totally different from ours. If you talk to North Americans, we look at government as a pariah of the people and we look at governments as not being able to provide any meaningful solutions. They're like, "Get them off my back." When you talk to the Germans, the French, the Swiss and others who have systems of government that are either mixed proportional representation or pure proportional representation, there is a much stronger satisfaction with the whole notion of government because they understand that government can and should play a positive role.

You can even go to the extreme of Switzerland. Now I would not advocate this for Canada, because we're not there, but I find this very fascinating. I think most people would argue that Switzerland is one of the more progressive places in Europe. One of the interesting things they have over there is not only proportional representation as the way they elect members, but the way the rules of the House are, no government can introduce a bill and spend X millions of dollars without a referendum.

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I don't particularly like referendums per se. I think you can achieve the same thing through PR. But the interesting point is when you look at what they've done in Switzerland, the Swiss labour party at the time—and I think it's still the labour party that's in power there—tried to introduce for the people of Switzerland a bill that would give better daycare provisions for families across Switzerland. Because of the type of government they have, because the cost is above the amount of money they can apportion as a cabinet and as a Legislature, they had to go to a referendum.

Interestingly enough, the referendum was rejected, but not for the reasons you would believe in California, where the big lobbyists are opposed to not-for-profit daycare; it was a question where the public was not satisfied that the plan being presented by the government quite covered off the bases that needed to be covered off. So the government had to go back and redo it, take into account what the public had said, reintroduce another referendum and then they got the authority to go ahead and do it. My Lord, isn't that an interesting concept—the public actually getting what they want? Man, would that be a refreshing start here in the province of Ontario.

So I say there are ways that we should be looking at as a Legislature to make this place much more accountable to the public so the Legislature speaks for the people and not the other way around. Yes, we have to have leaders in times of crisis; yes, we have to have leaders to help us through hard economic situations such as we've had, but you can still get that in a system of PR. The important point is people have to have confidence in those institutions.

We have an opportunity. I know my good friend Mr DeFaria, who I travelled with to all parts of the world, when we went to Africa some two or three years ago in order to meet there with l'AIPLF—as you well know, we've talked about this particular issue ourselves. We have an opportunity—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: Well, Joe, you didn't come along. I didn't see you there. I think you were off travelling somewhere else, but that's another story.

We have an opportunity. We have a golden opportunity right now. The government, in its last throne speech, introduced a notion that we would set up a committee that would look at the role of members. Specifically, what the government was looking at doing was how we can better use electronic technology for members, the

type of support services we as MPPs can use. Margaret Marland is the Chair of that committee. We just had a motion of the House pass this week that allows that committee to deal with this particular issue. I plan on going to that committee and pushing the committee to take a look at the various models of voting reform that have been done across the world and seeing if we can put together some sort of document that we can propose to the people of this province.

As a New Democrat, I hope to be in a position later on this winter or this spring to convene some sort of conference here in Toronto—or in other communities for that matter—where we can bring people in and start talking about the need to have voting reform. Because if we cannot reform the voting process in order to give people a voice and give people a sense of ownership about their governments and some pride, I think we're in deep, deep trouble.

I want to say that again, because every time we end up with time allocation motions, it gives me the only opportunity to raise this particular issue and I wanted to do this with the time. I ask people, if they're members of the House, or in fact the public who happen to be watching or reading this in Hansard, if you want more information on the whole issue of proportional representation, get hold of me. That's my name on the bottom of the screen: Gilles Bisson. It's real simple: gilles@gillesbisson.com. Send me an e-mail. I'd be glad to talk to you about it.

I want to get back now to the issue that is being treated within the time allocation motion itself, and that's the whole issue of road safety and what this particular bill is supposedly going to do in order to deal with an issue that the government says is a problem. Here's the issue: we are now in a situation where people who go to get their drivers' tests are having to wait unseen amounts of time—six to 12 weeks—to get an appointment to get that road safety test so they can get their driver's licences—clearly unacceptable.

The government says to us, "We're going to fix this problem by privatizing the service that MTO now provides." They're saying that the only way to fix this is to take away from the public servants who work for MTO this responsibility and put it into a private sector for-profit corporation that will be charged with dealing with this issue.

I see the government members are going like that. They say, "Yes, it's a good idea." It makes me think of the little doggie in the back of the car, always doing one of those.

Let's review why we got to this place in the first place. The issue of the waiting lists for people to get their drivers' tests is not something that was just always there. It's something that this government created. It created it in two ways: first of all, our government, when in power, the government admits, introduced a very good bill, the whole system of graduated drivers' licences. Under that system, people who get tested need to come in and get their full classification for drivers' licences at the end of five years. So the government knew, as we did, that in

five years, which was going to start in 1997, it would have a surplus of people coming to it in order to get drivers' tests in the province of Ontario. What did this government do to deal with what it knew was going to be a higher demand? In 1995-96 it slashed the budget of the Ministry of Transportation severely and, as a result, laid off a number of workers who were the very people who were responsible for scheduling and doing those tests with the drivers across the province. So not only did we end up having more people coming into the system and needing this service, which added to the longer waiting lists, the government, instead of hiring, fired the people who were there to do it. As a result now, we've got this huge waiting list.

Mr Marchese: They made it worse, deliberately.

Mr Bisson: They made it worse. In communities across small-town Ontario—and I don't know, maybe my good friend Mr Marchese wants to speak to this a little bit later. Mr Marchese can indicate if he wants any time on this. If you want any time, you can indicate at any time you do.

Mr Marchese: I will do that.

Mr Bisson: Very good. It looked as if you were looking to get into the debate, Mr Marchese.

I was just saying that they added to the problem. If you look at what it means for small-town Ontario, I can tell you about my riding, Timmins-James Bay. Communities like Hearst and Smooth Rock Falls and Mattice lost the examiners who were coming to their communities. I don't know how many times—at least two or three occasions—I've had to intervene directly with the Ministry of Transportation office to try to wrangle some staff out of somewhere so that we can at least get part-time coverage in some of those communities.

It means that for a lot of those communities, especially the smaller ones, you can't even get a driver's test in your own community; you have to drive 40, 50 miles away, depending on where you live, in order to get that. I know it's the same problem in southwestern Ontario, as it is for the southeast and rural Ontario; it has been real havoc for them.

For seniors and others who need to go and get their driver's test because of their age, it is really a problem because a lot of these people only use their cars in their own small communities. They don't want them for anything else than going from their home to the grocery store or to go visit their family. They don't want to drive into the larger communities, and now they're forced to drive into those communities that they don't want to come into.

Anyway, the government created this problem. They're saying that the only way to fix this is by way of coming in and making sure that we privatize the service. Are we going to get better service by way of privatization? I think that's the question we have to ask ourselves. I think the answer is a resounding no. In all instances where the government has gone out to privatize services here in the province of Ontario, where we have gone back and done studies by way of the auditor or

other committees of this assembly to look at the effectiveness of privatization, it has been a total disaster.

Mr Marchese: The taxpayers are paying for it.

Mr Bisson: Exactly. You know, you stole the words right out of my mouth, as the song says. Basically, the taxpayers at the end of the day are the ones who are left footing the bill.

I want to share with members of the assembly the 1999 Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor. As all of us here know, the Provincial Auditor is a person appointed by our Legislature to oversee the public spending of the province of Ontario. He is there—or she, when it is a woman—to be able, by way of the auditor's committee—members select which ministries they want audited. The Provincial Auditor goes in with his team, audits the particular ministry and comes back with a report. As members of the assembly, we get a good opportunity to ask very detailed questions about how expenses have been organized within particular ministries and the effectiveness of how those ministries are operating. What's very revealing is that in the 1999 annual report, where we look at expenditures of the Ministry of Transportation, where they have privatized winter road maintenance, it's been a disaster.

Just to set this up so people remember what we're talking about, the government privatized highway winter maintenance back in 1996-97. Up to that point we had a hybrid system where 50% of the snowplows were owned by the province and 50% were owned by the private sector. The ministry was responsible for patrolling the highways and deciding where the snowplows went and how often they needed to be there etc. As a result, we had a fairly good system in the province of Ontario. In fact, Ontario was the place that people came to take a look at how you should maintain highways in winter months and in summer months. Ontario was a leader. We had people coming from various state Legislatures from across the northern part of the United States and from the rest of Canada who would come to meet with MTO employees and supervisors to take a look at how we did things, because we had developed over a period of years one of the best systems of highway maintenance in North America, if not the world, but I know for North America.

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The government back in 1995-96 made the announcement that it wanted to privatize those services. I remember that at the time that was done, the Minister of Finance at the time, Ernie Eves, said, "I want to do this and we're going ahead and doing it. If we don't save at least 5% of overall cost to the taxpayer, it's not worth doing." I would have been happy if it had been a break-even. So the government gave a clear commitment that it was going to do this and it was going to save at least more than 5%. It would be a much more accountable system, they said, plus we would get better service.

Here's where we're at some four or five years now after we privatized winter road maintenance. We never used to get, in northern Ontario, the amount of highway closures that we get now. It used to be, up until 1996, that

if you went out on Highway 11 any time in the winter, from Timmins or Kapuskasing up to Hearst, it was very seldom you got stuck in a community and you couldn't get out. It had to be a real blizzard such that you would not go. It would not be because of the highway that you couldn't drive most of the time; it was because of visibility. You can't see. The highway's there but there's so much snow that you're blinded. Those were the occasions where you didn't venture out on the highway.

Nowadays, I can tell you—I have this experience, because I travel up and down those highways on a constant basis in the riding that I have, the second-largest riding in the province. Last year, and I should have kept these numbers, I can remember four or five occasions where I had to overnight in communities, not planned, because of highway closures, not because there was still a snowstorm and I couldn't drive because of visibility. The snow had stopped falling by that point, but they hadn't got the snowplows out in sufficient numbers to make the road safe. You'd talk to the truckers who had come up Highway 11 and they'd say, "Oh, Jeez, don't do that, man; there were all kinds of people in the ditch." Then the next day I'd get in my car and I'd drive down the highway and I'd see car in the ditch, car in the ditch, car in the ditch. I remember on one particular trip last winter I counted something like 14 cars in the ditch between Mattice and the cut-off point to Timmins on Highway 11. Fourteen. We never used to see that before. So are we any better off? Are we getting better service? The answer is no. We know that from the anecdotal evidence.

But more important, let's look at what the auditor has to say. It is unbelievable that the government gets away with this, because the government tries to make itself out to be the best people in the world when it comes to managing services. Nobody is better than Conservatives when it comes to managing government, so we're told. The auditor comes back and says, "The ministry had not achieved the target savings of 5% on the four outsourcing contracts...." All right? That's the comment that he makes.

He goes on then to break out what the savings actually were. Here's the big savings that we got when it came to highway maintenance. When this report was done in 1999, there were four outsourced contracts that were out long enough that he was able to go out and audit them after at least a year of service. In district A there was a saving. District A saved \$296,000. There's the good news. In district B, there was a loss—we spent more than the previous year—of \$864,000 for the same highways that were done by the Ministry of Transportation the year before. In district C, there was \$386,000 more spent in highway maintenance than there was the year before that. In district D, an increase of \$1.09 million was spent. The total cost to the ministry over the year before for those four contracts was \$2.05 million more than we had spent the year before. So have we saved any money?

Now, this is not an increase in service. We've had a decrease in service and it's costing us more money, by

the words of the Provincial Auditor, Erik Peters. I would say certainly what the auditor is saying is that we're not getting the savings that the government said we were going to get when we first went out there.

So you say to yourself, why is the government doing this? If you're not saving any money and you're not getting better service, why are you doing it? It's simply an ideological belief on the part of the government that privatization is the only way to go.

It kind of brings me back to my first point about how this Legislature works. I would argue that if we would have had a system of proportional representation in the province, the government, when they moved to do this, would have had to get the support of somebody on this side of the House. I can tell you, I would have never given it to you, because I don't believe that even then—and even now that I've been proven right—you could make the kinds of savings that you said you would by way of privatization. All that privatization is, quite simply, figuring out a way to pay workers less. That's all it is.

All we've done with this whole initiative of privatization is move from paying provincial employees 14 or 15 bucks an hour to drive a snowplow to having some private operator keep the 15 bucks, put it in his or her pocket and then pay the worker \$7 or \$8 or \$9 or \$10 an hour, depending on the contractor. Wow, is that contractor ever efficient, is that contractor ever smarter than the government. Whoa. Of course they're smarter; they put the money in their pocket and the worker gets less.

Is the private operator organized any better? No. There are some good contractors out there; I'm not going to argue that there are not. But overall, the ministry does a much better job because they must maintain certain standards that are prescribed by way of the minister's orders and by way of the policies in the ministry itself, and we need to ensure that those services are given that way.

Another comment that the Provincial Auditor makes in his report—and again, I think it's an indictment on what the government has done. I'm going to have to explain this one, because this is really the gift they gave to the contractors. It says, "Subsequent to awarding highway maintenance contracts, the ministry engaged the contractors to perform additional work without tender and offered these contractors surplus ministry vehicles and equipment without going through the required public auction."

Now, there are two issues here. You know when you see the ministry employees, guys standing beside the road and they're taking out the guardrails that have been broken or changing the signs on the side of the highway or fixing up the shoulder because the shoulder has eroded? Well, the ministry used to do that with their own employees. Those people who, by and large, were employed doing snowplowing in the winter, in the summer were transferred into the yards to do those kinds of jobs. They would put a crew together, they'd go out and they'd fix the side of the highways, fix the guardrails, fix the

shoulders, cut the grass, do all that stuff that had to be done. And that was done by the ministry employees for no extra money other than material, because they were already employees who were paid.

What they did under the area maintenance contracts, they said to the contractors, "By the way, if you see anything broken on the side of the highway, fix this and send us the bill." What a sweetheart deal that is. Wow. I am the contractor—and this is what he's basically worried about. The auditor is saying, "Hey, this is really open to abuse." If you have an unscrupulous contractor who says, "Sent crew to Highway 11. Replaced 55 rail posts on the side of the highway. Sent five men," how are you going to check it? You have no way of knowing how many people were sent there, because there are no MTO inspectors to watch what's going on. This whole thing is open to abuse.

I will predict, and I'll say it here in the Legislature, there will come a time in the near future where actual examples of this will be caught by the auditor. Because I'm hearing from within the circle of people who are in highway maintenance, they're saying, "Gilles, man, I don't want to come forward and give you my name. I don't want my name becoming public, but there is stuff that's going on that's quite unbelievable." That's what they're saying to me. They're saying they go out to actually do work and, let's say, replace five of those guard posts on the side of the highway and all of a sudden the government gets a bill for 10, 15 or 20.

As taxpayers, do we think that's a good idea? I don't think so. If I call a contractor to come to do work at my house, I'm watching him, and I'm making sure that contractor does what I told him to do and doesn't bill me for things that he didn't do. But under this system, there are no checks and balances. You've basically given a blank cheque to the contractors to send you a bill.

I want to say clearly it's not all the contractors who are doing this. There are reputable firms out there. But this thing is open to abuse, and I have been told by contacts I've had from across the province who have talked to me about this that there is abuse going on already. The amount of work that's being done and billed for doesn't jibe.

The other comment he makes is the whole issue of surplus equipment. Now, this was a real boondoggle. What did the ministry do with all its snowplows and all the trucks and graders and everything it owned? You'd think that they would have got top dollar, right? If I'm a private entrepreneur or I'm just Gilles Bisson and I've got a snowplow and I'm trying to sell it, do I try to sell it for the highest amount of money that I can get or the lowest? Which is logical? You want the most amount of money, right? That's what you would think.

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That's not what they did. They didn't even go through a public tendering process. They allowed the contractors to buy the equipment from the ministry at bargain-basement prices. I'm just going to make up a number. If the ministry paid \$100,000 for a piece of equipment,

contractors were able to pick up that equipment for as low as 20% of value, and there was no tendering process.

When we came into the House and raised the issue, the amazing thing was—the honeymoon was still on with the Conservative government and, oh no, they could do nothing wrong—the media wouldn't report on it. I remember coming into this House and raising this issue on a number of occasions back in about 1997 or so—I'd have to go back and look at my notes—raising it in question period, raising it in debate here in the Legislature and talking to the media, and the media said, "Ah, you're just making this up." I wasn't making it up; it was actually what happened.

Equipment in yards across northern Ontario and other parts of the province, which was supposed to be sent to the central yards for people to come in and put bids on—there was not even any tendering. There were no bids, there was nothing. The stuff was just sold for whatever the ministry thought was a fair value. Either there were some funny things going on in the ministry or they were given some pretty weird direction by the minister to make that happen.

My point is, privatization has not turned out to be the wonderful saving we were told it was going to be by this government when they originally went down the road of highway maintenance. So I have no reason to believe that privatization of the services having to do with drivers getting road tests is going to be any better under the private sector.

Is there a problem? Yes. Is it acceptable that people have to wait 12 to 16 or 18 weeks to get a driver's test? Of course not. Does anybody on this side of the House think that is good? No. Does the public think it's good? No. So what's the answer? I, as a New Democrat, say the answer is not to put it in the hands of the private sector; the answer is to make sure that we properly staff those offices with qualified personnel so that we can bring those waiting lists down and then manage them to a sufficient number. It's not a question, in my view, of going out and privatizing to find a solution; it's a question of staffing up the ministry offices with competent ministry employees to do that work.

The other thing that I think we need to be very cautious of—and this is amazing because it really worried me when I first saw it—the second issue with this bill, has to do with who is going to be managing the information that the Ministry of Transportation has on drivers. What we're going to have is the government, by way of this bill, giving greater access to the private sector to information that is now contained within Ministry of Transportation databases.

Currently, if you're a driver in Ontario, the only way they can find out stuff about you is that the police, when they pull you over on the side of the road, get into the CPIC system and check to see, by way of the plate on your car—or your driver's licence, if need be—if you have any criminal convictions against you. Those are the only people who can access that information. By law, the information you have as a driver as to your medical

condition, where you live—all that information that is contained within the driver's licence registry—is only accessible to the Ministry of Transportation for the purpose of issuing licences, or to the police by way of the CPIC system.

The government, by way of this bill, is going to give greater access to the database to the private sector, to these private for-profit operators. We have no assurances, once we go to the private sector, that there's going to be any kind of security on the information that will be within those private offices.

We have an instance in Quebec where the government has partly privatized their system. They still operate government offices where you can go out and get your driver's test, but they have some private operators who do it as well. There was a situation in Quebec, I think around the year 2000, where an employee of one of these private contractors gave information illegally—I guess that is the only way you can say it—to biker gangs, information that was contained inside the database.

Let me explain what happened. As you know, in Quebec there are some huge issues going on between biker gangs. In the city of Montreal and other places there have been huge battles going on between various biker gangs that are vying for control of the illegal activities they operate. What happened was that a particular biker gang wanted to get the addresses of individuals they suspected were a problem to their biker gang. But the problem was, they didn't know where these people lived. So they went to one of these private operators and said, "Hey, employee, if I give you a couple thousand bucks, would you give me the information?" This underpaid worker, who gets minimum wage, who doesn't have a career with the civil service, is not sworn to secrecy and all of those things, said, "Yes, OK, I'll give you the information."

You wouldn't believe what happened, and I'm just going to read what happened by way of articles that appeared in the paper. Basically what happened was people were killed. The biker gangs took the information, located the people they were trying to find, and murdered those individuals. I'm just going to read from a couple of articles because it's quite a telling story and it's what is possible by way of where we're going. I'm not saying this is going to happen, but it's a possibility.

This is an article that appeared in Montreal. I'm not sure which paper it was. It's May 31, 2001. It says, "Government Data Was Supplied to Biker Gang." It goes on to say, "Montreal: Police yesterday arrested a man and woman alleged to have raided a provincial government database to provide the Hells Angels with the licence plate number of crime reporter Michel Auger shortly before an attempt on his life last September."

It goes on to mention the woman's name and her accomplice's name "...are to appear in court today facing 50 counts each of breach of trust and fraudulent use of computer data.

"Investigators trailed" Mrs So-and-so "after determining that she had made an unauthorized inquiry on Mr

Auger's file. It was discovered that" this particular individual, "who was suspended by her employer last fall," because they found out, "had checked the files of some 25 people"—get a load of this—"who were of interest to the outlaw bikers last year.

"Of those 25, three from a rival gang have been murdered and four survived murder attempts," out of 25 people who were checked.

Some people will say, "It was just biker gang guys who went after other biker gang guys." We don't know that's the case. Some of these might have been innocent civilians.

The point is, there are people out there who are unscrupulous and prepared to pass on information to the public. There is a danger, if we don't have the types of checks and balances that we need in place in this particular legislation, that some unscrupulous employee of an employer that doesn't have the types of safety checks that we have presently in the system will be able to pass on information to people for whatever, either because some marketer wants to get your address or somebody wants your number for something like what happened here.

It went on to talk about this particular situation; I can read the entire article, but I think I made the point. There's a real danger when we open this kind of information and take it out of the purview of the public sector, because there is a danger that the information can be utilized for things that are not, quite frankly, in the public interest.

So I say on that particular issue—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: Do you want some time?

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: I want to say, I know that my good friend Mr Marchese would like to share some of my time. I will only say, just to wrap up, just a final thing. The minister—

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): He's leaving you eight minutes of the hour?

Mr Bisson: He just decided to come in at the end. I want to make sure my friend has some time. It's amazing what you do as a whip.

Mr Marchese: But take all the time you need.

Mr Bisson: I know I could.

The only other point I want to make is, the comments the minister made with regard to privatization on Saturday, July 2, 2001, in the Hamilton Spectator I think really say what the government is about. It says, "The province hopes the move to privatize driver testing will cut waits for a test from eight months to six weeks, a goal Clark said can't be achieved if the testing remains in the hands of unionized public employees." The bias. "There are a lot of problems with the collective agreement, problems the private sector won't face," he says.

So what is this really about? It's about the point that I made first of all: the government does not want to pay public sector employees the 14 or 15 bucks an hour they get for doing this. They would rather have a smarter

operator come by, keep the 15 bucks, put it in his or her pocket, and pay private sector employees \$7 or \$8 an hour. That's not efficiency. I just call that greed and stupidity. With that, I'll share the rest of my time with my good friend, Mr Marchese.

1650

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): It is my pleasure to rise today in the House to support the Minister of Transportation in his motion for time allocation on Bill 65, the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. Time allocation will ensure that the bill is moved forward expeditiously and, if the bill is passed, the people of Ontario will realize its benefits. As the Minister of Transportation stated, this bill has been significantly changed to address the feedback we have received, so a clause-by-clause examination of the bill is not required.

Let me now focus my discussion to the merits of Bill 65 and the benefits arising from the bill once it is passed into legislation. If passed, the bill would lead to important improvements in the way customer services are delivered to the public across Ontario. The bill underscores this government's promise to explore alternative approaches to service delivery. That promise was delivered in our 1999 Blueprint document and it was repeated in this year's speech from the throne. It was made clear when Bill 65 was brought before the House for first and second reading that, if passed, we will be able to deliver better service to Ontarians, reinforce their privacy rights and ensure the continued commitment to road user safety.

Time allocation is suggested to move this bill forward expeditiously. This government is working hard to implement this bill so that Ontarians may benefit as quickly as possible from it.

Members will know that since the introduction of alternate service delivery legislation, there has been feedback from various sources. This government has met with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union to gain input. The opposition's concerns have been heard. We have listened to those concerns and they have been addressed. The bill we have before us has been amended accordingly.

In short, we now have a bill that not only reflects our original intent but is stronger and more focused than before. It is a bill that would ensure better customer service, privacy rights protection for Ontario drivers and a commitment to continuing high standards in road user safety.

As members know, driver examinations and a range of related services are currently provided by the Ministry of Transportation. This government continues to find the ways and means to better serve the Ontario public. That is what alternative service delivery is about: providing better customer service to the people of Ontario.

We are working to build a better Ontario transportation system for the future. It will be a system that is part of a national transportation network that is cost-effective, safe and efficient. Alternative service delivery builds on that premise. Yet, despite the considerable advantages that this bill presents and the many benefits to

be gained by the Ontario public through alternative service delivery, there still are those who raise concerns over positive changes, changes that are designed to make our excellent standard for customer service even better.

For instance, there have been suggestions that driver examinations should be the sole domain of the public sector based on operational efficiencies. It should be clear to everyone here that the private sector is the driving force behind efficiencies in business. Nobody knows better than our private sector businesses how to run a business efficiently. If passed, Bill 65 will build on our work to empower the private sector to deliver these services with efficiency and innovation. This bill would not take away from service delivery; it would build on it.

Much has changed in terms of driver licensing standards since the days of the "365" so many years ago, when drivers could obtain their learner's permit and look forward to getting their licence quickly. With graduated licensing, for instance, Ontario's novice drivers now undergo a much more rigorous, two-step licensing process which includes two road tests. This new approach to licensing drivers is saving lives. But while our licensing requirements have changed a great deal over the years, our driver examination services have not kept pace with the times.

There are more than eight million licensed drivers in the province and thousands more receive new licences each year. The demand for driver testing services in Ontario will continue to grow as our population increases, thanks to successful economic growth in this province. The Ministry of Transportation has already made some significant customer service improvements to address the growing population of drivers in this province.

Members will recall that in 1999 the previous Minister of Transportation, the Honourable David Turnbull, brought in a package of measures to address the customer service problems at provincial driver examination centres. Under this initiative, the ministry hired more than 300 driver examination staff on a temporary basis. It also opened temporary driver testing facilities and expanded the hours of operation at a number of provincial testing centres. As a result of this initiative, more road tests were offered and the average waiting time across the province for driver examinations was reduced.

This new bill supports the Ministry of Transportation's intention to find a new service provider for driver examination services. If the proposed legislation is passed, the work eventually will be moved to a new service provider and the province will be able to build on the significant customer service improvements in driver examination services that have already been made.

As members will know, Ontario is committed to the highest level of customer service possible in all facets of its operations. By engaging the private sector in the delivery of driver examination services, the government will continue to maintain, even exceed, those high standards for excellence in customer service.

The key, of course, is to find the right service provider for the job. In order to ensure that the right organization

is selected to undertake this important task, the ministry has established an open, competitive process. Before earning the right to deliver driver examination services in Ontario, a successful bidder would be required to prove its capability in a number of areas. It is a process that will demand that all candidates for this role meet a very specific, predetermined set of criteria. If this bill passes, only pre-screened, qualified candidates will be able to proceed to the next level, in which they would be able to bid for the right to deliver ministry services. If a successful candidate is chosen, the ministry will then develop a detailed service delivery contract with the winning bidder. As I have suggested, great care is being taken to ensure that the selection process can have only one possible outcome, which is safe, effective, high-quality service delivery.

Yet, this bill has its detractors. There are some serious allegations that need to be put to rest. For example, to those who would suggest that putting driver examinations into the hands of the private sector would remove the government's quality control of the testing process I say it is simply not true. Under new service providers, the Ministry of Transportation would continue to be accountable for road user services and programs. The ministry would continue to develop policies, legislation and regulations in the same way it does today. The Ministry of Transportation would continue to safeguard the public interest at all times. This is regardless of whether services are delivered by the Ministry of Transportation staff or other service providers. The ministry would maintain a complete overview of service providers and their functions, ensuring that they meet all legislative and contractual obligations. The Ministry of Transportation would continue to establish standards, set curriculum, and train the service providers' trainers.

1700

Some critics have suggested that this is nothing more than a job-slashing exercise. The truth is that the goal of transferring service delivery to other providers is to improve customer service while allowing for greater innovation and flexibility in service delivery. It supports this government's commitment to be a manager rather than a deliverer of services.

While the outcome of Bill 65 could affect a large number of ministry staff, new service providers would require well-trained and dedicated employees. Job offers, as required under the collective agreement, would be a mandatory part of any contract with a new service provider. It is anticipated that many Ministry of Transportation driver examination staff may find job opportunities with the new employer. The Ministry of Transportation is following its obligations as set out in the collective agreement with the bargaining agents regarding the rights and entitlements of affected staff.

Other critics have said that our rural clients would lose access to service. Again, not true. The transfer of driver examinations would ensure that drivers in both rural and urban areas have access to driver exam services within six weeks or less everywhere in Ontario. We currently

provide driver exam services in 92 communities throughout Ontario at 55 driver exam centres and 37 travel points. Under a new service provider, this government would continue to provide services in those communities. This will not change except for the potential for improved service in many communities.

It has been said too that customer service would suffer under this legislation. The fact is that the goal of this initiative is to improve customer service. Alternative service delivery would help sustain the significant customer service improvements we have already achieved while supporting greater innovation in service delivery. This initiative builds on those measures which, as I said, were announced in the fall of 1999 to improve customer service and reduce road test waiting times. I believe the people of Ontario simply cannot lose with alternative service delivery, because the whole point of the exercise is to provide them with better service.

If the selection process results in a new provider of driver examination services, the service delivery contract with the ministry would contain measurable objectives and clear milestones for customer service improvements. The goal here is to improve customer service, and the people of Ontario will be the beneficiaries.

Others have already spoken to the bill's benefits with respect to enhancing government accountability. From my perspective, this bill's real importance is simply that it will bring better, more efficient and cost-effective services to the people of Ontario.

As members and elected representatives of the people, I believe we all have an obligation to support measures that will result in better service to the public. Under this bill, the ministry would continue to set the standard for improved customer service, and it would give the private sector an opportunity to use its flexibility and innovation to deliver key driver examination services to the public. We believe the ministry's staff, resources and expertise should be used to manage services rather than deliver them directly. That is the whole purpose of the bill we have before us today.

There have been several comments made with regard to the question of privacy. I want to draw the attention of all members to the documentation that has been provided from the Information and Privacy Commissioner in fact congratulating the ministry on this bill which provides, then, an opportunity for others to look at a measure that would ensure the privacy of information as it is provided by the new deliverers of service. That is certainly critical to the whole process. Included in that is the fact that the ministry would continue to manage and supervise the delivery of these services and would ensure that new service providers adhere to a performance management system that maintains this commitment to excellence. In this way, the public would see better, more cost-effective services, and the ministry would be able to focus on its proper role of service management. When you look at the attention that was given to this issue through the fall of 1999, we can see that there is the potential to provide that flexible, innovative service throughout the province, and that is what this legislation is designed to do.

I believe all members of the House should join me in supporting this bill. Like so many other changes we have seen over the years, this proposed legislation is designed to build on the steady progress we have made to keep Ontario strong and growing. If passed, this bill will improve customer service across this province by enhancing the services that we offer to people. I invite all other members to pledge their support for the proposed legislation.

Mr Sergio: I rise to join the debate on Bill 65; not only the content of Bill 65 but also on the latest motion that has been introduced by the government to cut off debate. They have another way of cutting off debate. They call it time allocation. Of course, the public is not aware of what time allocation means most of the time; it is cutting debate.

From time to time, we run into people who ask, "Why don't you people tell the Premier and the government more that this is happening? Why are they doing this, and why are they doing that? Why don't you say more about certain things?" Well, this is another one of those times. We believe Bill 65, as many other bills introduced by the government, is an important piece of legislation, and I believe we should give all members of the House and the public as well, and other agencies, enough time to speak their mind. After all, we are here exclusively for that. But of course the government doesn't see it the same way we see it or the same way the public would like to see it, so they have introduced the end of debate on this particular bill, Bill 65.

What is Bill 65 exactly? As usual, they introduce a bill with a wonderful title, Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, a very innocuous, good-sounding title, but what it's actually doing is privatizing road services, which is driver testing. I have a big problem with that, not because of what the government has introduced; it's how they are going about it, how they are introducing this particular piece of legislation and how they are moving this through the House. There's no question, it will be approved. If the government says so, it will be approved. But we are saying on this side of the House that the content of the bill does not work in the best interests of the people of Ontario. It does not work in the best interests of the people applying for a driver's licence.

1710

You may ask, what are some of those concerns? I think I'd like to address the members on the government side. Once we privatize, as they did in other areas—and I hope to have some time to cover that as well—what do we compromise, especially when we are dealing with drivers' licences, driver testing and stuff like that? We are compromising a very important aspect, which is road safety.

I have to tell you that never before—and I've been on the road now with a licence for 40-odd years—have I been as apprehensive as I am now on the highways, seeing the way people drive, let alone the maintenance. I drive quite a bit on the 401, back and forth throughout

Metro. We have gone a whole summer, and even today the potholes are still there. People are driving around at 100 kilometres, 120 kilometres an hour, trying to avoid those potholes, and this is because we have privatized the maintenance of those highways. So road safety is a very important aspect.

Cost? I believe it is ultimately going to cost drivers more money. Reduced services? Oh, yes, indeed, we will be seeing fewer services. Will it be cost-effective? I don't think so. It will not be cost-effective.

One important aspect is that they will have access to private, personal information. You may say, "Well, that's going to be very difficult, and if so, what are they going to do with it?" We have seen what has happened when the government has given authority, when they abrogated their responsibility to the private sector. We have seen that.

The province will not be retaining any liability, any responsibility to the people of Ontario. I believe this is an area where the government should maintain a greater responsibility and assure the people of Ontario, especially when they are driving on highways, that they have safety on the highways and on the roads.

How will they improve service with this particular bill? They will not. There is absolutely nothing in this bill that says, "We are going to improve service on the roads."

The abuses and corruption that could emanate from that are very real. I get the odd person walking into my office and saying, "Why do I have to go three times to get the same test only because I am moving from one class to another? I have a private delivery business. It's my life, it's my livelihood, and they keep sending me back for more tests. Why?" But if they go to Oshawa, they have no problem. They get it in no time. So there is a problem already existing there.

The problem has been created by the government itself, by not creating enough testing sites. So what do they do? They create problems. Then they say, "OK, we have overloaded areas, so we're going to privatize it now." The private sector is going to solve that problem? They're going to do it better than the government?

We have seen what happened to the liquor board. We have seen that. I think they are doing wonderfully, still being under the ownership of the province of Ontario. They are doing extremely well. It is because of the concern we expressed time and time again in this House with respect to the possible sale of the liquor board that they have said, "OK, let's put a brake on it." I have to say that they are doing wonderfully well.

One major problem that we have is that the government is not going to stop here. The minister has said in his own announcement that they are looking at other options to deliver better service, more efficient service and more safety. You are not going to do that when you turn everything over to the private sector. Can you imagine, especially during the times that we are going through now, giving the inspection of school buses, trucks, trailers and transportation of dangerous goods and

stuff like that in our cities, on our highways, to the private sector, without retaining control? I really don't think so. I really don't think we can have a more efficient system, we can have more safety on our roads or we can provide better service by turning it over to the private sector, without holding any particular power within the provincial government.

Reducing standards, public safety, the cost, lower service: these are our concerns in this House. I believe that, as Liberals, we would be doing things quite differently than just saying, "Let's create another crisis and then let's move on to sell the services to the private sector, without retaining any control whatsoever." That is not the way we are looking to provide testing facilities and at the same time provide efficiency, provide service and safety to our people in Ontario. I think the government would do well to take a good look at the content of this bill which they have brought into the House, that they want to cut debate on, that they want to push through, that they want to get over with, and then say to the people, "Yes, we have done it because it is better; we're providing a better service." I think they should be taking a second look at the intent of the bill.

It's very dangerous when the government puts in the hands of the public the interest of making money, the interest of profit, versus the safety of the public. It is because of all these concerns that I have a problem with the content of the bill. I don't think that in good faith it is a bill that in its present form is supportable. I will not support the way it has been presented in the House today.

Mr Marchese: I've just got a couple of things to say.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Only seven minutes or so? I thought I had more time, but it's more than I need to say the few things I want to say, because my focus is going to be on the issue of privatization. My colleague from Timmins-James Bay has spoken at length about this bill, so I don't have to say a whole lot, except to focus specifically on one aspect of what Mr Clark has presented with respect to Bill 65, road users, and that is this government's predilection for privatization. They love to privatize.

What does it mean? Good citizens and taxpayers, loving to privatize means that they want to take a service, like drivers' examinations, as one example of what they want to privatize out of the whole mix here in this particular bill, away from public hands and give it away to somebody else, who wants to make some money out of this. The government is quite willing to oblige, because, you see, they've been salivating since 1995 over the whole prospect of privatizing anything that belongs to the public sector and giving it away to somebody else who wants to make some money. They have this vampiric taste for privatization. They salivate at the thought.

1720

You could see the spittle just coming out of their mouths every time they think about privatization. That's what this is about. It's about removing yourself as a government and saying that somebody else can do the

job. It's about taking yourself away as a member of government saying, "Yes, we have a robust role to play in every facet of human life, in most aspects of human life," and saying, "Somebody else can do it, and do it better."

We saw as a result of September 11 how quickly people around the world see the need for governments to intervene and for governments to step in and be the protectors, the guardians of aspects of human life to the extent possible in a way that we haven't seen in the last 10 years, because in the last 10 years we have seen a wave of Conservative Alliance members saying, "We need less government, not more; we need to privatize more, not less; we need to downsize government," which they've done so effectively by removing 23,000 or so civil servants, by creating this image that the civil servants who work for you, for us, are lazy bums who don't work but make a whole lot of money. That's the image they have created over the last 10 years: lazy workers who would be better fired than to remain in their post providing the good civil service they've been providing.

So with drivers' examination tests, Mr Clark, yes, you could have solved this problem by putting in a couple more people to do the job. Mr Clark takes workers away from this service and says, "We're in trouble. The private sector will save us."

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: You guys are so tired. It is tiring, Chris Stockwell, to hear you guys. It's so tiring to hear you guys saying, "We've got to privatize. The private sector does it better." How long can an opposition member listen to that pap? I've been hearing it 10 long years from you guys and five or six long years from these others who came since 1995. It is absolutely exhausting. There is nothing new that comes out of their mouths, nothing new any longer. How much can I take? How much can you taxpayers take from these guys who have nothing new to offer?

They have privatized road maintenance. They said, "Road maintenance will save us a whole heap of money. If we can just privatize that service, give it away to the private sector, we will save money. The taxpayers will save money." M. Clark, wasn't that true? My friend from Timmins-James Bay has made it obvious to you, good taxpayers, and to the government, M. Clark and all, that you, taxpayer, haven't saved a penny. The auditor has proven to you and to the taxpayers that it has cost you, taxpayers, more money. But what you have is Mr Clark and others saying, "No, no, no, the private sector does it better." I say, "No, no, no." I believe the auditor, because the auditor is a watchdog, a neutral party who watches over the proceedings of what the government does and says, "No, no, hold on, Mr Clark. On road maintenance, it isn't true that we saved money. In fact, we spent more." You, taxpayer, are paying more than you did before, and we are losing more as a result of that deal. That's the game.

Highway 407 has now been completely privatized. The rates for you, Mr and Madame Taxpayer, who use

that highway have doubled since these people have come in and privatized that whole service. That's what privatization is all about. That's why I say they have this vampiric desire to privatize because they are so well connected to those private sector friends.

They privatized our jails—our public money, your public money, good taxpayer, to create these jails, turned over to the private sector so they could make a little more. That's what this is all about.

They want to privatize hydro. They would love to privatize more and more of our health care system, because we're talking about billions. But they can't do it, because you, taxpayers, good citizens, have held them at bay with that one. But wherever they can get away with it, that's what they're doing.

That's why we are opposed to this bill unequivocally. We'll say more on that as time goes on.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): In the few minutes that I have, let me just talk about a few items. First of all, I think the people of Ontario should understand that this is another time allocation bill. Now, time allocation is just a nice way of saying closure. You know, Speaker, you and I remember a day when closure was rarely invoked within parliamentary tradition, either federally or provincially. As a matter of fact, back in the 1950s, a federal government fell because closure was invoked in the famous pipeline debate.

Some of us may remember that. But the point I'm trying to make is that at one time, to shut off debate in our modern democracy, which is Parliament, was something that was taken very, very seriously. On occasions like this in the past, I've brought statistics to indicate that this current government, since it was elected in 1995, has invoked closure more often—

Interjection: How many times?

Mr Gerretsen: I don't remember the exact number of times—than all the Parliaments that have been elected in Ontario from 1867 to 1995, almost a 125-year period.

This government disregards democracy, and it's basically saying now, even on bills, as was pointed out earlier today, on which we have been talked out—in other words, there are very few members who still want to say anything about the bill itself—this government, as a matter of course, is saying, "Oh, we're not going to negotiate with the other House leaders; we're just going to invoke closure, because nobody out there cares any more."

That is a very sad commentary on the state of our democracy here in Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr Gerretsen: Well, I'm not sure why you did it. There was no need to have time allocation or closure on this particular bill.

I want to comment very briefly on some of the comments that were made earlier about how we can make this House and the way we function in Ontario in our parliamentary system more modern and more meaningful. I found it very interesting, and I agree with a fair number of the comments that were made by the member

from the New Democratic Party when he talked about proportional representation. I think there's some attractiveness to that.

As a matter of fact, I think we could have a modified form in which, for example, you want to ensure that every member who is elected to this House represents at least half or is elected by at least half of the people who voted there. So you could have some sort of a transferral ballot system, whereby, for example, if somebody did not get 50% of the vote, you'd take the second choices of the third or fourth candidate and add them on until somebody does get 50% of the vote. The big advantage that has is that at least you know that the person who is coming here has the 50% backing of the people in his or her riding.

So you could look at a number of different alternatives. I know that there are many other forms we could be looking at and that certainly I hope this committee will take a look at.

But what was surprising about this is that this would come from a member of the New Democratic Party. I find that very surprising, because to anybody who watches this on a day-to-day basis, people must be amazed how a party that got 12% of the vote gets as much time in the House as a party that got 40% of the vote; how a party that elected nine members—even under the old system, which may not be perfect—gets equal time in the House, basically, to a party that elected 36 members. There is something undemocratic about that.

I get comments like that from people I meet in my own riding. Why is it that when you guys get up and you've got something very meaningful to say and positive propositions to put forth to the government, we only hear from you for three or four minutes at a time, and a New Democrat gets up, the great defenders of democracy, and these people babble on for 40 minutes? The reason is that the way the current House rules are structured, somehow each party gets equal time and it really doesn't matter whether you've got four times as many members or whether you got elected by 40% of the people or by 12% of the people.

1730

I challenge the members of the New Democratic Party. Mr Bisson is back in the House. He was the gentleman who made, as I stated before, some very good comments about how the democracy of this place can be improved. But I'm challenging you, sir: do you think it's fair, do you think it's democratic, that the nine members of the New Democratic Party should have equal time with the 36 to 38 members of the Liberal Party? In question period you get equal time with us, more or less.

Hon Mr Stockwell: What about us? We've got 57 members.

Mr Gerretsen: How about you? You know as well as I do that in question period you get much more time now than you ever did before, particularly if you take the cabinet members out of the mix, because presumably you don't want to ask each other questions about what's going on in your various ministries. Your backbenchers get more time to ask questions during question period

than we do in the Liberal opposition. Now there's something wrong with that.

I'm all in favour of democracy. I'm all in favour of proportional time in the House etc, and I challenge the New Democratic Party to come up with a resolution implementing that in this House immediately.

Now let's talk about the privatization bill itself. I've only got three minutes left, because I talked so much about a subject that I feel very strongly about, and that's bringing greater democracy not only to this House but so that the people out there will have a much greater input as well.

How about this bill? I know there are people out there who sometimes think, "My gosh, a government never listens." I'll give you credit: you listened in this case. This bill is very much like Bill 137 that was brought forward last December, and you've actually improved the bill in three areas. I've got to compliment you on that. I think it was primarily as a result of what the opposition said about the bill, what we proved on a day-to-day basis in committee and elsewhere, that you made those changes. So, people of Ontario, there is a small flicker of hope out there that every now and then a government will listen, and we now have a better bill in Bill 65 than we had in Bill 137.

It is still all about privatization. It is still all about unaccountability, and for that reason alone we cannot support it, because we honestly believe that you have done enough harm in this province with all of your privatization efforts already. Look at what's happened to Walkerton. That's as a result of cutbacks and as a result of privatization, whether you like to believe it or not. Look what's happened with some of your other privatization efforts, as has already been pointed out earlier. The Provincial Auditor made it quite clear in his report of 1999 that all of the road maintenance contracts that you contracted out to the private sector, in effect, are costing you and I as taxpayers more money than when the public service did it itself. By the privatization efforts that you're making, you're costing the taxpayers more money.

There is even something much larger involved in this, and that is the question of accountability. Government should be all about accountability, so that when something happens there should be a direct relationship between the public service or the service that the public enjoys out there and who should be responsible for that. You know as well as I do, with all of these so-called arm's-length boards and commissions you have set up, you are getting further and further away from accountability and, as a result, the general public out there has less and less faith in what government does on a day-to-day basis. We're seeing it in the health care system as well, where a great amount of privatization is taking place.

I simply ask the government, stop your privatization mode. We've got all sorts of new leadership candidates out there. Come out and say, as the good Red Tories did in the past, "Yes, we believe that government has a very

positive role to play in people's lives and that we should not privatize every service that's out there." I think that candidate is going to do extremely well. I really don't believe, with any of the names I've heard mentioned so far, that this is going to happen. I believe that the people of Ontario, particularly with what has been happening in the last little while, want to have good public services. That's really what it's all about.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I'm pleased to rise on this resolution put forth by the government that, in essence, will end the debate. They're in a mad rush to privatize and they want this bill passed quickly. It's unfortunate that we don't have more time to discuss this particular matter.

I want to first of all have members and people viewing recognize that the government set up a crisis in this situation, as it stands, prior to bringing in this privatization bill. I think every minister went to the John Snobelen school of crisis and said, "If we can break down the system, if we can ruin the system, then the public will want change." So they purposely go about ensuring that the system doesn't work properly, in this case for driver examinations. The government knew five years in advance that there would be a huge influx of persons needing to renew their licences under the G2 system. They were warned by countless persons that this was going to occur. Here we had a flood of people coming into examination offices to avail themselves of a new licence and, lo and behold, the government was simply not prepared for that influx of persons. They knew it. They were told about it. Any sound government would have recognized it without others having to bring it to their attention. That's where this all began: the government's mismanagement of how they ran driver examination centres. Now they say, "Whoa, lo and behold, we must privatize it." That's the backdrop to this whole situation.

I want to read into the record a memo, a copy of which I have received, dated September 28 of this year. "Great results. I'm really pleased to see the tremendous improvements in all DEC's re wait times. You and your staff are to be congratulated. Please pass on my sincere appreciation to them for this great effort." Who sent this memo? None other than the assistant deputy minister of transportation. He has recognized that the staff within the driver examination centres were doing a good job. The minister's stated goal is to reduce wait times through this bill. We see, re wait times, "You and your staff are to be congratulated," says the assistant deputy minister of transportation. So it is beginning to work somewhat better.

If the minister's stated goal is to have times to get a licence reduced to six weeks, we have the deputy minister saying, "You're doing a great job re the wait times. Things are improving." It took the government long time to recognize that improvements were required. It certainly wasn't at the driver examination centres that this was a problem. It was by their mismanagement, as I stated earlier in my remarks. Things are improving. So

why do we need a bill to improve? Why do we need to outsource this now? Why do we need to hand this over to the private sector?

I mentioned at one point in the House that the Ministry of Transportation is replacing workstations and computer equipment at all driver and vehicle licence issuing officers and driver examination centres across the province between October 2001 and January 2002. This legacy renewal project is being funded by the people of Ontario. The government is setting it up so that the people who will take over in the privatization of these centres will have the best of equipment. They'll have the best of workplace stations. They're setting it up for their friends, the friends of the Harris government. They're preparing now to give them the best of everything so they can turn around and privatize it. As has been mentioned in this House before, by myself and others, the Provincial Auditor has pointed out the mismanagement of sales of other equipment and the recognition that privatization was not saving any money as it pertained to our highways in Ontario.

1740

So here we have two very strong points as to why this debate should go on. The assistant deputy minister, Ministry of Transportation, says that things are improving. So things are improving, as they would have long ago under a government that could recognize the problems that were coming about with G2 licences. It should have been improved long ago by not closing examination centres in my riding in places like Leamington and Ridgetown, closing centres to short-circuit everything that people could have availed themselves of in getting a new licence. That's the mismanagement that the government put forth: "We'll close driver examination centres," two in my riding, one in Leamington, one in Ridgetown, putting people at great hardship. Also, it places a real burden on rural Ontario. They closed offices. They were not prepared for the new persons who will be coming along to get their driver examinations at the end of a five-year period, which they knew all too well was going to happen, and if they didn't know, they darn well should have.

I want to talk a bit about the events of September 11. Surely all the world has learned a lesson about safety and security issues since the events in the United States on September 11. But this government persists in its agenda. It has changed nothing. They continue to sell off those institutions that provide for public safety and security to their friends. They continue to do that. It's a very scary thought. We are concerned what will happen to confidential information when it falls into private hands. I know that the government opposite says they've taken care of that. We know what happened to those savings accounts; some 50,000 of them were given to the broader public. So do we have confidence in what the government says? I would say, ask the people who took advantage of the Province of Ontario Savings Office some years ago when 50,000 provincial bank accounts were wrongly exposed to people who should not have seen them. So we don't

have great faith in what the government is standing up and purporting.

Our public services should stay public. As I say, with the events of September 11, the government has learned nothing. They continue to sell off those fine institutions that exist here in Ontario. This is a neo-conservative notion that private is better than public. That's the neo-conservative notion, and they continue to pursue it. Within the bill, the minister's own language would tell us that he may continue to pursue this.

In the bill and with backgrounders, the minister has said, "And we will continue to pursue alternate delivery." That's the Mike Harris way of saying we're going to privatize even more down the road. "In the months ahead," the minister said, "our government will continue to examine the government's assets and the important services it delivers." That's code for we're going to privatize even more. "We will continue to examine innovative options to improve how services are delivered to the people of Ontario." That's code for we are going to privatize even more. We have the assistant deputy minister saying that things are slowly beginning to improve under the current system.

This is going to be a fundraiser's delight for the Mike Harris government. This is what this will be. They're going to privatize this. It was mentioned by one of the members of the government in a prior debate as to where these private companies will come from. I suggest they will come from the front rows of the Mike Harris fundraising machine. That's where they will come from.

We are concerned about rural Ontario and northern Ontario and the availability of offices to be placed there and remain there. The motivation for these private companies, of course, is to make a profit. We have grave concerns that they will not expand into rural or northern Ontario and may, as I say, withdraw from rural and northern Ontario.

We saw what happened when the government privatized in situations evolving around the Walkerton situation. We know that it was a wrong move to make. We have seen what has happened on the 407. As was stated, we can't even get the document that goes with 407.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Further debate? Seeing no further debate, Mr Clark has moved government notice of motion number 60. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1746 to 1756.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Members please take their seats. All those in favour will rise in their place one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 46; the nays are 36.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

The House adjourned at 1759.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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	Prue, Michael (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
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, 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
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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, Frank (PC)	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, Hon / L'hon R. Gary (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

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

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

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