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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 23 October 2001

Mardi 23 octobre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 23 October 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 23 octobre 2001

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LEO GERARD

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Over the next few days, my community of Sudbury will be host to a meeting of the international executive of the United Steelworkers of America, led by Sudbury's own Leo Gerard. Mr Gerard will be returning home to his roots with his executive members. Leo was sworn in as the international president of the 700,000-member Steelworkers union this past February.

Born in Lively, Ontario, and the son of a hardrock miner, Leo began working at the Inco smelter when he was 18 years of age, joining local 6500 at that time. While working for Inco, Leo studied economics and politics at Laurentian University, which later conferred on him an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Leo has spent most of his working life in the labour movement and has done much to ensure that workers' rights and the issues of health and safety of workers are brought to the forefront.

Let me share with the House two quotes of Leo's which really articulate his dedication to workers. First, Leo said, "There are people in our society who would like us to think that economic decisions have no values attached to them, but I don't believe that." Secondly, he said, "I am going to fight for the standard of living of workers. I am going to fight for the right to have a decent job and maybe put something away for my future and I am not going to give that ground to anybody."

Sudbury extends a hearty welcome to our homegrown boy whose determination and character are as uncompromising as the rock for which Sudbury is famous. He not only champions the rights of workers but also has time to support special-needs students who are so dear to his heart. Welcome home, Leo, and welcome to your international executive.

TRUMPETER SWAN SCULPTURE

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): On Friday, October 12, I had the honour of participating in the official unveiling of the trumpeter swan project at Water-

front Park in beautiful Midland. The project, coordinated by the Friends of the Wye Marsh, consists of a stainless-steel-built, 25-foot trumpeter swan which is symbolic of the trumpeter swan reintroduction program at the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre. The ceremony began with Simcoe county native and Canadian country male vocalist of the year Jason McCoy singing our national anthem.

There are so many people to thank for their contributions, beyond the hundreds of personal donations: Cheryl Webb, president of the Friends of the Wye Marsh; Laurie Schutt, executive director of the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre; Hudson Leavens for his vision for the trumpeter swan sculpture project. The sculpture stands as a visionary symbol not only to the Midland community but also to fellow Canadians of what can be done when a community works together to save an endangered species.

Ron Hunt is to be thanked for his outstanding contributions in designing and sculpting the trumpeter swan sculpture. Ron has been working on the sculpture for over a year, and without his expertise and commitment this wouldn't be here today. Bill Fielder and Les Hussey both assisted Ron Hunt with the making of the trumpeter swan. Both have put endless hours in also. Bill and Les work at Kindred Industries Ltd and are members of local 540 of the Sheet Metal Workers.

There is Case de Jong, president of Kindred Industries Ltd. Kindred very generously donated the mirror-finish stainless steel that the sculpture is made of and allowed the swan sculpture to be built at Kindred Industries.

Finally, thanks to the council and staff of the town of Midland for generously donating the land and staff assistance to see this generous community project become a reality.

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I was away when the Premier, Mike Harris, announced that he is stepping down as Premier. Let me at the outset state that I wish him all the best in his new venture.

During his reign, he led a revolution that was destructive and harmful to the working families of Ontario. We have seen our health care system put in disarray; an education system that has been confrontational; affordable housing that was completely taken off the agenda; the Walkerton tragedy; the murder of Dudley George at Ipperwash, which was a national disgrace; the frontal attack on welfare recipients, on democracy and on the

environment; and a debt that is now \$110 billion, and the list goes on and on.

Now the Progressive Conservative Party is looking for a new leader. A new Tory leader will not change the terrain. Arrogance is the policy of the Conservative Party. The bullying will continue. Nothing will change the suffering. Disrespect for democracy will prevail. The lack of accountability for the taxpayers' money will continue to be the norm. The chairs of the Conservative Titanic will not make a difference. It will sink.

Is there hope? Yes, there is hope: Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals bring hope and compassion to the province; a leader and a party that understands the needs of the people, that understands there must be accountability for taxpayers' dollars. There is hope for Ontario: Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party.

COLLÈGE DES GRANDS LACS

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Intéressant, ce qui se développe quand ça vient à la question du Collège des Grands Lacs. Comme on le sait, le gouvernement et le ministère des Collèges et Universités, avec le collège, ont décidé de fermer ce collège cette année, mettant complètement en danger l'année pour beaucoup des élèves de la première année.

Aujourd'hui j'ai eu l'occasion, de la part de notre caucus, d'assister à une manifestation au collège, où on a appris quelque chose de très intéressant. Apparemment hier soir, soit le collège ou le ministère—ce n'est pas encore clair—a fait une offre aux enseignants de rouvrir le collège pour les élèves de la première année. Ce qui est intéressant est que supposément ce matin quelqu'un a retéléphoné pour dire, « On retire l'offre. On a changé d'idée et on n'ouvre pas le collège pour les élèves de la première année. »

Je dis directement à la ministre des Collèges et Universités, c'est l'enfer. C'est complètement mélangé, ce qui se passe entre votre ministère et le collège lui-même. On demande à la ministre d'intervenir et de s'assurer elle-même que les élèves vont avoir la chance de finir leur année à ce collège cette année, et de mettre, finalement, un bon sens à ce collège à la place de ce qu'on voit depuis les derniers mois avec l'administration présente.

LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to recognize the hard work of local 183, Universal Workers Union, and the co-operation of the union and the management team with our government.

Yesterday I attended the sod-turning ceremony in Cobourg for a new lifelong learning centre sponsored by local 183. The centre will offer training programs and short-term courses in a variety of disciplines including road building, sewer and water main installation, framing, bricklaying and cement finishing. The new facility will train some 245 individuals in apprenticeship courses and 400 students in health and safety annually.

The lifelong learning centre is an \$8.2-million project, with a portion coming from the province's strategic skills investment initiative. This initiative will help us to address the critical shortage of skilled workers in the construction industry.

This project is a great example of how unions, the government and management can work together for the benefit of all Ontarians. By the fall of 2002, there will be more opportunities for employment because of these efforts.

I look forward to the opening of the new facility in 2002. I'm pleased to say that we have a great new friend in Northumberland, and it's the Universal Workers Union, local 183.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I am speaking on behalf of the residents of Hamilton Mountain, and indeed on behalf of all the residents of Hamilton, when I raise concern over the prolonged crisis in health care in Ontario. Because of the chronic nursing shortage in this province, McMaster University Medical Centre in Hamilton has been forced to close medical beds for acute care patients.

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They are short 200 nurses, and since Ontario nurses are earning less than their counterparts in British Columbia and Alberta, it's becoming even more difficult to recruit them. It's shocking and unacceptable when hospital units requiring 33 nurses regularly operate five to six nurses short. A nurse in intensive care described it as "scrambling all the time." This is not quality health care. This is no way to treat our nurses, and this will not attract new nurses to the system.

The taxpayers of Ontario deserve better. Under the Harris government, Ontario is below the national average in per capita nursing numbers. Ontario has fewer beds per capita—

Interjections.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I know you don't want to hear this, but this is the truth. Why don't you accept it for a change? There are fewer beds per capita than any other province in Canada.

In addition to nurse and physician shortages, we are facing a shortage of radiation therapists in Hamilton. My constituent, Grace Gagliano, was diagnosed with breast cancer in July and underwent surgery. This is not a laughing matter. In August it was recommended that she receive treatments in 12 weeks. It will be at least 14 weeks and probably longer before she gets treatment. When will you fulfill your responsibilities?

CASINO NIAGARA

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Yesterday, both Tim Hudak, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and I were on hand as construction of the new Casino Niagara officially got underway. The

Niagara Falls Casino/Gateway Project, a Hyatt casino and resort, is part of a larger vision to revitalize the Niagara Falls region by transforming it into a unique, year-round tourist destination which will draw and expand on the existing tourist base and increase visitors' length of stay.

The estimated \$800-million investment in the new Casino Niagara complex is approximately the equivalent of building three new Air Canada Centres. Located on an eight-hectare site on Murray Hill, overlooking the Horseshoe Falls, the complex will feature a casino containing 3,000 slot machines and 150 table games, a 368-room Hyatt hotel, extensive meeting and exhibition space, a world-class retail facility, restaurants and entertainment venues. The complex also includes several off-site attractions, including plans for a people-mover system as well as a 12,000-seat indoor-outdoor amphitheatre for concerts.

Many residents had the opportunity yesterday to participate in the groundbreaking and start of the new casino complex. Approximately 200 excited and enthusiastic people equipped with shovels and wearing hard hats were in attendance. Thanks to all of them, as well as to Premier Harris, Ernie Eves, Chris Hodgson, Bill Saunderson, the late Al Palladini and all my caucus colleagues for helping make yesterday possible for my community.

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Tomorrow, October 24, will be recognized in communities across Ontario as Child Care Worker Appreciation Day. CUPE, along with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, have worked very hard to inform municipalities about this important day in recognition of the very good work of child care workers.

Children are our most precious resource, and the Early Years Study is the most recent affirmation of the significance of quality care and nurturing of children between the ages of zero to six. Studies show that child care providers play a key role in shaping children's social, physical, emotional and cognitive development, yet there is still little support or recognition for the value of the work of care givers. It is disturbing that those people who carry the responsibility of caring for our youngest children are among the lowest paid workers in the province.

We are blessed in Ontario to have child care workers who have a tradition of high-quality care for our children. Mary-Anne Bedard, executive director of the Coalition for Better Child Care, expresses it well when she says, "Child Care Appreciation Day is an opportunity to raise awareness about the valuable role and contributions of child care workers in the lives of our children, their families and the broader community. By working together we can make early childhood development and care an important issue in our communities."

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): The tragic event of September 11 is still with us. Premier Harris and this government have shown strong leadership in a time of political and economic uncertainty. We stand in stark contrast to the Liberals and their leader, Tax-and-Spend Dalton McGuinty.

The Liberals and Mr McGuinty want to go on a billion-dollar spending spree. Under the influence of their voodoo economics, the Liberals recently called on the government to blow \$1 billion in a panic. Spending our way to prosperity has been tried and failed miserably, but it appears that no one has told Mr McGuinty.

Today we are seeing Mr McGuinty's true colours—red, as in red ink. If the Liberals had a chance, they would have maxed out our credit card a long time ago. Ontarians now know that at the first sign of an economic slowdown Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are reaching out for our credit card.

Let the record show the Liberals do not believe in tax cuts; they believe in reckless spending. Mr McGuinty wants to do what's expedient, not what's right. This call for reckless spending just goes to show once again that Dalton McGuinty is just not up to the job.

VISITORS

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to take a moment to have this Legislative Assembly recognize, acknowledge and welcome the wonderful folk from Victoria county who are here in the gallery today to be with us.

CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr Speaker, as you are aware, I did write to you earlier today to indicate that, pursuant to standing order 21(c), I would serve notice of intention to move a point of privilege this afternoon regarding the Minister of Health.

It is my submission that the Minister of Health has perpetrated a contempt of this Legislature by impeding and obstructing me, a member of the Legislature, in the execution of my duties.

Let me cite very quickly, Mr Speaker, a reference from the 22nd edition of Erskine May in regard to contempt. Quoting from page 108 of Erskine May, "Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence."

Section 46 of our own Legislative Assembly Act sets out the jurisdiction of this House to inquire into and punish as breaches of privilege or as contempt a number

of matters, including “assaults upon or interference with an officer of the assembly while in the execution of his or her duty.”

Mr Speaker, the case of privilege that I’m submitting to you today stems from the failure of the Minister of Health to publicly announce the allocation of \$161 million in additional operating funds to support patient services, while at the same time such an announcement of public funding was made in a purely partisan fashion.

The following is a portion of an e-mail distributed to the subscribers of the Ontario PC Daily Bulletin dated October 19, 2001:

“Quality health care for all Ontarians: Everyone in Ontario deserves access to quality health care. And that means providing hospitals with the necessary resources to meet the health needs of their communities.

“That’s why Tony Clement, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, today announced \$161 million in additional operating funds to support patient services. Today’s announcement brings the total funding for hospitals this year to \$8.7 billion—the highest total in Ontario’s history.”

In fairness, Mr Speaker, I’ve read the content of the announcement. What is of import is that there was never a press release of this nature placed on the newswire service or on the Ministry of Health Web site. I draw your attention to the fact that this was not placed on the PC Party Web site—that would have been bad enough in and of itself—but at least it has some access to the public. This announcement was made on the Ontario PC Daily Bulletin, which is available only to members of the Progressive Conservative Party and to its executive.

Further to that, my staff contacted the minister’s office on Monday, October 22, requesting a copy of the release and a breakdown of the amount that each hospital had received. My staff was told by Gord Haugh, the press secretary to the Minister of Health, that he did not believe there was a breakdown available and that I could just contact each individual hospital for that information.

The minister announced the funding to members of the PC Party on Friday, yet there has still been no official announcement made to the public.

I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that the Minister of Health, in not only failing to report this announcement to the public but also suppressing this information from my office, has perpetrated a contempt of this Legislature.

As the health critic for the official opposition, I believe it is the responsibility of the Minister of Health to make available to all members of this House all information about public expenditures that are being made. This is of particular importance to me in my role as critic for health because it is my responsibility to help hold the government accountable for these expenditures.

I submit these matters to you for your urgent and serious consideration, Mr Speaker. I do believe that it is absolutely inappropriate that announcements of public funding should be made only on a site geared to reach partisan supporters, and I believe it is of the utmost importance that you deal with this matter in the midst of a leadership campaign when we need an assurance that

announcements of public funding will not be used or misused for partisan purposes. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member for giving me a copy. I won’t go through, as she’s just done it, but the member essentially takes issue with the fact that other than the e-mail, no official announcement was made to the public and no information was readily available to the member.

I am sure the member will appreciate that the Speaker is in no position to require compliance by all members to any sort of format or distribution list for government announcements.

I do not find that the e-mail and distribution as described tramples upon the rights the members enjoy in this chamber, and therefore a prima facie case of privilege has not been made.

But I do thank the member for giving me that in plenty of time to be able to review it.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy, and I move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Mr Barrett from the standing committee on justice and social policy presents the committee’s report as follows and moves its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 30, An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities / Projet de loi 30, Loi prévoyant des recours civils pour crime organisé et autres activités illégales.

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

All those in favour will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1352 to 1358.

The Speaker: Mr Baird has moved the adoption of the report of the standing committee on justice and social policy regarding Bill 30.

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic
Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Beaubien, Marcel
Bountroggianni, Marie
Bradley, James J.

Gerretsen, John
Gill, Raminder
Guzzo, Garry J.
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hoy, Pat

Newman, Dan
O’Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parsons, Ernie
Patten, Richard
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Pupatello, Sandra

Brown, Michael A.	Hudak, Tim	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Sergio, Mario
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Smitherman, George
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Snobelen, John
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Spina, Joseph
Cordiano, Joseph	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sterling, Norman W.
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Curling, Alvin	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Tilson, David
Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn	Turnbull, David
Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The eyes are 81; the nays are 9.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX ARCHIVES

Mr Johnson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 116, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week / Projet de loi 116, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation aux archives.

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

The member for a short statement.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I have had a lot of requests and a lot of background and support for giving recognition to those who are in archives and keep track of documents and things like that from the past, the same as museums keep track of artifacts from the past.

CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION À LA CARDIOPATHIE CONGÉNITALE

Mr Spina moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to proclaim Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day / Projet de loi 117, Loi visant à proclamer la Journée de sensibilisation à la cardiopathie congénitale.

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

The member for a short statement.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I think it's important that we recognize a day that acknowledges that congenital heart defects or diseases are birth-related and consist of 35 different types. They affect many children across Ontario and Canada. In fact, as a person with a congenital heart defect, I am very proud to present this bill to the House.

DECORUM IN THE CHAMBER

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Monsieur le Président, I have a point of order I would like you to consider under page 14 of the rules, "IV. Order and Decorum," part 13(a) and (b).

Yesterday afternoon at the end of question period, at approximately 3:23 or 3:24 pm, you being in the chair, Speaker, there was an exchange which several members here on this side, and I suspect on the other side, heard between the member for Don Valley East and the member for Don Valley West. The member for Don Valley East was exiting the House. At that point in time, he pointed over to the member for Don Valley West and, in a raised voice, said words to the effect, "Come on outside, fella, and we'll deal with this matter there." He not only made the statement once; he made the statement twice. My question—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member for raising the—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

The Speaker: The same point of order, but let's be very brief and then I'll order. I think the member for St Catharines was first.

Mr Bradley: I can explain how this can happen. Very often there are meetings going on in the House when there are proceedings and you ask that we take our meetings outside. I presume that's what happened.

The Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Kormos: Mr Speaker, I know both these members. The member for Don Valley West may be a few years older, but I suspect he's in better shape. I've got 20 bucks on him right now.

The Speaker: I thank the member for raising the point of order and for the members' participation. I know that occasionally members do get rather heated in here. I'm sure the member will agree that the Sergeant at Arms does all he can. In circumstances like this, if members could realize that we are honourable members—and in fact on that particular occasion, it could have been a dis-

cussion taken outside. I would ask all members to act honourably, which I'm sure they will do.

It's a difficult task in here some days to keep order. Having said that, I appreciate the member for St Catharines's and the member for Niagara Centre's trying to keep things a little bit loose in here. It is a responsibility of the Speaker to maintain order, and I intend to do that. As you know, there are some occasions when I've had to be pretty tough on some of the members, and I do wish that all members would behave accordingly, as is the case—for everyone watching—most of the time. Members do behave, and I'm sure all of them will continue to do that.

It now brings us down to statements by—

Mr Hastings: Do I take it, then, that it's OK?

The Speaker: Of course not, and you know it's not OK. Don't be silly. We're not going to get into that. There are situations that come up. The Speaker will try to maintain order. Quite frankly, at the end of the day, when people are leaving, it's very difficult to tell because it's very noisy in here, and I say to the member for Etobicoke North that on some occasions I have had to rule very strongly for him as well and I will continue to do that. I think he knows very well that behaviour and calling people outside won't be tolerated by either side.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My first question today is for the Minister of Health. In the days after September 11, you know that our party promised our full support to ensure the safety of Ontario's working families, and we promised to keep bringing forward positive solutions, like our Ontario security plan. Here is another part of that plan.

Right now our hospitals are running at about a 93% capacity when it comes to bed occupancy right across Ontario, and it's 97% right here in the GTA. Our emergency wards are full. Our hospitals and emergency wards would have a real challenge contending with a bus crash, let alone something of the magnitude of what recently took place in New York City.

Here's my proposal to you: instead of speeding up handouts to already profitable, already competitive corporations, let's instead invest that \$175 million in emergency health care. Making sure our families are safe, making sure we're meeting their needs in an emergency, is more important to me and to my party than cutting taxes for already competitive corporations. So I ask you, Minister, will you implement my plan?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for his suggestion. It's in fact our plan, because since 1998 we've invested over \$750 million to improve access to our ERs across the province, to provide more flexibility

to anticipate and respond in the peak periods of activity. So that is in fact our plan. We have added \$44 million this year to our universal flu vaccination program, which takes pressure off our emergency wards. That is a plan that is unique in the world, not only in North America but in the world, to allow any individual at their workplace, doctor's office, hospital or nursing home to get the flu vaccine.

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May I take this opportunity, since the honourable member has provided it, to encourage Ontarians to get their universal, free flu vaccination. That will help us deal with our ER situation as well. That's the kind of foresight this government has shown over the last few years.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, let me tell you where your foresight has led us. We now have the fewest nurses per capita in the country. We come next to last when it comes to the number of hospital beds per capita. That is where your leadership has taken us.

This is a good opportunity for you to tell Ontarians and perhaps your supporters, since you view yourself as a contender, where your priorities might lie. We've got a very important choice to make. I think it's more important that we invest \$175 million in our emergency health care system to make sure our families get the care they need should the eventuality unfortunately arise. You consider it more important to sink \$175 million into corporate tax cuts for corporations that are already competitive and yet you still want to make sure they are taxed at a rate that is 25% below their North American competitors. That's the issue here.

I ask you, is it more important that we make sure there is room at the hospital inn for our families in the event of a terrible emergency, or is it more important to you, as the Minister of Health, to make sure our corporations have a tax level that is 25% below their competitors?

Hon Mr Clement: Let me remind this House about some of the investments we have made since 1998: \$225 million over four years to implement more flex beds, interim long-term-care beds, expanding home care services; \$90 million for emergency and critical beds in Toronto, Hamilton, London and Ottawa; \$97 million to fast-track the expansion of 56 hospital emergency departments. I could go on, but the point is that we have acted, that we have understood that after the years of the Liberals closing hospital beds, we had to expand our hospital sector in a way that put the money for patient care, that concentrated on patient care. We have made those investments, and when the honourable member talks about his plans, these have been our plans and we have acted on those plans under the leadership of Mike Harris, and we are very proud of that.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, if you want the big job, you're going to have to do better than that. You're going to have to actually take a position. You'll have to tell us whether you think it's more important to invest in health care, especially in emergency care, for our families, or whether you think it's more important to invest in more

tax cuts for already competitive corporations. That is the very clear distinction. Tired, old ideology is no longer going to cut it. Ontarians are looking for good ideas, not old ideology.

I put forward a good idea. It doesn't cost you a single extra cent. The money can be found in the budget. It's all about making sure our families have access to emergency care should the unfortunate need arise. I think you've made it very clear whose side you're on. I want to ask you now, in your capacity as Minister of Health, why is it you don't stand with Ontario families in making sure they've got adequate emergency care in the event of an unfortunate eventuality?

Hon Mr Clement: Here's a Leader of the Opposition who earlier last year said that money wasn't the problem in health care, that the system needs to be fundamentally reformed. Evidently he's changed his mind since then, which happens with alarming regularity. The honourable member mentions our economic policies. Our economic policies are based on growth and opportunity. They are based on the fact that our province can succeed when we have an economy that is growing, when people have jobs, when people have economic opportunity. Tax cuts have been part of that. They have created 860,000 jobs since we were elected. We are proud of that legacy. That's how we pay for health care; that's how we pay for education; that's how we pay for safe streets. That's how we pay for all the programs the honourable member seems to be so enamoured with and yet spends the money over and over again, seeming to think it comes out of a well that has no end. That is not leadership. That's the same old Liberal rhetoric that'll get us right back in the soup again that we just crawled out of through the leadership of Mike Harris.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Chair of the Management Board. On Thursday this Legislature will be debating my bill to end the use of taxpayer dollars on partisan ads.

Your government has a sorry record of serious addiction when it comes to spending public money on partisan political ads. Recently, instead of investing \$6 million in our classrooms—for example, buying more textbooks for our students—you plowed \$6 million into an ad campaign. Still more recently, after September 11, instead of investing \$1 million in concrete measures to make Ontarians safer, your government invested \$1 million in an ad campaign. Again and again, you choose to prop up your sagging political fortunes over the needs of working families.

Minister, my question to you is very straightforward: will you do the right thing? Will you support my bill?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The Leader of the Opposition mentions the ad that the government put in the newspapers a short while ago dealing with our response to the tragic events of September 11. It's certainly something the people of Ontario have been expressing to us on the

government side, and I suspect on the opposition side as well, that they need to know what the government is doing to respond to September 11. It was also very important for us to thank the many Ontarians and Canadians who went down to the United States to assist in this effort—to thank the firefighters and other volunteers. I think it's very important for us to recognize those efforts.

This is a piece of advertising that I believe the people of Ontario wanted to see. They wanted us to acknowledge the efforts of Ontarians, but also to indicate the steps the government is taking to address the events of September 11.

Mr McGuinty: Between 1995 and April 2000, your government spent over \$234 million on advertising. You can stand up and act as an apologist for this government and these policies, if you will, but our values are decidedly different and we think it is wrong to use taxpayer dollars on partisan political advertising.

You hack away at our classrooms, our schools are falling apart, we don't have enough money for busing, we can't hire enough school psychologists, but apparently there's more than enough money for partisan political advertising. I ask you again, minister: I am putting forward a bill, and it's the second time I have done so, which will ban the use of taxpayer dollars for partisan advertising. We think it is the right thing to do; we think it is the right time to do it. I ask you again, will you support my bill?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It was my impression at one point in time that all people in this Legislature were supporting the efforts we made in terms of dealing with the events of September 11. This is something I believe the people of Ontario wanted to hear. If I could indicate some of the steps—the last time the Leader of the Opposition raised this point, he held up the ad that the government placed in the papers. I proudly hold it up as well, because it indicates the positive steps that we as a government have taken to protect the people of Ontario, such as appointing Norman Inkster and also Major General Lewis MacKenzie to give us consultations on ways we can improve safety for the people of Ontario. We have taken many steps. I applaud my colleagues for taking positive steps. I applaud the Premier for taking a leadership role in all this.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, maybe your colleagues are going to buy into that, but Ontarians are not. They can see through that as clear as day. So far you've spent \$234 million in advertising that we've been able to calculate—and there's a lot we haven't been able to incorporate here. You tell us we don't have money for more nurses, but you have hundreds of millions of dollars for advertising. There's no money for hospital beds. There's no money to save the programs in London—I'm specifically talking about the pediatric burn unit and the pediatric cardiac unit. There's no more money in Ontario for home care for our parents and grandparents. We can't keep on staff the only biohazard experts whom we had working for us here in the province. We don't have money in Ontario for textbooks for our kids; we can't

afford smaller class sizes; we can't afford to invest in school libraries; we can't afford to ensure there are adequate busing levels for our kids; we can't afford to hire enough school psychologists. We can't afford to protect our drinking water. Yet you're able to find \$234 million for partisan public advertising.

Minister, isn't it time that you put our working families ahead of your political fortunes? Isn't it time to do the right thing and pass my bill?

1420

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I have a news flash for the Leader of the Opposition: this government has spent more money on health care than ever before in the history of this province. This government is spending many, many dollars more on education. I want to say something else: this government is also investing in police officers—a thousand more police officers in this province since this government took over.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. It's getting too noisy now. Come to order, please. It gets carried away. I let you go, I let you go, and then you get too loud. It's too loud now. I would ask all members to listen to the minister.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Thank you, Speaker. I might say as well that the Leader of the Opposition is always proud to stand up and say, "I'm speaking on behalf of working families in the province of Ontario." Guess who wants to know what's going on? Working families in the province of Ontario want to make sure they have the assurance from this government, which we are giving them, that we are taking care of their safety needs and dealing with their economic needs.

I have to applaud my colleague Bob Runciman for taking a lead in the economics, the Premier for taking leadership on this entire issue, and my colleagues in the justice ministries, Mr Turnbull and also the Attorney General, for taking their lead in making sure people in this province are safer and better positioned than any other jurisdiction in Canada to deal with the event.

TAXATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, you will know that today the Bank of Canada cut the interest rate rather aggressively. In fact, it is the lowest bank rate now in Canada in over 40 years. They were clear about why they did it: they want to stimulate consumer confidence in the economy. They want to see people back out there making purchases.

Premier, it's now time for your government to do your part. It's time to reduce the provincial sales tax from 8% to 5%. Consumers are clearly worried about our economy. The Bank of Canada is clearly worried about what's happening to consumer confidence. Will you do your part, Premier? Instead of reducing corporate taxes, reduce the tax that matters most to consumers. Cut the sales tax from 8% to 5%.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The leader of the New Democratic Party is becoming this one-trick tax-cut pony. I know the Liberal members smirk at that, but at least I would say this: the member has got it. He has now understood why Ontario has been leading the way in Canada, understood the response of every other provincial government, the response even of the federal government in Ottawa to work in co-operation with the Bank of Canada and to work in concert with other governments in making sure that we have sound fundamentals here in the province of Ontario.

I appreciate the advice and the suggestion. As you know, both the federal government and ourselves have opted for other tax cuts to stimulate the economy, and we think, in conjunction with the Bank of Canada, this is the right way to go.

Mr Hampton: Premier, we're well aware of your boasting and your Minister of Finance's boasting about your corporate tax cuts, but the reality today, as expressed by the Bay and Zellers, is that your corporate tax cuts are not helping them or anybody else in the retail sector one bit. They are saying they are going to lose this year. Why? Because consumers are worried about the economy, and when consumers are worried about the economy, they put money away for a rainy day and they stop making the purchases that they need to make and they want to make.

Cutting the sales tax is one way of saying directly to them, "If you want to make this purchase of a fridge, a stove, if you want to make this purchase of winter clothing, we're prepared to cut the sales tax to save you some money." This is a way to get people back into the shopping malls, back into the Bay, Zellers, Sears, and restore confidence in our economy before we have more layoffs, Premier.

The federal government and the Bank of Canada have done their part. When is your government going to address the issue of consumer confidence?

Hon Mr Harris: As I said, I welcome the debate over which taxes to cut and I welcome the NDP to this debate. I think it is something that demonstrates, really for the first time in a long time, that the New Democratic Party understands the mistakes it made when it was in government, something the Liberal Party has not yet understood. So plaudits for that; we appreciate that and we welcome the debate.

I would say a couple of things. We have looked at which of the various taxes are the correct ones to provide overall momentum. I would say that the Bank of Canada—I met with the governor of the Bank of Canada—is very supportive of the policies of this government. We work in concert and look at what other jurisdictions are doing. Both the federal government and ourselves have determined that making sure that employers can employ and that people actually have a job, cutting their income taxes and all the other taxes we have reduced, is the most beneficial way to help the economy.

Mr Hampton: Premier, George Bush tried that argument this summer. He reasoned that if he cut personal

income taxes to the tune of \$600 per household, it would create a stimulative effect in terms of consumer confidence. The jury is now in in the United States. Seventy-five per cent of the households didn't spend that tax cut. They put it in the bank because they were worried about the economy.

It's the same thing with respect to your corporate tax cuts. It will do wonders for banks that are already profitable. It will do nothing for the Bay, nothing for Zellers, nothing for Algoma Steel, nothing for Stelco and nothing for consumers out there. Even the parliamentary assistant to your Minister of Finance yesterday admitted your government now has to look at reducing the sales tax for three or four months to restore consumer confidence.

Will you do your part, Premier? Forget about more tax cuts for your corporate friends, forget about the George Bush experiment of personal income tax cuts that didn't work. Deal with the problem—consumer confidence—and reduce the provincial sales tax.

Hon Mr Harris: I appreciate that a second tack that's new for the NDP is this lobbying now on behalf of corporate America and corporate Canada, the very large corporations. The next thing you know, the New Democratic Party will be accepting donations from large corporations, or do they already do that?

I welcome the debate on how we can stimulate the economy, on how we can have the right balance of revenues in the province of Ontario, the right mix that is important for today and into the future. I appreciate that the New Democratic Party has a different view than we have on that right mix, but it is a view that is supported right now, I know, by the federal government, by the Bank of Canada and I think by the vast majority of those who understand how to create jobs.

I would say this: any speculation that there will be a sales tax cut is not helpful for jobs and for purchases today, which is why we are not speculating, nor is the federal government. Rest assured, that's not something we're considering.

MENINGITIS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): This question is also to the Premier. I would hope that when you make your economic statement on November 6, that will be part of it and will address the real needs of consumers.

In July I asked the Premier to follow the example of Quebec, Alberta, Great Britain and other jurisdictions around the world that have implemented a meningitis immunization program. I repeated that request in September as the school year was beginning. I was joined by Dr Ron Gold, an international expert on immunization. Just a few days ago, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization called for such a province-wide meningitis immunization program.

Premier, in Ontario this year 65 people have been infected with meningitis, mainly young people, and eight of them have died. Will you now do the sensible thing

and follow the advice of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and implement a province-wide meningitis immunization program?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The Minister of Health.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the honourable member knows, there is a National Advisory Committee on Immunization, which just released some recommendations on meningococcal immunization for children under 20. We've typically had guidelines, which were first issued in 1994, that recommend we don't use this kind of immunization for routine vaccination but only for an outbreak control issue.

We just received the recommendations of this important committee. I should stress for the record that it is a national committee, because this issue is of national importance. Certainly we do call upon the federal government to engage in discussions with us on how best to ensure that this national strategy is implemented.

1430

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Do you know that two other provinces, Alberta and Quebec, have already implemented province-wide strategies on their own? We were also told at the health estimates that Ontario has been following the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization when it comes to meningitis vaccinations.

Now this committee has made a critical recommendation calling for meningitis vaccinations for everyone aged two months to 20 years. The committee also recommended that that vaccination program begin now, because most of the cases of meningitis occur in the winter and the number of cases has been steadily rising since 1998.

Minister, 65 people have been infected and eight people have died from meningitis this year. This is a serious health issue. Your government had over \$2 billion in the May budget for tax cuts for your corporate friends. Where is the money now to protect infants and children from meningitis?

Hon Mr Clement: Let me repeat that we just got the report earlier this week. The original guidelines that were in place said you don't immunize on a routine basis; you immunize when there is an outbreak control issue. This issue, of course, is not just an Ontario issue, a Quebec issue or an Alberta issue; it is a national issue. The federal government has taken the lead to get all the parties together to discuss what should be done on a national basis. We are in discussions with the federal government to see what sort of ongoing and enhanced funding through CHST or some other method can be used to deal with this program in a national and comprehensive way so that we do meet the concerns the honourable member has so rightly expressed.

We of course want the best health for our children and our seniors and for the general population when it comes to meningitis, but it does involve an issue of national importance with national participation necessary.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Solicitor General. The Windsor Port Authority is asking for the help of your government. You will know that the Windsor Port Authority is responsible for 22 kilometres of the Detroit River, including the busiest border crossing in North America, which handles 40% of Canada-US trade. If something were to happen to the bridge or the tunnel located adjacent to Windsor, it would devastate our economy.

A letter today to the Premier reads in part as follows: "It is apparent that local experience in dealing with terrorism ... and financial resources are dangerously inadequate to provide security for key vehicular infrastructure ... for interdiction of people moving illegally by water ... for escort of high-risk ships, and for general policing.... We respectfully and urgently request your government's support in addressing these critical issues."

The question to you, Minister, is what are you going to do to make sure the Windsor crossing is safe for people and for Ontario trade?

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): We have certainly been consulting with all our partners at the federal and municipal levels, but surely the Leader of the Opposition understands that what he's speaking about is a federal responsibility.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I find it passing strange that every time we mention in this Legislature that the federal government should take its responsibilities, you run 100 miles an hour backwards from that proposition. The fact is, the federal government has balanced its budget on the backs of all the provinces, and now you're asking us to try to bail out the feds. I suggest that's rather silly.

Mr McGuinty: I want to remind the minister that this government has representation on the Windsor Port Authority. I also want to remind the minister about my plan, which would enable you to lend some assistance to the community of Windsor.

You will know that last week we put out our Ontario security plan, which creates a special \$100-million fund that communities might access for purposes precisely like this one. As I am sure you well understand, Minister, people in Windsor are dependent upon the free flow of goods, services and people across the border. They are telling us that they cannot cope on their own, and there's a letter here that is not directed to the federal government; it is directed to the provincial government and the leader of the provincial government. I think we have a responsibility to try and help out. Does the federal government have some responsibility here? Undoubtedly they do. But I think it is also appropriate that we work together with this community and lend whatever assistance we can. I put forward a proposal which sets aside \$100 million specifically for this kind of purpose.

I ask you again, Minister, what are you going to do now that you've received an urgent request from the Windsor Port Authority to make sure the people of Windsor and our trade are secure?

Hon Mr Turnbull: I would suggest to you that (a) I have not received such a letter, and (b) very clearly, they should be directed to address themselves to the federal government, because that is the authority which is responsible for this. However, that being said, we have committed to a process of looking at all the resources of the federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as police forces, to ensure the security of our borders. I have to tell you that while you were running out to spend \$100 million, which you didn't say how it was going to be raised, over and over again, ad nauseam, our Premier was in contact with the US authorities, working on freer flow of goods and services across our borders.

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship. Ontario welcomes immigrants—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock. Order.

The member for London-Fanshawe.

Mr Mazzilli: As you know, Ontario welcomes immigrants and always has. I'm certainly proud to be one of those people who have been welcomed to this province. I came over at a very young age with my parents. We have approximately 100,000 newcomers a year. As a result, this province has an enormous stake in the effectiveness of any immigration policy that's spelled out in Bill C-11. I understand that Ontario was not given the opportunity to appear before the House committee on Bill C-11, which proceeded through the House of Commons. But the Senate committee offered to hear our concerns. On behalf of the government of Ontario, you attended yesterday, Minister. Could you outline what you put forward to the federal government on behalf of the government of Ontario?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I'd like to thank the member for London-Fanshawe. In fact, we were the only province in Canada that presented before the Senate yesterday. I was pleased to table Ontario's position with respect to Bill C-11. It was very clear to all the Senators, who openly admitted that this is overly complex legislation—one Senator indicated that the legislation seems to move more to be governed by bureaucracy and less by the laws of our country. Also, Ontario believes that we should be doing a much better job in terms of our front-end security screening for refugee claimants and we should be honouring the financial contributions that are required to support refugees.

Some 26,000 refugees land in Canada every year, yet the federal government flatly refuses—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Would the members for Windsor West and Windsor-St Clair come to order, please. You just keep yelling across. I know there's some heckling, but

you just continually keep yelling, with no let-up. Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mr Jackson: There are about 26,000 refugees—
Interjection.

The Speaker: It's not helpful to yell stuff like that, I say to the member for Ottawa West-Nepean. That is not helpful at all. I'll maintain order in here and I don't need cheap shots coming across like that, when they're loud enough for everybody to hear. I'll maintain order in here. If you want to be Speaker, next time run yourself.

Sorry for the interruption.

Hon Mr Jackson: There are about 26,000 refugees who arrive in Canada every year, and most of them, over half of them, land in Ontario. Fundamentally, we have a concern as a province—

The Speaker: Time is up. Supplementary.

1440

Mr Mazzilli: The tragic events of September 11 have not only changed our economy but the way we view the world. A recent poll suggests that 57% of Canadians have higher stress levels about security in our country. Recently, the media have criticized Canada's immigration policies, particularly concerning the refugee process and immigration enforcement.

Minister, I understand the need for legislation that addresses the concerns of our citizens. Can you tell us if Bill C-11 lives up to the federal claim that it will address these concerns?

Hon Mr Jackson: The short answer is that the bill does not live up to its claims. In fact, before the Senate I had an opportunity to expose some of the key elements of the legislation. In fact, the old immigration bill in this country clearly sets out a mandatory duty for police officers to investigate and report inadmissibility for deportation. That is required in the current law. Under the new law proposed by Minister Caplan it becomes a voluntary, non-mandatory condition, and they've dropped the reference to police officers and vested it in the hands of bureaucrats. In other words, they've removed 50,000 police officers from the immigration enforcement process in our country. This is a serious matter and one which even the Senate expressed concern about yesterday.

Frankly, the current Bill C-11 contradicts Bill C-36, a federal piece of legislation brought in by Minister McLellan to deal with anti-terrorism. This government has asked for a bilateral process so we can deal with the concerns of underfunding for refugee claimants and for the security—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. You know, Minister, not a day goes by that I don't hear one of my constituents expressing anger at your government for forcing amalgamation down their throats. They feel mistreated and disrespected. Many of your very own constituents, feeling the same

way, are here today at Queen's Park looking for answers. Over the past several months, the citizens of Victoria county have held a series of referendums. In 17 separate ballots administered in different communities throughout your own riding, an overwhelming 96.5% voted to de-amalgamate.

Minister, they don't like their new municipal government and they want their historic communities and names back. For the record, the people of Victoria county want to know from you today: will you bring forward legislation or regulation to undo the disaster that your government has created in your own backyard and return local municipal government to the people?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Thanks for the question. I could be partisan and read a bunch of quotes from the member from Hamilton and your leader about the benefits of amalgamation. I can tell you that in my own riding, Bill 26 is the only way that Queen's Park could amalgamate if it was asked for by democratically elected councils. The expenditures—it's working—are down \$5 million from what was collected the year before and spent in that municipality.

There are some transition problems, but it wasn't taken lightly. The township of Emily and the town of Lindsay requested a commissioner. We asked that they find a local solution. They couldn't find that, a commissioner was brought in, and the result is that we have a new municipality which is spending less dollars, providing better service, and the councillors are working hard to make it work.

I would be interested to know what the Liberal solution is, because I'm not going to give weasel-word answers to my residents and pretend that you can undo the past.

Mr McMeekin: Minister, when will you and your government actually listen and respond to the people? Let's be honest: the concept of forcing municipalities to amalgamate has been a bad idea from the get-go. In fact your own government, to its recent credit, has now placed a moratorium on any future amalgamations in this province. I want to believe that you are one on that side of the House who still believes in democracy. On February 8, 1997, a full 57% of all the eligible voters in the old town of Flamborough voted 10,762 to 532—or roughly 95%—against the proposition of amalgamating six municipalities into the new city of Hamilton. I'm noticing a trend here. You wouldn't listen then and you're not listening now. The people of Kawartha Lakes, like the people of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, want to know what it is going to take to convince you and your government to allow them the right to determine for themselves their own democratic future.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Enough of the rhetoric. He knows full well that in our area it was asked for by local, democratically elected councils. Secondly, they talked about it for 25 or 30 years. He also knows that back in the 1950s and 1960s there were 1,100 municipalities in this province; now there are 447.

If he's suggesting that Dalton McGuinty's position is to allow a referendum without any weasel words, I would like to see it. Where do you draw the line? Do you let Sturgeon Point, with a few residents, separate and become a municipality and county unto itself? Do you let little neighbourhoods that disagree with their neighbours separate and form their own municipalities? I would like to see the wording on how you would allow referendums. What we've done is respect democratically elected councils. In the past, Queen's Park could have forced its will on rural Ontario; it couldn't under Bill 26. The decision is working for the benefit of residents of that area.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr Bob Wood (London West): My question is for the minister responsible for children. The minister is aware of the innovative program currently being run in the state of Hawaii. As part of their strategy to support parents and children, Hawaii runs a program that allows nurse practitioners to visit families and provide support if they need help adapting to their role as parents. This program has helped a broad range of families, including young families, single parents and couples, who may sometimes feel overwhelmed with the challenges of raising a child. Studies say this program has reduced child abuse among these families by 75%. Long-standing research shows reduced criminal and non-criminal delinquency is likely among these children in the long run. Does the minister believe that such a program could be helpful to the families of Ontario?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I'm certainly impressed with the program of which the member speaks. Indeed, they've had a significant success rate at reducing child abuse and ensuring optimal child development.

We have pursued a number of initiatives in this regard, including the Healthy Babies, Health Children program, where we're spending about \$70 million providing a real commitment to screen about 139,000 babies born in Ontario each and every year. We're also expanding our Learning, Earning and Parenting program, providing supports to single parents, so they can realize the very best they can for themselves, their future and their families. We're also doubling the support for our program for young children with autism to ensure they get the support and the capacities they need to be successful later in life. This is a record of which I think we can be tremendously proud and one for which we're prepared to accept any good ideas, like the idea the member is suggesting, for consideration in the future.

Mr Wood: A number of experts, including the government's own Early Years report, have identified a clear need to expand supports to families, so that children can get the best start in life. Research has clearly demonstrated that the first six years of life are the most crucial in determining a child's opportunity for a successful and

happy life. I believe a program like the one in Hawaii offers the chance to greatly reduce criminal and non-criminal delinquency and greatly improve the quality of life for many families across Ontario. Is the minister prepared to consider mandating the offering of a Hawaii-like program across Ontario?

Hon Mr Baird: As I said at the outset, I'm certainly prepared to consider any initiative to help young children in their optimum years. Building on the success of initiatives we've undertaken as a province, whether it's through the proposed Early Years Centres that will be rolling out over the next year, whether it's building on the supports we provide through our health units and the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program and building on the success our Premier had in encouraging the federal government to provide increased supports and financial support to our Early Years initiative, an initiative on which the federal government took more than three or four years to come to the table and provide that additional funding, we now have the benefit of all levels of government rowing together for the benefit of young children. That's good news for children, parents, families and the future of our province.

1450

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Health. Are you telling the Soo area hospitals to cut services? They're running a \$3.5-million deficit. You're telling them they can't run a deficit. They're saying they've already cut to the bone. Doctors are saying that this whole scenario puts services at risk. Are you telling the Soo area hospitals to cut services?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): We are working with every hospital. Every hospital has to file an operating plan, as the honourable member knows, so that we can go through what services they propose to render in a given year. We then work with the individual hospital to make sure the resources can cover the plan, and that they do so in the most efficient way. That process takes a little bit longer in some hospitals than others. Sometimes we have to go through an operational review, because the hospital boards approach us and indicate they have difficulty managing in the way we expect them to manage. There is a process of dialogue that goes on, and that dialogue process takes a few months. But we always put patient care first, and this will be no exception.

Mr Martin: The Soo area hospitals are running a \$3.5-million deficit. You're telling them they can't. They are saying they've cut to the bone. The doctors are saying that any cut to services will have a devastating effect on their ability to do their job. They won't even be able to attract new doctors to Sault Ste Marie if they can't perform their duties. Will you tell us today whether in fact you're telling the Soo area hospitals that they need to cut services?

Hon Mr Clement: Quite the opposite; we expect them to maintain their services. That's why we go through the process of reviewing operating plans to make sure patient care and clinical results are number one. That's the kind of thing we expect of our hospitals, and the hospital administrations are usually exceedingly good at meeting those expectations. The hospital report card we released in July revealed an 88% patient satisfaction with overnight stays in Ontario's hospitals, something all hospitals should be proud of.

Incidentally, the honourable member should know that, as a result of the final allocation for this year, in terms of funding for hospitals that the honourable member opposite mentioned in her remarks prior to question period, the Sault Ste Marie General received \$2.2 million, which of course will help them deliver excellent patient care for the people of Sault Ste Marie.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to ask you about the St Peter's Hospital situation in Hamilton. As you are aware, St Peter's is the only hospital in the city that has a dedicated palliative care unit. It has 15 beds that are operating at this point. Last year, it had a waiting list of 285 people, mostly cancer patients who died before they were admitted to St Peter's Hospital. On any given day, 30 people are on a waiting list to get into those 15 beds at St Peter's. Most of them are in acute care wards in hospitals, where they don't get the care they would receive at this particular hospital.

In February, you were given a proposal by St Peter's that was going to cost \$700,000 to open up an additional 19 beds. That does not solve the full problem but would go a long way toward solving the situation at St Peter's. Can you tell us why you're delaying and denying this basic care to patients in Hamilton in their dying days?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, I have heard about this plan. You should know that the member for Stoney Creek, the honourable Brad Clark, has been a consistent and very good representative and advocate on behalf of the people of Hamilton and Hamilton area in order to ensure that this minister and the Ministry of Health understand the needs in Hamilton; I wish to put that on the record. The fact of the matter is, we haven't received a detailed proposal from St Peter's. As well, there is a district health council study that is ongoing on this very issue. I would be happy to receive that detailed proposal, and I'm sure Minister Clark can assist me in that regard.

Mr Agostino: Minister, you seem to be the only one who doesn't understand the need and feels we need more studies and more reports. Maybe the Spectator editorial had it best in the headline when they said, "Tories Tell the Dying to Wait a Little Longer." Clearly there's no need for further studies. We know the need that is there.

Your own colleague seems to understand what you don't. But let me quote what he said, "I think in the Hamilton area we don't have the palliative care we should have. Unfortunately palliative care in Hamilton has fallen by the wayside." That is your cabinet colleague Brad Clark. You're the only one left who doesn't seem to understand this need, Minister. I don't understand why you need further studies with 15 beds in the whole city for palliative care. What other reports do you need to convince you that the need is there, that you're not meeting that need? They provide quality care. They provide round-the-clock nursing. They give the families opportunities to visit around the clock. It is a type of support you don't get in the hospitals.

Minister, can you explain to this House why you have \$2.2 billion for tax cuts but cannot commit today to \$700,000 for Hamilton to give people in their last few days the quality care that they deserve and need in the city of Hamilton?

Hon Mr Clement: Let me make it perfectly clear for the House and the honourable member. There is a planning process which will have a final report at the end of that process. The hospital is participating in the process. They haven't finalized their proposal with us, because they are participating in the local process, the DHC process, so we are waiting for that. In the meantime, we've had some very effective advocacy by the member for Stoney Creek, who understands the issue and who understands the need for this kind of care. So we are taking all of that under advisement.

When it comes to the latter part of your argument, we know the Liberals don't like tax cuts. We know the Liberals have voted against every single tax cut that we have proposed in this House. You don't have to underline it, but if you want to underline the fact that you don't like tax cuts, that you don't like the fact that the people of Ontario have more change in their jeans, you can continue to do that, but that does not help with health care—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Hamilton East, come to order. Was the minister finished? Sorry. Member for Simcoe North.

On a point of order, the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr Speaker, the Minister of Health, in response to the question from the member for Sault Ste Marie, made reference to the point of privilege I raised earlier with you regarding a list of hospitals that had received funding in a recent announcement. He held up the list in the House. I therefore have reason to believe that list is the list I was requesting earlier. It's my understanding that any material referenced in the House must be tabled with all members. I would ask him to table that.

The Speaker: You know that it says it will be referred to, and not just on one simple occasion, every time somebody does it. It's on occasion when it's being

referred to continually, and it was not. Simple references like that are not a situation where he needs to table it.

SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of the Environment. I was reading an article this morning in the Globe and Mail regarding acid rain and the Clean Air Task Force report that was released today. The report clearly states that acid rain will continue to affect the lakes and forests of eastern Canada and existing salmon populations unless sulphur dioxide emissions, which are the main cause of acid rain, are dramatically cut.

Minister, could you please tell the House what the government's commitments are to reducing sulphur dioxide emissions in our province?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): To the member for Simcoe North, yes, I had an opportunity to take a look at the Clean Air Task Force report, and Ministry of the Environment staff are reviewing that report.

Our government is very proud of the commitments that we have made to reduce sulphur dioxide. In 1985, this province, along with New Brunswick and Quebec, signed the Countdown Acid Rain agreement to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 50% by 2004. However, I am very proud to say that in January 2000, our government announced a commitment to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by a further 50% beyond the Countdown Acid Rain agreement, and this action will then reflect an 80% reduction from the 1980 base levels. I can assure you we will continue to take aggressive steps to reduce sulphur dioxide, because we know it has a negative impact on our forests and our lakes.

Mr Dunlop: Thank you very much, Minister. I understand that acid rain is an extensive problem due to the fact that many of the repercussions associated with acid rain will persist in nature for many decades, and a full recovery takes many more years.

I'd like to ask the minister what other measures the provincial government will be pursuing to ensure that acid emission curbs are strengthened in the future.

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have been moving forward very aggressively this past year. As the member perhaps does know, we have announced in July of this year proposed new emission caps for the electricity sector that will reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 25% by 2007. As of this September as well, we did issue orders to Inco and Falconbridge in Sudbury to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 34% by 2006. This is very important, because Inco and Falconbridge account for over 40% of all sulphur dioxide emissions in Ontario.

I am also pleased to say that tomorrow I plan to make further announcements concerning aggressive action that we plan to take regarding reduction of sulphur dioxide emissions.

1500

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): The ministers leave when I'm about to ask them the question. My question is for the Minister of Health, and he just left.

Interjection.

Mr Parsons: Thank you. Minister, you're very aware of a medical affliction called age-related macular degeneration. It strikes our seniors and virtually guarantees that they will go blind. The good news is there is a very simple, painless treatment for it that has 100% success. The bad news, Minister, is that you have refused to fund it. The previous Minister of Health, Minister Witmer, refused to fund it. Seven Ontario provinces do fund it now. You and I daily receive letters saying things like, "Will you try to help me? Time is running out for me."

These people are not wealthy; they cannot afford to keep their eyesight. They have paid taxes all their lives. They need some service, and you have stalled and stalled. Minister, will you today commit to funding the cure for macular degeneration?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for the question and thank him for his point of view on it. I can update the House on the situation.

The honourable member should perhaps add to the facts that we of course have to wait for Health Canada to go through its process to ensure that a new drug is safe and is effective in what it does. That process is now complete. We then wait for what is called the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee to finish its preparations and its consideration. That was just recently completed, and I can tell the honourable member that we have the issue under advisement and would like to report back to him and to this House at the earliest available opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr Parsons: Minister, that has been approved for some time. Other provinces fund it. Every day that you stall reinforces your commitment to two-tier medicine and forces working families to have their loved ones go blind.

You need to talk to your staff, Minister. They have indicated to us that there is a red tape problem within your office as to which branch of your ministry will pay for it. They say it should be approved, but you can't decide which budget line should pay for it.

Minister, financial decisions can be backdated; blindness can't be. Will you show some leadership qualities and, today, make the decision that our seniors not go blind and you will fund their treatment?

Hon Mr Clement: Let me say to this House that of course we take this matter very seriously. This government has added 1,200 new medications to the formulary since we were elected. Previous governments were adept at delisting services, delisting medications from formularies. We have added 1,200 new medications to the

formulary. We are proud of our assistance to seniors and to those who are members of the Trillium drug plan, and that support will continue.

Incidentally, these are 100% provincial dollars. Not a single cent comes from the federal Liberals. Only 14 cents on the dollar comes from them when it comes to preserving and enhancing our own health care system. That's the kind of support we get from Allan Rock and the federal Liberals.

It is quite concerning to us, but we are in fact spending more and more. For six years in a row we have spent more on health care, and we have the highest budget in the history of Ontario, both generally and for the drug formulary. That is a record of which we are proud and which is known to the people of Ontario.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, since the events of September 11, we have heard countless versions of how the border system should change. Some people recommended an updated version of the status quo, while others are recommending a complete overhaul of the border crossing system.

Our province's economy relies very heavily obviously on trade with the United States. You have said on a number of occasions that we need a border that allows easier access for legitimate people and goods. Could you please update the House on your views and what you have been hearing regarding this issue?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): This is a critical issue and one recognized by the Harris government. We can't lie back and think it's business as usual. A quote last week from US Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont: "One of the major security issues we face involves our border with Canada."

We have recognized it. We had the New York-Ontario border summit in June. We'll have that report coming, publicly, shortly. The Premier and I met last week with Governor Pataki and other officials from New York state to talk about these issues. We are sponsoring a border forum on November 2 to discuss these issues with major players who are affected by economic transportation across the borders. The New York state government is going to mirror our round table, and we hope to, at the end of the day, have a joint report from New York state and Ontario which we can provide to our respective federal governments.

Mr Maves: Minister, my community is one of the busiest Canadian gateways to the United States. None of us wants the close relationship we have with them jeopardized. I understand that not everyone is onside with the idea of a secure perimeter. Could you please explain to us how the federal Liberals seem to be lagging behind everyone else on this issue?

Hon Mr Runciman: I think we can describe the federal approach with a range of adjectives: "curious,"

"perplexing," "worrisome," "disturbing." The US ambassador to Canada, our Premier, Mr Harris, and the Premiers of Manitoba, Quebec and British Columbia have all called for a North American security perimeter.

Instead of recognizing the economic implications of border traffic, federal officials have been suggesting that somehow a security perimeter is going to lessen sovereignty. This is an urgent, critical issue. There is a clear need for the federal government to get off the bench and into the game. Mr Chrétien, this is no time for your trademark complacency. Get into this game.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. You have a busload of people here, Voices of Central Ontario, from your own constituency. Some 11,000 people have signed a petition and 96% of the people in your riding have voted to get their towns and villages back. Will you agree to a government-sponsored referendum and be bound by the results?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): In my area, two democratically elected councils requested that a commissioner come in and sort out what they've been talking about around restructuring for the last 25 or 30 years. If the NDP has a recommendation that, where there were 1,100 municipalities and now there are about 447, referendums decide your municipal boundaries, and one street in Toronto wants to separate from the city of Toronto, is that the NDP position now?

Mr Prue: Obviously you're not willing to let the people's democracy speak. I have heard from them that you have not even been willing to meet them; you've not been willing to return their phone calls. You have not been willing to be any part of their discussions in their desperate and valiant effort to save their towns and villages.

Will you at least meet with them? Will you consider their pleas, and will you give them back their towns and villages to protect their local democracy?

Hon Mr Hodgson: In my riding for the last 25 or 30 years they have talked about restructuring. Local governments are very, very important. I have met with the councils of the former Victoria county; I've met with the councils of Haliburton county and Peterborough county. We looked for local solutions. Haliburton and Peterborough counties chose to do that. In Victoria county, you had about two thirds who wanted to have change and one third who wanted no change. I was fine with whatever my democratically elected councillors wanted. Unfortunately, those who wanted change couldn't agree, and so two of the democratically elected local councils asked for a commissioner. The result, under Bill 26, was binding. It couldn't be forced by Queen's Park for rural Ontario.

As a result, we have a new municipal authority, the city of Kawartha Lakes. It's one tier. Under the old

system, it was two-tier. Most of the expenditures were made at the upper tier, but they were elected at the lower tier.

This is something that has its growing pains but, as I said to an earlier question, they are spending less money than before and delivering better service, and most people are trying to make it work. I understand that a lot of people are disappointed and frustrated, and it's their democratic right to express that, so I appreciate the question.

1510

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Before we begin petitions, we have a new group of pages. I'd like all the members to welcome Richie Abrich from Oak Ridges; Timothy Armstrong from Algoma-Manitoulin; Emily Baker from Hamilton West; Lisa Blenkhorn from Sarnia-Lambton; Amanda Brown from Mississauga West; Benoît Brunet-Poirier from Ottawa-Vanier; Antony Candeloro from Niagara Falls; Timothy Cuddy from Lanark-Carleton; Olivia Dennis from Scarborough East; Cherie Fawcett from Nickel Belt; Andrew Guytingco from York North; Amy Hammett from Brampton Centre; Andrew Hodes from Perth-Middlesex; Emma Kastanis from Davenport; Courtney Kiss from Prince Edward-Hastings; Katherine McCormick from Scarborough-Agincourt; Gillian Mucklow from Thunder Bay-Superior North; Gawain Tang from Brampton West-Mississauga; Chadd Vandermade from Brant; and Ben Ward from Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Please join in welcoming our new group of pages.

PETITIONS

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I have a petition signed by some 12,000 residents.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

"Whereas the promise of tax decreases has not been met; and

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents."

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a petition that has been signed by over 240 residents from Victoria county.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

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

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents."

I have affixed my signature as well.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I continue to receive petitions. This one reads as follows:

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer, also called Our Father, has been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada in the 18th century; and

"Whereas such use of the Lord's Prayer is part of Ontario's long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary Ontario life; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is a most meaningful expression of the religious convictions of many Ontario citizens;

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

"That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord's Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom, and do all in its power to maintain use of this prayer in municipal chambers in Ontario."

I'm proud to support this because I believe in it.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

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

“Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents.”

I affix my signature; I'm in complete agreement.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a petition as well, signed by 227 people. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

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

“Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents.”

I affix my signature as well.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased the Minister of Transportation is in the House today because I've received a petition with respect to Highway 407 from Bob Brown and Philip Brown, who operate the Kedron Dells Golf Course in my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has proposed the extension of Highway 407 into the Durham region and the proposed route, designated as the technically preferred route, will dissect the property of Kedron Dells Golf Course Ltd Oshawa;”

“Whereas such routing will destroy completely five holes, and severely impact two additional holes effectively destroying the golf course as a viable and vibrant public golf course;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change this routing to one of the other identified alternate routes, thus preserving this highly regarded, public facility patronized annually by thousands of residents,” of Durham region and the GTA.

I've been to the golf course. My constituents use this course. I sign, endorse and respect this petition and present it to the Minister of Transportation here in the House today.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

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

“Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance that is forced on the local residents.”

I've also signed the petition.

1520

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a petition here, 232 signatures out of 11,000. I'm going to read it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

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

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents."

I affix my signature to this petition because I totally agree with it.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have a petition signed by hundreds of persons from across Ontario.

"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, 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, of course, have signed this petition.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): The Harris government forced a restructuring in my community last year, so I understand the concerns of the folks who are here today and it's my pleasure to present this petition on their behalf. It says the following.

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

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

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promise of streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

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

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all residents."

I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to this.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'd also like to recognize the people from Victoria county. As my wife was born in Lindsay, I probably know some of them. It was a beautiful place to live and it is certainly still a beautiful place to live.

I also want to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, now that the Minister of Transportation is here and listening to this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province of Ontario has proposed the extension of Highway 407 into the Durham region and the proposed routing, designated as the technically pre-

ferred route, will dissect the property of Kedron Dells Golf Course Ltd Oshawa,”

“Whereas such routing will destroy completely five holes, and severely impact two additional holes effectively destroying the golf course as a viable and vibrant public golf course”—I might say that the problem is that they’re landlocked;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change this routing to one of the other identified alternate routes, thus preserving this highly regarded, public facility patronized annually by thousands of residents”—not just of Durham region but all of the GTA and probably from the city of Lindsay and Peterborough county and the city of Kawartha Lakes.

I sign and support this in respect to my constituents.

NURSES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

“Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high-quality care for patients;

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

“We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

“Ensure wages and benefits are competitive and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions.”

I’ll be happy to sign this, and I’m handing it off to Gillian Mucklow, our new page from Thunder Bay-Superior North. We’re very proud of her in Thunder Bay. Welcome, Gillian.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Sarnia-Lambton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Finance yesterday concerning the Cabinet Office costs. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR ROAD USERS ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L’AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES À LA CLIENTÈLE OFFERTS AUX USAGERS DE LA ROUTE

Mr Clark moved third reading of the following bill:

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 / Projet de loi 65, Loi permettant au ministre des Transports de déléguer à des personnes du secteur privé des pouvoirs, des fonctions et des responsabilités pour fournir des services liés aux programmes à l’intention des usagers de la route.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 16, the remainder of this sessional day will be divided equally among all recognized parties and the question on the motion for third reading of Bill 65 will be put at 6 o’clock this evening.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): I am pleased today to rise and introduce the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001, for third reading.

As the honourable members know, 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 worked diligently toward that goal since taking office in 1995. That role as a manager of public services included a promise to explore alternative approaches to service delivery.

It’s clear that Ontarians have come to expect good services from their government. It’s clear too that we have provided good services for taxpayers’ dollars. Bill 65 would build on the commitment we have made to the people of Ontario. Bill 65 would ensure better customer service; the protection of privacy for all citizens of this province; and continuing support for road user safety programs in this province.

I should mention too that this bill has undergone extensive scrutiny by many parties. Concerns raised by those parties have been addressed in the bill we have before us today.

Better customer service is, and always has been, our intent. And Bill 65 would deliver on our goal to improve customer service in this province. Not only is Bill 65 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. It would mean continued high-quality services to Ontario’s taxpayers: modern, safe, efficient and cost-effective services that continue to ensure value for taxpayer money.

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 would still be mandated under the proposed legislation to protect the public interest.

Yet, in debating this bill, we have heard the naysayers claiming that privacy would not be protected under its legislation. In fact, Bill 65 includes important provisions to protect the privacy of individuals and to safeguard the confidentiality of their personal information.

1530

Members of the opposition have suggested that personal information in databases would be at risk in the hands of the private sector. The fact is that my ministry would retain custody and control of all databases related to driver and vehicle information. For service providers, access to information would be limited. Our service providers would be allowed to see only the information required to conduct specific transactions as delegated by my ministry.

We've heard too that the public, rather than the private sector, can better protect privacy. This is not true. If passed, this legislation would ensure that privacy would be protected to the very same level under Bill 65. It specifically ensures that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act applies to all new service providers. As a result, all applicable records would always remain under the control of my ministry. We would reinforce that commitment to privacy by requiring that our alternative service providers create the position of privacy officer within their organization. The privacy officer would be responsible for securing all customer records related to the delegated business.

I've said this before in this House and I will say it again: 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, would serve as a good example to other government institutions, in the event they decide to provide services through private service providers."

How can we not feel confident about this bill when our own privacy commissioner offers such unquestioned support? Underscoring the privacy commissioner's vote of confidence, we received much additional support from other parties whose mandate it is to protect the public interest.

Yet there are those who would question the wisdom of this bill. For example, we were also asked, "Shouldn't you have been preparing for alternative service delivery before now?" The answer to that question is a most definite yes. Yes, we prepared for alternative service delivery. We hired temporary staff to handle increased workload. We opened new driver examination centres. We extended our hours of operation. We upgraded our systems, because our technology needed upgrading in the

way that all business systems and offices across this province require regular updates.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As I listen to the eloquent speech of the Minister of Transportation, I'd like to ask if a quorum is present.

The Speaker: Would you check for a quorum, please.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker: Call in the members.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister of Transportation.

Hon Mr Clark: We upgraded our systems because our technology needed upgrading in the way that all business systems in offices across this province require regular upgrades. These are required to keep pace with continuous improvements in technology and customer service standards. But the funding that was targeted to address these issues was temporary. We needed a long-term solution. Bill 65 would provide that solution.

One of the first initiatives in this proposed legislation would be the transfer of driver examinations. Yet it has been suggested that privatization would result in inconsistent delivery of those exams. It has also been suggested that the Ontario public would suddenly be inundated with a raft of service providers, all engaged in the delivery of driver examination services. This is not true. To ensure a straightforward approach and to ensure effective contract management and adherence to consistent standards, Ontario would seek one service provider to deliver driver examination services across this province.

Under this proposed legislation, my ministry would maintain a lead role in ensuring that the new service provider would fulfill its obligations as per its contract with the government. As always, the government would continue to set and enforce the standards we have established. My ministry would, through a comprehensive and thorough system of checks and balances, oversee every aspect of the service provider's operations.

From the initial contract through to service level agreements and daily operations, the service provider's work would be carefully scrutinized for consistency, fairness and adherence to its contract obligations. Taxpayers would be apprised of who is responsible for providing the services and who is accountable for their timeliness, cost and quality.

Some detractors have also suggested 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 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, it's simply 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 would risk safety, let the public be assured that at no time would 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 whether services are delivered by the ministry staff or other service providers.

To those who would suggest that, under alternative service delivery, the public would suddenly be faced with driver examiners who aren't qualified to do their jobs, again, it's just not true. My ministry would continue to establish standards and set curriculum as well as train the service provider's own trainers under this proposed legislation.

As for the suggestion that there would be an increased risk of more instances of fraud and corruption under alternative service delivery, it should be noted that measures are currently in place to address the issue of fraud. Those measures would not change. They would continue under any new service provider.

We would also institute a performance management system that ensures accountability. If this proposed legislation is passed, we would rigorously audit and monitor the service provider to ensure that standards are met. And, as it is dealt with today, any instances of fraud would involve a police investigation.

It was also suggested that next up for privatization would be the inspection and enforcement of standards for trucks. Nothing could be further from the truth. Let me be clear that the enforcement of standards for commercial vehicles is exempted from Bill 65. Why? Precisely because this proposed legislation focuses on improving customer service. Customer service is important, but enforcement of commercial vehicles is a completely different issue. Therefore, my ministry would continue to retain accountability for compliance and enforcement functions.

I again want to stress that if we were to transfer the delivery of services to other providers, road safety in this province would not be compromised. Indeed, the safety of all road users remains a high priority for this government and for the Ministry of Transportation. Because of the work of this government since 1995, Ontario now has the safest roads in Canada, second only to Massachusetts in all of North America. We're proud of that record, and we are working to make it even better.

A big part of delivering effective programs is ensuring quality customer service. As I have mentioned, my ministry has already made some significant customer service improvements that would address the growing population of Ontario drivers. If passed, Bill 65 would build on those improvements. It is clear that alternative service delivery of driver examination would bring innovation and greater flexibility in the way the services are delivered.

For those who might suggest that engaging a private service provider would reduce services to the public, the

answer is no. Again, by transferring the ministry's driver examination business to another service provider, my ministry would build on the customer service improvements that already have been achieved, and in fact be in a position to offer enhanced service to the public in the future.

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Under the new service delivery model, the service provider could elect to offer new value-added services to the public. It should be emphasized again that no new services would be allowed before my ministry has had an opportunity to thoroughly review and approve them.

Although the transfer would affect many ministry staff, we are confident that a new service provider would need and would 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. Some have suggested that we would be dismantling a service in which vital civil service jobs would be threatened. It should be noted that job offers, as required under the collective agreements of those affected staff, are a mandatory part of any contract with a service provider, and many Ministry of Transportation driver examination staff may find job opportunities with the new employer.

As the members were advised when Bill 65 was first introduced, the proposed legislation was written to address a number of important issues such as ensuring privacy, continued high standards in road user safety, and better customer service.

As I said earlier, alternative service delivery is all about serving customers better and finding more flexible and innovative ways to deliver services. It would help us meet this growing demand in ways that are smarter and more effective. Bill 65 would bring us closer to that goal, and to that end I ask for the full support of the House.

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

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I'm pleased to rise and speak on third reading of Bill 65. As the House would know, the government invoked closure. That was done some time ago, a time allocation that ended the debate at second reading. Now they move forward with third reading and, as stated by the Speaker, there will be a vote tonight. So the government is in a mad rush to privatize these driver examination offices.

I think it's important to remind the public that the reasoning behind the government and their mode of operation has been to short-circuit the system. The government quite clearly did not provide to the employees of the Ministry of Transportation the tools in advance in order to deal with what is known as the G2 licence system. The government was warned by others five years ago that there would be an influx of those persons who have a G2 licence, that they would be coming on stream five years down the road, and they should have been prepared for that. The government should have been

prepared for this huge number of persons seeking to acquire their permanent licence.

The government not only wasn't ready and did not provide to the Ministry of Transportation employees the tools they needed to deal with this influx of persons, but they actually closed offices. They magnified the problem by closing driver examination offices in Ontario, and I can speak of my riding. They closed one in Leamington and they closed one in Ridgetown. So clearly the government has been trying to set up a crisis in order to convince the public that something needs to be done.

The government's answer in this situation, of course, is to privatize, and it is the wrong road to travel down. The government need not have embarked on this endeavour. What the government needed to do was to be prepared in the first place to provide the tools to the employees of MTO and be prepared for the number of persons who were going to be coming to their offices to upgrade and get their permanent licences.

We have been opposed to this bill from the outset; let me make that perfectly clear. I travelled, along with my friend Mr Kormos from Niagara Centre, to the minister's office to ask him and to bring to the public's attention that he should withdraw Bill 65. We also jointly had a press conference here at Queen's Park to talk about the privatization in Bill 65 and how it should not occur. We worked together in that regard. Many of my colleagues on the Liberal side of the House also staged events to bring awareness of our opposition to Bill 65. So we have been consistent in our message that this is not the road that should be travelled by the government.

The government is moving back in time over 40 years. They're moving back to a time when these offices were allowed to be private. This government which talks boldly about a future is moving back over 40 years and returning this to private hands. Back in the early 1960s, the Minister of Transportation at the time decided that, to end corruption and all manner of problems, he would take these driver licensing offices and put them into the government fold. It was a wise decision. As a matter of fact, he thought it was one of the greatest decisions he had ever made. But the neo-conservative notion is that private is better than public. That's their notion across the way. It's not one that we share at all, but the neo-conservative notion is that private is better. Here we see this government moving back in time over 40 years. They're turning the calendar back and making a wrong-headed move.

The minister talks about the fact that he would like to see that licences can be obtained in some six weeks. There is nothing in this bill that would guarantee that. Nothing at all guarantees that people would get their licence within six weeks. There's no provision for that at all. It's just wishful thinking on the minister's part. If he was truly dedicated to the notion that people should get their licences in a timely way so that they continue to go to work and drive an automobile, so that they continue to go to university and college, so that they continue to have a part-time job in order to offset those huge tuition fees

that this government has downloaded on to persons and working families in Ontario, he would have very early on made sure that driver examination offices like those in Leamington and Ridgetown stayed open, and he would have made sure that the staff had the tools to handle the G2 licence, as I mentioned previously. He would have done that long ago, but the government has mismanaged the situation.

Many of our members have spoken about the delays that occurred where people had to wait months and months and months to get their next examination date and the fact that their licence may have expired two and three and four and five months prior to that. We've spoken to that issue, the mismanagement of the Harris cabinet and the Minister of Transportation. We've spoken to the fact that these people were almost panic-stricken that they could not get their licence in a timely way in order to drive and provide for their families and, as I said, to students who are preparing to save monies to go to higher education. The list of incredible circumstances coming into my office was really quite heart-wrenching.

What happened across Ontario was that people decided they would travel from place to place trying to find a location that would take them even sooner, and that put pressures throughout Ontario. But it's interesting to note that the assistant deputy minister on September 28 of this year wrote:

"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."

It's signed by the assistant deputy minister of transportation.

So if it is the government's opinion that things were going badly, and indeed they were, the deputy minister now says that the system is improving. It's all due to government inaction in the past that it was not working well.

Not only that, but just days before we began the debate on second reading of Bill 65, we saw that the Ministry of Transportation was replacing workstations and computer equipment at all driver and vehicle licence issuing offices and driver examination centres across the province between October of this year and January 2002. Here the government is now improving workstations and computers and the tools that our public servants needed long ago; they're improving it now as they get ready to sell it off. I find this unconscionable.

Post-September 11 and the horrific events that occurred in the United States, people have magnified their opinion of the public service. They've always respected it, they've always cherished it, they've always seen a need for that. But those needs are now magnified by what we have seen occur in the United States. I think it's incumbent on the government to withdraw this bill, to simply stand up and say that turning this over to private hands is wrong-headed, it's the wrong road to travel.

1550

Private companies will be motivated solely by profit, and we have concerns that offices that exist in rural and northern Ontario may disappear because the profit levels will not be the same as they might be in urban centres. Furthermore, we are concerned that new offices in rural and northern Ontario may not be opened at all. With the government's intention to move to this privatization—down the road these companies will come back to the government once everything is in place and say, “We can't really afford to keep these offices in rural and northern Ontario open, and we need more money to operate because the bottom line to our shareholders is not looking good.” Then the government will be caught in a very dangerous situation similar to selling off equipment at the Ministry of Transportation in the past. So we have grave concerns about this bill.

I just want to mention, before I let my colleagues from Essex and Eglinton north speak, that the minister talks about safeguarding information. Surely, post-September 11, the people of Ontario have a heightened awareness of protecting information that reflects on them and the dissemination of information and what it can mean to their lives and the lives of their loved ones. They know what information that is given to the broader public—for instance, through drivers' licences—about our police forces or our firefighters or our other emergency service persons, not to mention the people of my riding and the general public here in Ontario, could mean if it fell into the wrong hands.

The minister says there are safeguards. But let me say to the government that at one time the Ontario provincial savings office was thought to be sacred ground in terms of information, and some 50,000 accounts were given out to the broader public. Fifty thousand accounts were given out to the broader public. So we have no faith in the government's decision in this regard.

We reflect on Walkerton and the privatization that occurred there—very sad for the families of Walkerton, and they will suffer for years and years to come. I recently spoke to someone from Walkerton, and the situation is very sad indeed.

This government is rushing to privatize examination offices where the government themselves created the crisis. They did not deal with it in an effective way, and now they say we must sell it off.

As I mentioned before, this will be a fundraiser's delight. The companies—or company—that will take this over will come from the front rows of the government's fundraising events. And I fear that down the road they will come back to the government over not too long a time when this is all in place and say, “We need more money to service those areas of Ontario that don't have the greater populations, such as rural and northern Ontario.”

The government has an opportunity this afternoon to walk into this place and say, “For the safety of our citizens and to ensure that the public service can continue to do the good work they have done in Ontario, to stay

with the times and not go back 40 years, we withdraw this bill. It's wrong.” I urge the government to give that serious consideration. They still have time to do the right thing.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I welcome the good citizens of Ontario. It is about five to four this afternoon—when they look at those repeat programs, they will know exactly when we are talking in this assembly.

Bill 65 is about several things I want to comment on. But before I touch on some of the aspects of the bill, there are two things the Tories are good at. These people specialize, more or less, in privatizing. The other area where they're really good is beating up on certain sectors of the Ontario population because they like to do it. I want to separate the two.

First of all, on the issue of privatization, they are besotted with the idea.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: You'll have to look that up; I don't have time to explain.

To put it differently, in a way that good Ontario citizens will understand, they just drool at the thought of privatizing anything they can get their hands on. Why do they like to do that? What is that drooling, the spittle just shooting out of their mouths with enjoyment of the fact: “Can we privatize yet something else for our buddies, for the buddies out there who come to our fundraising events?” Every time you privatize something—meaning you give away what belongs to the public—and give it to someone who's going to make money out of it, those people will be eternally grateful. They will gladly take money out of their pockets—and it won't be five bucks, but on the order of hundreds and thousands of dollars—because those who have a lot like to give a lot. God knows, they get a whole lot in return from this government.

It's a gravy train that goes two ways. It's called political patronage, something this government would never, ever do when it was in opposition. In fact, when they were in opposition, they said, “We will be pure. There will be no patronage when we are in government.” God knows, they know how to give it away so easily. It's just like these short little trees with money growing on them for the picking by all the good, willing buddies they've got out there, gladly giving \$100, \$200, \$500, \$1,000 to go to their events because they love this government so much. The government gives to them, and they in return give a whole lot back.

I've got to tell you, a whole lot of people from my riding wouldn't be able to afford to go to their fundraisers, because they get so little from them. They go to Liberal fundraisers, too, by the way. I should just tell you that as an aside, Speaker, because it's the same crowd.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Not by much. Our fundraisers—God knows, I don't know how we survive with the kind of money we charge for our events. The Liberals charge a little

less, but you're right up there. Instead of \$700 fundraisers, it's \$600 fundraisers.

But let me focus here. I want to stay focused. It's a two-way gravy train: the government gives, and the rich people give back. What puzzles me is that the honest, working taxpayers out there think this government is serving them. The paradoxical nature of the political system confuses this experienced mind. How is it that an ordinary working stiff, an ordinary taxpayer out there could believe this government is serving them and not the interests of those for whom this government wants to privatize yet another service like driver examination?

1600

They are besotted with this privatization. I can bet my boots that Mme Thatcher must have had some chat with some of these guys out there, with Harris and/or someone else, because she helped Harris and the like take compassion out of this province, just throw it out of the province. Man, did they learn so well from Mme Thatcher. They stamped out compassion really well. The other thing they're good at is beating up on, as I said, welfare. I know they like it when I mention it because every time I mention it, they say, "Right on. The taxpayers like you to say that, Marchese, because that's what we got elected on." That's what they are doing. They're beating up and privatizing. You beat someone and you privatize. It's all part of the same game.

Who are they beating up? Welfare recipients and teachers. Man, oh man, do they besmirch teachers daily, besmear, belittle, and in the process of doing that demoralize, de-spirit, dislocate and disillusion those poor teachers, to the extent that those poor teaching civil servants are so sick of it that many are leaving the profession. In these two ways they're good: you send those teachers to the abattoir on a daily basis, and you privatize as much as you possibly can so that you can enjoy the taste of those \$1,000 bills when they come to your events so you can run good campaigns.

That's what you're good at. I wanted to praise you so that the taxpayers know how good you really are on these issues. But I want to say to you, good taxpayers, those of you who earn \$40,000, \$50,000, or even more, \$56,000, that these people are not for you. Why is it that at this time this government has an interest in pressing this issue of privatizing our driver examinations? Why is it that they are doing that at this time with such great haste? What is the pressing public need to do so at this time? Why would they do that, good taxpayers all?

Think about these things. They want to privatize to help their good, dearest of friends so that they can help each other in return. It's what it's about. They had the possibility to be a government. You have the power to be government each and every day, yet you give it all away. You give it away each and every time to the private sector as if September 11 meant nothing to you. September 11 means to me that people come running back relying on government for its responsibility to protect, to serve, to give security, to be there in times of need. September 11 taught me that when there is trouble out

there, they come to government for support. But what has this government done, except to whittle it down, to reduce it to its lowest level so that it has no more significance, to demean the political process and to besmirch politicians, not just teachers but to besmirch us as well in the process? You have belittled not just teachers, but you belittle yourselves and your own role and the function of the MPP, and governance, governing and government. You have made it so that those taxpayers out there don't believe in what we do. Yet September 11 has brought to the attention of the public the need for a greater and robust role for government.

As that happens, you learn nothing from it. You have decided to forge ahead with the privatization of driver examinations at a time when there is no need except for you to accept your responsibility and fund this program adequately. If indeed people are waiting six months to get a driver's test, then it speaks to the need of government to have done something a while ago when you recognized and understood that perhaps you should be hiring more people to do this job.

Yet you, instead of being government, decide that you don't want to be a government. As a result, you happily give this responsibility away to the private sector to do this job, you argue, better, to create more and better customer services, on the notion that the private sector does it better. Yet everybody is understanding that the private sector doesn't do it better. Yes, it does it more cheaply, but that's what it's about: to do it more cheaply in order for them to make more money. But it's not cheaper for you, taxpayer. You get whacked each and every time by this government. Taxpayer, I'm talking to you. Yes, I'm talking to you; I'm not talking to them. You are the one who gets whacked each and every time a service gets privatized.

When they privatized completely Highway 407—

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): What a wonderful highway.

Mr Marchese: Yes, what a wonderful highway you have given away, sold, in perpetuity. You've given it away to a couple of people—where are you going? Stick around. We're enjoying ourselves.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: OK, I'll see you there later. He's leaving. Mr Speaker, do you have a problem with him leaving? Call him back.

Highway 407, privatized eternally, given away.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): You guys created the partnership.

Mr Marchese: Oh, we created the partnership, but this government has taken you, taxpayers, to the cleaners. How did they do that? They privatized 407 in perpetuity, never to return to the government, as indeed was the intention, as indeed was the plan, as indeed it was then with the NDP. But under the Tories, this no longer is the case. It no longer belongs and will not belong to the citizens of Ontario; it will belong to the private sector.

What does that mean, "private sector"? It belongs to a couple of rich people who suck you dry every time you

get those wheels on to that 407. Every time you get your fat wheels or cheap wheels on the 407, there's a camera catching your little number. You get hit and whacked again and again and again. And you know that, Highway 407 drivers, because at one point the rates were this low, and wham, it got privatized a little more; it doubled, and you get hit each and every time. Why? Because Joe Spina wants to serve you better. Because Joe Spina wants to create better customer service for you. Yes, if your rates doubled in the last couple of years as a result of the complete privatization of that highway, he does so in your interests. He does it because he loves you and he wants to help you. He does it because he wants to help the private sector extract just a little more money from you and your pockets, because presumably you, Highway 407 driver, can afford to do it, can afford to pay. He wants to help you each and every day as you get on to that highway. And don't you worry when the rates are increased once again. He does it to increase the level of public service to you, driver on Highway 407.

Do you understand what I'm saying? The explanation for privatizing is because they want to create better customer service. I tell you, drawing a comparison to Highway 407, what it will mean is the user fee will be doubled, will be tripled. And who pays? You, taxpayer, pay for that; you, the taxpayer who is convinced by this government that privatizing anything the government ought to be controlling is a good thing. Yet you are the one who will eventually pay for that privatization.

Mr Spina: How?

Mr Marchese: Joe Spina asks me how. I just gave you an example, Joe. I just gave the example of Highway 407 and I said that once you privatize that highway completely and you separate your responsibilities from it, meaning you no longer have any control whatsoever, they increase the rates to any level they want. They do and they have, and you know it and everyone using that Highway 407 north of me knows it.

They have privatized our prisons—

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Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): Tell us about Teranet. Tell us about the land registry system that you privatized.

Mr Marchese: David knows and he understands these things, David from Dufferin-Peel. He knows that when you privatize those prisons—

Mr Tilson: You privatized the land registry system.

Mr Marchese: Let me finish this, David, and then you—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: David is having an exchange with me, Speaker, and that's OK. I don't mind. It's participatory democracy in this place, and I like it. I want to talk to him. I want to say to him that they have privatized our prison system.

I say to you, taxpayers, it was with your money that we built those prisons, and that same public investment is then given away to the private sector on the basis that they do it better. But this government has given away a

public institution that was ours, that we built with your money. Now that public institution, paid for with your money, is going to the private sector. A couple of rich guys are going to make money out of it.

That's what it's about. It's about making sure that they constantly feed their friends with patronage so that their provincial Conservative political coffers are always filled so that they can run election campaigns with the grease that it takes to run them effectively. As if it were not enough, they use public dollars to inform you of what they are doing on a regular basis.

This was the government that was not going to spend money in such a manner because they, oh yes, decried so much what New Democrats did in their four and a half years. This government, the Conservative government, would be loath to do such a thing and would not be captured at any time doing what other, previous governments have done.

Now you have M. Flaherty defending Madame Ecker and my other buddy, Minister Tsubouchi from Markham, defending why it is that the good citizens of Ontario need to be informed. It wasn't OK for the NDP to inform the public, no. It was not OK for M. Peterson at the time to have informed the public, no. But it is OK for M. Harris to inform the public, because presumably the information we get from Harris is good and what they got from the NDP, and the Liberals before us, was bad. Do you follow the logic? It's simple, you see. It's not so very complicated, is it?

Mr Spina: You did the same thing when you were in government.

Mr Marchese: But it's what I just said, Joe. I said that we were in government and we spent money to inform the public. But when Harris was right here, Harris said he wouldn't do that, he would not get involved in such political engagement of informing the public in the way New Democrats did. That's what he said. It's not just he who said that; all the other Conservative members who were right here said they wouldn't do it. They get into government and they spend on a regular basis as if they were besotted.

They spend your money, taxpayers, to inform you, alas, differently than the way the NDP did. Alas, they would not give in to political patronage, presumably like other political parties did. Yet this is the government that, on a daily basis, gives the whole shop to their buddies, appoints to each board, agency and commission every living, breathing Tory who lives and breathes Tory politics. They're in those boards, agencies and commissions—filled with them. But that would not be political patronage, would it? Oh, no. Yes, they would be very able people, wouldn't they? Unlike previous appointments, Tory appointments are based on merit, I would presume.

You see the game? It's too funny, tragically funny, to talk about, but I've got to tell you, taxpayers, because otherwise you may not get it. I'm here to help demystify these paradoxes, these little mysteries that take place in this assembly.

Routine driver licence issuing offices: yes, they've been in private hands in many of the cases, but they will privatize that whole shop. Why do they want to privatize this whole shop? Why do they want to give the database that collects driver information on every driver away to some private firm—from the US, yet—which should be in the hands of the government to control so that you're not giving away something that holds private information about individuals, about their health, anything pertaining to their private lives? It will be given away to the private sector, managed by some US firm. Why would you do that?

At a time when people are looking for security and they're looking for governments to protect information that protects them, in such a climate, why would these Tories give away such data to a private firm from the US? What does September 11 mean to you and what does this talk of security mean to these Tories, when here is an example of something the government ought to be controlling and they're giving it away?

They're saying to you, all taxpayers, "Don't worry. Your information will be protected." Whose word do you have? The Tories', who don't want to be a government, who came here not to govern but to be the non-government government. Do you believe them?

How can you believe a group of people that comes here not to govern but to be the non-government government? Whom do you believe? Surely you would believe a group of people if they said, "We have an obligation to govern and to be government and we respect the institution and we will hold in our hands that which should be in public hands." They're giving it away. Whom do you believe?

I don't believe them. You have Mr Long, who was recently quoted. You remember the fellow who ran for the Alliance and did so poorly. He's got some advice for the leadership campaigners. His advice to the leadership-aspiring bright lights is that they should move in this direction of privatization steadfastly, not to waver—privatize, privatize, privatize—because that's what they are good at. They specialize in that, and Mr Long, oh boy, does he specialize really, really well in this field.

One of the things he says to the Tories is, "Continue with the privatizing of our health care system," because that presumably, good taxpayers, is good for you too. He's saying to the Tories, "Privatize more and more of our health care system because that is in the public interest." You taxpayers, seniors and all, will be better protected by a two-tier health care system than the current one" that is desperately holding to the public system as much as it can.

This government has moved the privatizing of our health care system from 28% to 35%, and it's continuing. Mr Long, the former Alliance hopeful, is saying to this government, "Continue to privatize the health care system more and more and faster and faster."

I wonder whether the new leadership is keen on that, given that a whole lot of Ontarians are not happy with where this government is going, has been and wants to

take us. I know most of you taxpayers are sick and tired of this government, you're sick and tired of this privatization, you're sick and tired of this group that wants this government to privatize more and more.

1620

Yes, they help each other; yes, they love each other; yes, they feed each other as they get the corporate tax cut, as they deregulate our labour laws, minimize, diminish, make labour laws disappear so that the private sector, the corporate sector, can flourish and make more money. As you do that, they give you back their love with a whole heap of money so you can run your campaigns more effectively the next time around. But the taxpayers, ordinary men and women, are sick and tired of it. That's why New Democrats unequivocally oppose Bill 65 and say to the taxpayers, "Call your political MPPs, your members. Tell them what you think."

I think if you follow this debate in this chamber you will have learned enough to know that privatizing driver examinations, giving away our database that controls all the information around all drivers in Ontario and giving away the routine driver licence issuing offices to the private sector completely cannot be in the public interest. There is even no public pressing need to do so at this time, at this time or any time. It is a duty of the government to protect you, and it's the duty of this government to make sure those offices run well. If the money isn't there, they've got to put it back. You can do so by telling this government that the corporate tax cuts, according to one economist, cumulatively have meant that we have \$27 billion less in our provincial coffers than before, and \$8 billion less cumulatively for individual corporate taxes, the combination of which means that you have drained this province—drained it. There is no more water in that tank, drained to the extent that we have no more money to do anything with.

I tell you, when Flaherty comes back in the next little while with his budget, that billion bucks he's got stashed away—I hope he stashed away a few more dollars, because that billion he's got stashed away is not going to last more than a couple of weeks or a couple of months. When that billion is gone, good taxpayers of Ontario, they're going to cut so deep in our health care system, our educational system, our social services that benefit seniors in particular, our labour laws, our environmental laws, that if you believe they have altered Ontario in unrecognizable ways so far, when these Tories get to you in the second round, should, God forbid, we be into a deep recession—if you believe you don't recognize Ontario now, it will be completely unrecognizable in the next year or so unless this government somehow pulls the reins back on these crazy corporate tax cuts that you have given to people who don't need them and have taken literally from the mouths of children as a result of doing that to make those who are already wealthy wealthier. What an irresponsible act of a non-government government.

How can you taxpayers believe these people? How can you continue to support them? I say to you, visit their

offices and talk to them about these bills. Call us. Talk to us if you don't want to talk to them. Let us know what you think. More particularly, let these Tories know what you think.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I take great pleasure in rising in the House today to support third reading of Bill 65, the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. This is an excellent opportunity to focus on the benefits that would accrue from this proposed legislation, should it be passed. It is clear that if passed, Bill 65 would lead to important improvements in the way customer services are delivered to the public across Ontario. The bill underscores the promise this government delivered in our 1999 Blueprint document and which was repeated in this year's speech from the throne. It was a promise to explore alternative approaches to service delivery. Without question, if this proposed legislation is passed, it would enable our government to deliver better service to Ontarians, reinforce their privacy rights and ensure our continued commitment to road user safety.

Our government is working hard to implement Bill 65, to ensure that Ontarians may benefit from it as quickly as possible. Since the introduction of alternative service delivery by the Minister of Transportation, feedback on its contents has been received from various sources. We can feel confident that all input received has been given full consideration. We listened and responded to concerns. As a result, the proposed legislation we have before us for third reading reflects those concerns.

This is a bill that is strong and focused. It reflects our intent to provide better customer service to Ontarians, ensuring that their rights to privacy are protected and upholding our commitment to ongoing road user safety. With this proposed legislation, the bottom line is quite simply that we're finding 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. If passed, this proposed legislation would ensure many benefits. That is true, and yet the promise of alternative service delivery continues to be challenged by those who would question its benefits in making our excellent standard of customer service even better. For instance, there have been suggestions that, based on operational efficiencies, driver examinations should remain under the aegis of the public sector. Yet it is also true and must be acknowledged that the private sector drives innovation in this province. Clearly, the private sector is the driving force behind business efficiencies. Nobody knows better than our private sector businesses how to run a business efficiently. If passed into legislation, Bill 65 would empower the private sector to deliver these services with efficiency and innovation. In short, far from reducing the efficiency of service delivery, the engagement of our private sector in the delivery of these services would in fact build on it.

Much has changed in terms of driver licensing standards since the days of the learner's permit, or the 365, so many years ago. In those days, a novice driver might obtain a learner's permit and look forward to getting their licence quickly, sometimes on the same day. That has changed with the introduction of graduated licensing. With graduated licensing, Ontario's novice drivers undergo a much more rigorous two-step licensing process which includes two road tests. It is an approach to licensing drivers that is saving lives, and it is a great success story.

But while our licensing requirements have changed a great deal over the years, our driver examination services have not kept pace with the times. Ontario has more than eight million licensed drivers in this 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 the successful economic growth in this province.

1630

The Ministry of Transportation has made some significant customer service improvements to address the growing population of drivers in this province.

Members will recall that in 1999 the then Minister of Transportation brought in several measures to address 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 a number of provincial testing centres. As a result, more road tests were offered and the average waiting time across the province for driver examinations was reduced. If passed, this legislation would build on that work.

Bill 65 supports the Ministry of Transportation's intention to find a new service provider for driver examination services. Under this proposed legislation, the work would eventually be moved to a new service provider. Ontario would be able to enhance and 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.

Reaching that goal would mean finding the right service provider for the job. In order to ensure the selection of the right organization to undertake this important task, the ministry would establish 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. The process would 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 driver examination services.

Upon choosing a successful candidate, the ministry would develop a detailed service delivery contract with the winning bidder.

Mr Agostino: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to try and help my colleagues across the floor get more of their members interested in this. Can you check if we have a quorum?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for York North.

Mrs Munro: Upon choosing a successful candidate, the ministry would develop a detailed service delivery contract with the winning bidder. Let me reiterate that great care would be taken to ensure that the selection process would have only one possible outcome. That outcome would be safe, effective, high-quality service delivery by one service provider.

Yet this bill has its detractors. There are some serious allegations that need to be addressed. For example, some would suggest that putting driver examinations into the hands of the private sector would remove the government's quality control of the testing process. This 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. If this legislation is passed, the Ministry of Transportation would continue to safeguard the public interest at all times, 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.

Some critics have also suggested that this proposed legislation is nothing more than a job-slashing exercise. The truth is that the goal of transferring service delivery to other providers would improve customer service. It would allow for greater innovation and flexibility in service delivery. And it would support the government's commitment to be a manager rather than a delivery agent of services to the Ontario public.

While it is understood that the outcome of Bill 65 could affect a large number of ministry staff, new service providers would require well-trained and dedicated employees. These employees may well be within the ranks of the Ministry of Transportation's workforce. Job offers, as required under the collective agreement, would be a mandatory part of any new contract with a new service provider. It is anticipated that many Ministry of Transportation driver examination staff would find job oppor-

tunities with the new employer. To that end, 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.

Another issue that has been raised is the question of the ministry's rural clients and the suggestion that they would lose access to service. Again, not true. The transfer of driver examinations would ensure that drivers in both rural and urban areas would have access to driver examination services within six weeks or less everywhere in Ontario. The Ministry of Transportation currently provides driver examination services in 92 communities throughout Ontario, at 55 driver examination centres and 37 travel points. If this legislation is passed, under a new service provider this government would continue to provide services in those communities. This would not change, except for the potential for improved services in many communities.

1640

It has also been said that the customer service would suffer under this legislation. The fact is that the goal of this whole initiative is to improve customer service. Alternative service delivery would have to sustain the significant customer service improvements we have already achieved while supporting greater innovation in service delivery. If passed, this legislation would build significantly on those measures introduced two years ago to improve customer service and reduce road test waiting times.

The people of Ontario simply cannot lose with alternative service delivery, because the whole point of this proposed legislation would be the provision of better customer service. If this bill is passed, resulting 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 would be improved customer service, benefiting the people of Ontario. Others have already spoken to the bill's benefits with respect to enhancing our government's accountability to the people of this province. From my perspective, Bill 65's intent is to bring better, more efficient and cost-effective services to the people of Ontario.

Every one of us here has 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. As I said earlier, the Ministry of Transportation 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.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Is there a quorum present?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

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

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for York North.

Mrs Munro: If this bill is passed, new service providers would work closely with the ministry to deliver the best possible driver examination and other driver services province-wide.

The Ministry of Transportation 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.

I believe all members of the House should join me in supporting this bill. 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 we offer to people.

I invite all other members to pledge their support for this proposed legislation.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): When I first started to listen to the member for York North I thought, "If that member puts forward a compelling argument about this bill, I'm willing to support it." But try as she did, it just didn't do it so I'm not going to be able to support the bill.

I would like, though, to comment on it. I know the member said on several occasions that if this bill passes, how good things are going to get. I'll comment on the first part. This bill will pass. Those citizens of Ontario who may be watching today can be assured of that because the government simply has more numbers than we do. But will service be improved? That is the question.

There was a minister in the House earlier today—he's still about, I think—who has heard probably oftentimes and probably too many times of a quote he made, and that was that to get things done you have to create a crisis. If you want to get things done your way, you have to create a crisis so that people get up in arms and then you can attempt to solve the problem. There has been in the not-too-distant past—

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Essex.

Mr Crozier: I know the minister just wanted to interrupt my flow.

Hon Mr Sterling: Oh, I wouldn't do that.

Mr Crozier: No. I was talking about other areas where a crisis has been created. In the not-too-distant past things weren't so great in the driver examination area in particular in this province because the govern-

ment didn't heed the word they had heard from many quarters in the province, that the graduated licensing system was arriving at maturity, at its fifth year, and that there was going to be a great demand on the system. We had long waiting periods.

Hon Mr Sterling: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is a quorum present?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Essex.

Mr Crozier: I was just telling the minister that I thank him for asking for these quorum calls because I think, first, that what we have to say in here is important, and second, I was required to go for 18 minutes and I really only have 14 minutes of material, so as the clock clicks off it will help me.

There were long waiting lines—you can tell by this prepared text, Minister, that I can keep my place as I go along. As the member who spoke previous to me said, the ministry did hire a number of examiners and it has improved, but they still didn't quite do enough. So they have come along and said, "Well, we're going to improve service by sending it to the private sector."

1650

I don't know that there's any guarantee in this legislation that service will be improved. I say to my constituents, who are mainly small urban and rural, that I am afraid service is going to get even worse. I don't know whether the private sector is going to be able to hire all the inspectors we now have. We have well-qualified inspectors. I don't know whether the private sector is going to hire them. I fear they won't, because not only is this a cost-cutting effort by the government, and nothing more than that in my view, but I suspect that in the private sector, when you have to reach that bottom line, when you have to make a profit on this, there are going to be some cost-cutting measures as well. I don't think rural Ontario is going to benefit from this at all.

My colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex mentioned when he was speaking that back in the 1960s it was decided there were a number of reasons why the government should be responsible for this service and why they took it on and became accountable for it.

I can recall when I took my driver's test. At that time, all you had to do was drive around the block—literally that. I paid my two bucks—goodness knows, the cost of a driver's test has gone up considerably since then.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): There were only 28 cars on the road.

Mr Crozier: I paid my two bucks, drove around the block and got my driver's licence. The only fear then was that you might have to park. As one of my colleagues

over there has just alluded to, there were only 28 cars in the province, so there weren't too many on the street that day to bother me. But I remember that well, and some of the folks in my home town will recognize this: we came up Fox Street, made a right-hand turn and there was a traffic signal there and a traffic signal down at the corner of Mill and Erie. I remember the examiner chiding me because I wasn't going fast enough; I was going very cautiously. He said, "You know, if I wasn't with you, you would have been past that traffic signal at the corner of Mill and Erie."

What they tried to do was bring some professionalism to it since the 1960s, and I think they've done that. We have a very professional driver examination system today, albeit not without its problems. But these problems were within the purview of this government to have solved by now, and they haven't done it. They've decided to go the private sector route. So I say again that I'm really concerned that rural Ontario and small urban Ontario will not be well served by this legislation.

I want to speak briefly on, and to re-emphasize, our concern about the privacy issues—yes, the privacy commissioner has commented on this. We thought the provincial savings office information was well protected, and look what happened to it. This government let that information, private information on individuals, go holus-bolus. They turned it over to the private sector in order to carry out some obligation they were concerned about at the time. Private information from 50,000 accounts in the provincial savings office got out into the private sector. There's no guarantee this won't happen again.

I suggest there is some information they will be privy to that should be kept even more private than the Province of Ontario Savings Office information was. There will be health information on these records, and there is no way that anything in the realm of information about my health, your health, Speaker, or the health anyone in this Legislature or in the province should go to the private sector.

That goes to the heart of what government's responsibility is. There are some things that government should be responsible for, and I think this is one of them. Yet this legislation, in the explanatory notes, points out this can even be subtle. In other words, the minister can delegate the responsibility for, in this case, driver examination and that delegate can subdelegate it. So how can you ever go back to the government and make them accountable for some information that may not be used properly? Go to the minister? If once this is delegated and subdelegated, a problem comes to us at our constituency office, we'll go to the Minister of Transportation to complain about it, and he'll say, "It's not my job. Not only have I distanced myself from it, but I have even double-distanced myself from it." How is the minister going to have any control over that? I suggest that the more it's delegated, the more you lose any control that you might have over it.

It says here, "Delegates and subdelegates are not agents of the crown. The crown is not liable for any act

or failure to act by a delegate or subdelegate." Well, today the crown is responsible. Before this bill is passed and receives royal assent and is enacted, the government is responsible. But the minister, in having this legislation drafted, has been very careful, folks, to say to you that he or she, the minister of the day, is not liable for any act or any failure to act by a delegate or subdelegate. If that isn't simply abdicating responsibility, I don't know what is. That's another concern I have with this legislation.

There's some reference made to fees, that the government will have control over fees. But experience tells us that what will probably happen, and what I predict will happen—let me put it that way: I'll go on record as saying I predict that this will happen—is that after a period of time this private sector company is going to come to the government and say, "We really can't make a profit at this. We're either going to have to get out of the business or you're going to have to help us by increasing fees." And they're going to be able to show that; I don't doubt in the least that they'll be able to show that they need an increase in fees. Much like the situation with Highway 407, which has also been referred to in debate today, much like that situation, the fees are going to climb and climb and climb. Again, if we go to the government of the day, they're going to say, "Well, we want to provide the right service and we want the right service provider to be in place, but this private sector provider has to make a profit, you know." So the logical event that will follow that will be increases in the fees that are charged.

I want to refer to something the Provincial Auditor said with respect to privatization of government services. The Conservative government has repeatedly praised the cost savings that it achieved by privatizing highways and privatizing highway maintenance in particular. But in the 1999 report of the Provincial Auditor he showed that privatization has not saved any money and "may ultimately result in significant increases in the cost of highway maintenance." So if we use that as an example of what might happen, then we can logically think that these examination costs are going to increase significantly.

I wonder too where the incentive is for the private sector provider in this case, where that incentive is to do its very best to have the persons being tested, tested fairly. I only suggest that it might be—because not everybody is honest beyond a doubt—that a failure rate of a certain percentage might be factored into the bottom line of this private sector provider to say, "If we provide a failure rate of X per cent, what really happens is that money comes right back into our pocket."

1700

I even had it suggested to me, with the system that we have in place where the government is accountable today, that the way it's operated now is a government money-grab. I don't believe that to be the case, because in those instances where I've gone back to the supervisor of a driver examination—frankly, I've never attempted to nor would I want to go back to the actual examiner, because they are professionals and I think they approach their

position that way. But when I go to the supervisor and say, "There is some question by this constituent that perhaps their driver test was not administered fairly," the supervisor, without hesitation, goes back and looks at that test and either comes back to me and suggests that it was administered fairly and that there were reasons why the result wasn't what the constituent wanted, or in fact, in a number of cases, goes back to the constituent and explains it to them. I don't think we're going to have that kind of contact. I don't think we're going to have that kind of reaction.

As I said earlier, if I go to the minister: "It's not my job. It's the delegate's job or it's the subdelegate's job to explain that. I can't interfere, can't do anything about it, can't check it out." If I go to the private sector, I'm just as liable to be told, "Look, this is a business. We know how to run this business and we're not about to help you out, either."

So that's something I'm going to keep an eye on very closely. I'm going to want to know and want to determine as this goes on that examinations are administered fairly and that I can explain to a constituent or have it explained to that constituent why the examination may not have gone just the way they had hoped.

In fact, I can say with the professional service that we have today that we run into instances where we need their help, where there may be a particular emergency where someone needs a driver test. Since I'm in government and that inspector works for the government, we get co-operation where they are able on occasion to help us out. I don't know whether we're going to get that with the private sector. Again, it's going to come down to dollars and cents, and they're no doubt going to apply that rule to whether they can help or not. I don't think I'm speaking out of line, but there even has been occasion where the flexibility that they were able to help us with has led to an examination that was given either at a certain time or in a certain place. So to suggest, as some of the discussion has, and I think the minister spoke of this, that they'll be able to work longer hours and give better service that way, I don't think that's the case at all.

I think that if this government managed the licensing in this province properly, they would have been able, up to now, to serve us very well. I see this need to hand it over to the private sector under the guise of better service as just an admission by this government that they weren't able to manage it. You know, they tout themselves as being the great managers. If you're the great managers you're supposed to be, why then couldn't you get this part of your responsibility in order? Why is it that you have to throw your hands up and hand it over to the private sector?

There have been some suggestions made today why that is. My colleague from Trinity-Spadina suggested that it may be a case where the more you put into the private sector, the more you can then get from the private sector, as a government, because they're beholden to you. If there's any place in the service that should be provided by the government, that shouldn't be beholden to any-

body, that should be administered fairly, it's this: driver testing. We know it goes well beyond that; that this is, in all likelihood, only the beginning.

It very well may be—because this legislation doesn't prevent it—that the enforcement of equipment standards for vehicles, including lights, brakes, safe tires and road-worthiness, particularly commercial vehicles, may be doled out to the private sector. It may be that enforcing additional safety standards for school buses, motor-coaches and vehicles that transport the physically disabled may be at some point handed off to the private sector. It may be that the enforcement for maintenance requirements will be offloaded to the private sector. The enforcement for hours of work and the requirements of commercial motor vehicle operators may be foisted off to the private sector.

I'm not sure at all that the direction of this piece of legislation is for the benefit of the citizens of Ontario. This bill will pass, but we will watch very closely what the results of it are.

Mr Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise today in the House to offer my support for third reading of Bill 65, the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001. First of all, I'd like to congratulate Minister Clark and the parliamentary assistant, Ms Munro, for their comments on behalf of our government today. I want to congratulate the minister for bringing forth this legislation. I think it is long overdue, and it is important legislation for our province.

As members of the House know, this proposed legislation, if passed, would allow the delivery of some Ministry of Transportation services by another service provider.

Bill 65 was developed in order to fulfill a promise this government made to the people of Ontario. It was a promise made in our Common Sense Revolution and Blueprint. That promise was to ensure a smaller and more efficient government. I am pleased to say this legislation, if passed, would help make that promise a reality. Bill 65 is designed to improve customer service without compromising safety. If passed, this legislation would give the Ministry of Transportation the authority to transfer the delivery of some road user programs and services to other providers. This legislation would ensure the Minister of Transportation's continuing lead role in safeguarding and protecting the public's interest. If passed, Bill 65 would lead to significant improvements in the delivery of customer services to the Ontario public.

Without question, if Bill 65 is passed, this government would continue to do the following: focus on setting quality standards; effectively manage, rather than deliver, services; and it would monitor and rigorously audit service providers to ensure that they comply with their legislative and contractual obligations.

Better customer service is what Bill 65 is all about. It is important that this bill is passed so that all Ontarians may realize the benefits as quickly as possible.

1710

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that since alternative service delivery was first introduced in

this House, it was significantly changed to reflect the feedback that was received from various sources. That was part of the process of putting together a bill that reflects the comments and concerns of all parties involved. In the process, it underscored the government's commitment to listen to the citizens of our province. The bill we have before us for third reading addresses these concerns. In fact, it is in the best interests of the people of Ontario to move this legislation forward so that its benefits can be felt as quickly as possible. In addition to providing better customer service, Bill 65, if passed, would continue to vigorously maintain the privacy so important to our citizens. Bill 65 would ensure a continued commitment to road user safety in our province.

Members of this House know that the Ministry of Transportation currently provides driver examinations and a range of related services. But the ministry also recognized the need for change in order to maintain its higher standards of customer service delivery. For this government, keeping pace with change has meant making the right decisions, and in some cases they've been tough decisions. 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—

Mr Hoy: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if a quorum is present.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members. This will be up to a five-minute bell.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Simcoe North.

Mr Dunlop: Our economy has grown by almost 25% since 1995. That translates into more than 550,000 new jobs that were created in Ontario between 1998 and 2000. That's the best pace of job growth in the history of our province. Certainly, this government paid attention to maintaining and improving our transportation infrastructure, which is key to our growth. Our first-class highway system is a cornerstone of our economy and handles more than \$1 trillion in goods every year. That translates into \$2.7 billion a day.

I think it's fairly safe to say, when you drive around the province, that you see a number of transports on our roads. 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. No matter what political party you're from or what level of government, I think you'll all agree that we've seen some amazing construction projects in all parts of our province over the last six years.

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 would ensure continued prosperity for the province, and it underscores our efforts to foster an economic climate that is conducive to continued growth.

Continued growth means keeping the 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 that, if passed, 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 would reinforce and build on that commitment. And while there might be some opposition to the benefits of alternative service delivery, I can say that Bill 65 would make Ontario's excellent standard for customer service even better.

Of course, not everybody is in favour of legislation that would build on our record for safety, customer service and transportation excellence. There are those who oppose the legislation simply because they don't want to believe in its benefits. For example, there are those who would insist that personal information in databases would be at risk in the hands of the private sector. We've heard some of those comments earlier today. The truth is that MTO would retain custody and control of all databases related to driver and vehicle information. 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 was also a suggestion that the public sector would offer better privacy protection than the private sector. Clearly, the answer to that is no. If passed, Bill 65 would provide privacy protection to the same level that we have today. All applicable records would remain under the control of the Ministry of Transportation.

Some have also said that if passed, Bill 65 would result in the inconsistent delivery of driver exams. Again, the answer to that is no. If this proposed legislation is passed, the Ministry of Transportation would ensure a consistent approach, effective contract management and adherence to consistent standards across our province. That's why the ministry would seek a single service provider to deliver driver examination services across our province. And if the bill is passed, MTO would oversee all of the service provider's operations.

Through a comprehensive system of checks and balances, the ministry would ensure that this new provider would fulfill all of its obligations, as laid out in its contract, to the citizens of our province.

For those who would suggest that fees would suddenly skyrocket, again, not true. This government will continue to set fees for regulated services just as it has done in the past.

An opposing point also states that privatizing road safety and driver examination services risks the safety of the citizens of our province. 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—only behind Massachusetts—in all of North America. This government will continue to build on that record, and alternative service delivery would ensure that road safety is not compromised.

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

Others have said, again without regard to the bill's inherent, clear and unquestionable benefits, that alternative service delivery risks privacy. Let's make it clear that there is absolutely no risk to privacy under this proposed legislation. The fact that Bill 65 has received accolades from Ontario's own Information and Privacy Commissioner speaks clearly of its intent to uphold and protect the public's interest. To that end, if passed, Bill 65 would require new service providers to abide by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, ensuring the continued protection of privacy for all Ontarians. Personal information would be governed by this proposed legislation. Contracts between this government and 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 currently in place to address the issue of fraud. Those measures would not change. They would continue under any new service provider.

Under the proposed legislation, the Ministry of Transportation would also institute a performance management system to ensure accountability. MTO would audit and monitor the service provider to ensure that standards are met and, as is the case today, any instances of fraud or corruption would involve a comprehensive and thorough 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, and it would support even greater innovation in service delivery that would only serve to benefit the people of our province.

As others have pointed out, this initiative would build on measures announced in the fall of 1999 to improve customer service and reduce road test waiting times. Without a doubt, Ontarians would not lose with alternative service delivery. In a phrase, its direction and

intent are all about better customer service. Some might argue with that, but you will hear no arguments from me on making improvements to customer service delivery to the people of our province. Clearly this proposed legislation would, if passed, enhance government accountability, boost our safety record and ensure 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 examination and other services across our province. The Ministry of Transportation would continue to manage and supervise the delivery of these services and, as I mentioned earlier, ensure that new service providers adhere to a performance management system that maintains its commitment to excellence. The end result would be more efficient and cost-effective services for the Ontario public, and the Ministry of Transportation would be able to focus on its proper role of service management rather than service delivery.

I believe that all members of the House should join me in supporting this bill today. Like so many other changes we have seen over the years, the proposed legislation, if passed, would build on the steady progress we have made to keep Ontario strong and growing.

I just want to say in closing that there has been a lot of discussion here this afternoon about the private sector being involved in the Ministry of Transportation. I think we have to go back possibly 20 years to the Bill Davis government, and the Peterson government, the Rae government and the Harris government have all used the private sector in road maintenance. We have a number of contracts out today. Certainly I can remember back 20 years ago, when they first started using private companies to plow roads, to sand the roads, and it's worked very well over the years. We've built on that. We've used the private sector very efficiently, just as we have done with road construction. All road construction in the province, all the bridges we build, the miles and miles of asphalt, the \$6 billion in road construction we've committed to over the past six years, has all been done by the private sector. They've done a wonderful job. The words "private sector" are not dirty words on this side of the House. We look at the private sector as one that can deliver cost-efficient services, often very comparable and sometimes even better than what the government can provide.

With that, I want to ask all members in this House to join with me today in supporting third reading of this bill. It's important legislation for the citizens of our province and for the Ministry of Transportation. I would ask everyone to join me when this bill comes up for the vote.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I'm here to speak to Bill 65, privatizing road safety. This is another attempt by this government to basically do something that nobody asked for. I was just wondering how many citizens of Ontario asked for driver testing to be privatized. I certainly didn't get any calls or visits from

people in my riding asking for privatization. People phoned and contacted my constituency office, Eglinton-Lawrence, asking for a more efficient and timely delivery of testing. I think that was as a result of this government's cutbacks, where they didn't have enough people employed providing service to Ontario citizens. Out of that lack of good management, they've come up with this bill to privatize road-testing services.

I think it's a demonstration that this government is looking at legislation in their rear-view mirror. Since the horrific tragedies of September 11, the public has realized that essential government services are indispensable, whether it be our firefighters, our police forces, our port authorities or our postal workers. We take essential government service for granted. I know this government was on the neo-con mantra of privatizing, privatizing, privatizing. It's really yesterday's view of the world. I think the citizens of Ontario are no different from citizens all across North America who are saying that they want excellence in public service and that they want it efficiently and effectively, but they want it to be in the public domain.

As you know, there's a debate in the United States right now about the inspectors and baggage handlers and personnel at the airports. A lot of these are privatized in the United States. Many congressmen of both parties, Republicans and Democrats, are saying, "We want to federalize those employees at our airports." They were hiring these inspectors at airports who had criminal records. The private companies, which were basically trying to get minimum-wage employees, were hiring people off the streets who had no qualifications.

That's hopefully a lesson people will come to appreciate. But this government, as I said, is behind in terms of understanding the different dynamics in North America today, where people want government to take a role in ensuring that people who have vital services to give are under federal or provincial auspices, that their records are checked, that they're people of high moral standing and that they're people who have good qualifications and training.

These fly-by-night private companies that come in are going to come in for driver testing. Who knows what they'll do for training or what kind of monitoring they'll do. You know that the bottom line there is not service or protecting the public. The bottom line is making a profit. If they can make a better profit by cutting down on training, they'll do that.

That's the risk we're facing with bills like this Bill 65, that there is a risk for the public in terms of something as important as driver training and testing. We have our young daughters and sons who go for this and we want to make sure that the people on the roads are tested by professionals who have the objective of providing a very comprehensive test, a test that's not dictated by bottom-line profits.

This is a government continuing on a road that is really fraught with a lot of sometimes unnecessary expenses. As you know, the Provincial Auditor said that

with the road maintenance on our highways, when it was given out to friends of the government, basically it saved no money. They transferred the service to private companies and the Provincial Auditor said in his report that this practice of privatizing road maintenance on our highways has saved no money. Why do they do it? What was the rationale for doing it?

1730

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, with respect to the member who has the floor: he has just impugned the motive of government by suggesting that we give out, to our friends—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr Colle: All the people of Ontario have to do is look at—there's a Professor MacDermid at York University who has catalogued all the political donations to this party. You'll see that this government has got about 90% of its contributions from these corporations. That is really beyond belief. As Professor MacDermid says, if you want to find out what legislation this government puts forth—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Eglinton-Lawrence has the floor. One member has the floor at a time. That is how this place works. Try to remember that.

Mr Colle: I guess, Mr Speaker, I struck a nerve when I talked about what motivates this government to introduce legislation. As I was saying, if you look at the very well documented work of Professor MacDermid at York University, it will show you that if you follow the money, the millions of dollars this government has gotten into its political coffers, you'll see a connection between what legislation they pass and what money they got. It's documented over and over again by Professor MacDermid. As you go to his Web site, you'll see that if you want to follow the money, you'll find out what motivates this government.

In terms of following the money, I would ask that the public out there follow the money on Highway 407. This is a highway built by public tax dollars, built by the hard blood, sweat and tears of Ontario taxpayers, by the government. What the government did to build up their treasury to make it look good before the last election was to sell off one of these most important assets, Highway 407, which was supposed to have been a source of revenue for government for the next 100 years. What did they go and do to reward somebody who was very influential, I guess, in their government circles? They sold off an asset like that for basically a song.

They sold off the 407 to a Spanish consortium. Now the Spanish consortium for the next 100 years will rake in millions of dollars a day from Ontario taxpayers who are on the 407, paying those tolls, which are about the highest tolls in North America for a highway, and those people who are paying the tolls on the 407 paid for the 407 with their tax dollars. So they're getting hit twice: tax dollars to build the 407, and every time they ride the

407 they pay off their friends who got the contract, this Spanish consortium that came from nowhere, and this government gave the highway away to them.

You can imagine how many billions of dollars Ontario taxpayers could have gotten if they had kept the highway in the public domain. Instead, just like this Bill 65, you wonder what motivated the Harris government to give away that asset to the Spanish consortium. How did that happen and what are the cost-benefits of giving that highway away to this consortium, basically for a song? You know what really irritates the people in the GTA? They for the most part can't afford to ride on the Spanish giveaway highway, the 407, because the tolls are so high. They're forced to go into gridlock on Highway 401, gridlock on Highway 7, because the Spanish consortium, friend of this government, is charging exorbitant tolls for the taxpayers to ride a public highway that they privatized and sold off to their friends. To me, that's a perfect example of how this government does not appreciate public assets and the value they bring into the public treasury.

So if you want to talk about the rationale and how this government takes money out of the pockets of Ontario taxpayers, Highway 407 will be a monument to this government and how it operates. I tell people, "Every time you pay a toll on the 407, just think that that was your highway and now you are paying good money to go into the coffers of some Spanish consortium." That is wrong, because public assets not only provide a public service, like driver testing, but also are a way of ensuring that the people of Ontario have an asset they can use. These highways or these road contracts are things that should be in the public domain if they are run efficiently by the public service and if you ensure the public service is doing a good job. Rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater—what this government does at any opportunity, when they see a problem with the public service, is sell it off to some private consortium, at every opportunity.

There are probably people across the northern part of the GTA, spewing all kinds of fumes and carbon dioxide, all kinds of smog, because they're bumper to bumper on the 401. You know why? Because the trucks, for instance, in this province can't afford to pay the hostage fee to go on the 407. The trucking firms can't afford to pay the exorbitant fees that this Spanish consortium that got the highway from this government for a song is charging Ontario truckers. So the truckers, who are trying to make a living, are stuck bumper to bumper on the 401 as we speak. You just try and get along the 401 right now—you can't. Meanwhile, if you go up to the 407, you can sail clear across the 407, but when you go on the 407 you have to pay an arm and a leg.

Then you know what happens? My good friend the member from Sudbury, Rick Bartolucci, will tell you that if you have a bill from the 407 consortium, the friends of this government, that Spanish consortium, and you try to pay that bill on the phone, you can't get through.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): It's a mess.

Mr Colle: It's a disaster. They don't hire enough people to even help you pay your bill. So do you know what they do? If you don't pay your bill, they can stop you from getting your licence renewed. What a giveaway to this Spanish consortium. They're acting like an agent for this private consortium to prohibit you as an Ontario taxpayer from getting your licence back because you missed a bill payment on the 407 that you couldn't pay because you couldn't get through their answering system. Talk about disgraceful; talk about disgusting. There is an example again: 407 and the millions of dollars that pour out of Canada, out of Ontario, into some fat-cat Spanish consortium that this government has given away the store to.

That is why we have to be very careful when we look at bills like Bill 65. It's not the bill by itself, but if you add all these bills up to what they've done, they've sold off the heritage of a lot of our young people. And they've sold it off for the short-term fix. They don't think of the fact that a highway like 407—those tolls could have been helping to build hospitals, helping to build schools. They could have been doing all good things with that money. Instead, every red cent goes to Spain. What we're doing is helping who knows what in Spain. We can't even afford to provide textbooks in our schools. Our emergency rooms here in Toronto are packed to where men and women sometimes have to share the same room in emergency hospitals. That money that went to the 407 and is going daily, as we speak—I've been up speaking for 10 minutes, and we probably gave away half a million dollars to the Spanish consortium. That half a million dollars in 10 minutes could certainly hire a lot of good doctors and a lot of good nurses. Those are the mistakes this government makes because it has got blinkers on, it has tunnel vision, and all they see at the end of that tunnel is a way of pleasing their friends.

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They don't think of the hard-working Ontario citizen taxpayer, working families who have to try and make ends meet to pay user fees at schools now, user fees for all kinds of medical services that our seniors pay. This government never stops to talk to ordinary people at the supermarket, talk to ordinary people who are trying to walk an extra block or two because the milk is five cents cheaper down the street. Those are the people who can't afford to pay for basic services, and this government tries essentially to put them off and marginalize those working people and just take care of the elite few in this province. Their corporate friends are doing quite well, but small business is not doing well in this province, and working people are not doing well because they're not getting good services from a government that basically is more interested in a straitjacket political agenda than looking at ordinary, hard-working Ontarians who want to raise a family, who pay their taxes, who are good citizens and care about this province and this country.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I appreciate this opportunity to join the debate on Bill 65.

At the outset, I'd like to just add to what my friend and colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence raised with re-

gard to the sale of the 407, because he makes excellent points. There's another aspect to this that needs to be put on the public record, and that is: for a government that likes to portray itself as, "Oh, such wonderful fiscal managers," and "Oh, so responsible with the public purse," the reality is that the money derived from the sale of Highway 407 was added as a current-year revenue for the government books—lo and behold—in the year we went into an election. They sold a capital resource that you can only sell once and took the profit—by the way, that was derived because of the way the NDP structured the development, the partnership and ultimately the operation under our plans—you took that profit that belonged to the public, took all of it in one year and added it to your current revenue figures so that you could project a rosier picture in the upcoming year, heading into an election. Talk about shameful.

In addition to everything else the member from Eglinton-Lawrence has raised, you also did that. And now, when we're facing revenue losses to the extent that we are, that stands out as an even greater stark difference between what you say and what you do.

Mrs Marland: How about GO Transit?

Mr Christopherson: If my friend from Mississauga South would allow me, I'd like to continue.

Mrs Marland: But tell us about selling the GO trains.

Mr Christopherson: We'll talk about that another time, Margaret. Today we're going to talk about this.

Bill 65: let me say that this is a major reversal for the Conservatives in Ontario. It was in or around 1961 when a former Progressive Conservative government—interesting, Progressive Conservative, the forward-backward party that takes us back 40 years—when the government of the day—real Tories—took this whole business out of the private sector and brought it into the public domain. Why? Because there were concerns at the time over the very issues we've raised in this House time and time again. That's what happened: 40 years ago it was in the private sector, and it was taken out of the private sector by a former Tory government and brought into the public domain because there were concerns of corruption and fraud and other wrongdoing. Now the forward-backward party of Mike Harris et al is taking us back to the bad old times and indeed opens up all those negative possibilities. Why? So that you can benefit your friends. I agree; I heard my friend Mr Spina heckling a little earlier about a public process. But the difference is, when everybody who's in the line contributes to your political party, it really doesn't matter to you which one wins, and you can afford—and I'm sure you do—to run a very above-board process. But at the end of the day, it's the private sector and those who own those private sector entities, who I'm willing to bet in one way or another make contributions to this party that's in power now, who will be the benefactors.

This government loves to talk, again, about how good they are at managing things. Boy, it'll be interesting to watch that unravel over the next few months. Sad, I must say, for the people who are affected in Ontario, but in the

context of this place, interesting as a case study in saying one thing and doing another, because you say that you manage things in the interests of the majority of people, yet the majority of people lose under your economic policies, and a very small portion of the population wins, and they win big-time.

One of the reasons that you're going to privatize is because of the absolute mismanagement, on the part of this government, of the whole issue of driver testing. You've been in power now for six long, long years, and you have failed to come to grips with the fact that the licensing process in Ontario has changed and as a result we needed an even greater investment in driver licence testing. But because you won't spend a dime on public services—to pay for your tax cuts, which benefit a very small percentage of the population—we now have waiting lists that are up over half a year long.

One way out of this, rather than breaking your Holy Grail rule of not reinvesting in the government of Ontario and providing the people with services, is that you're going to sell the problem off and let somebody else worry about it. How are they going to handle it? They're going to handle it through user fees. You don't want to face the political heat for spending money—reinvesting, we in the NDP would call it—on public sector services, so you're going to let the private sector not only make money, but they can take the political heat for you, can't they? Because somebody has to deal with it. You can't continue to have backed-up waiting lists of over half a year in something as important as drivers' licences, particularly when my friend from Hamilton, the member from Stoney Creek, the current Minister of Transportation, talks—rightly, I would emphasize—about the importance of our transportation system. But you're going to let somebody else worry about that. You want to get that off your books.

It has been raised in this House before, about user fees. You love user fees. Of course, those who have the bucks can afford to pay the user fees, and if you don't, well, you sort of get left behind, somewhere in the shadows in Mike Harris's Ontario. Right in the preamble, in the explanatory note, you state, "The minister may establish fees not authorized by any other act or regulation and may authorize the delegate"—because you're going to delegate this down to the private sector—"in the delegation agreement, to charge those fees to the public." The public would pay for this one way or another. The difference is whether we all pay a little to maintain a responsible, quality driver testing system or whether we hand it off to the private sector where your friends can make a pile of money and charge whatever fees they want—we've seen that with Highway 407—and if you're an Ontarian who can't afford that, too bad, you just don't matter in Mike Harris's Ontario.

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Another aspect that needs to be brought out is that each and every time this government privatizes, they talk about the money that's going to be saved. When you privatize something—and I've made this argument be-

fore—you don't create some new race of workers. You don't go somewhere and find robots that suddenly come in and do the work and replace the people who did it before. You've still got the same workers from Ontario who will come in and do the job. The difference, in large part, is how much they make. We know this government can't stand the fact that somebody should make decent money when there's profit to be made by paying them less—unless, of course, we're talking MPP wages. Then we want to make sure everybody is paid what they're worth. You buy into that concept for us, but you don't buy into it for anyone else.

The whole idea is to sell it off to the private sector, and where's this money going to be found? Not in some magical, new, efficient way of doing business, although I'm sure there are always improvements that can be made in the way anything is structured, whether it's private or public. The real money is going to be made by the private sector. Let's not forget you've already helped out those future owners, those friends of yours, with Bill 7, where you said that for any service in Ontario that's public and is privatized, the union doesn't go with them. It's not like that in the private sector. If a corporation is sold and there's an existing collective agreement, the rights, the wages, the pensions and the benefits in that collective agreement go with the corporation. But public sector workers, the enemy of the Harris government, don't have that right.

In this case, the only thing those workers can hope for is some of the victories their union, OPSEU, won for them by fighting all the way to an arbitrator. One clause in their collective agreement provides some protection. But at the end of the day, it probably won't provide total protection.

We're talking about 900 people. You're so quick to provide corporate tax cuts. You say that will stimulate the economy and get people spending money. Here we have 900 people, who are making at least half-decent wages with half-decent benefits. You're going to put them out of work and have them replaced by people being paid, what, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50% less than the people who were there before? How does that help our economy? Sure, it helps that corporation, that business that buys the service. But at some point the profits made there go right out of Ontario and, indeed, often go right out of Canada. Those 900 workers spend their money in Ontario. They spend it in their communities—in my case, they spend it in Hamilton—and other small businesses benefit. That makes economic sense. It sure makes economic sense to those 900 workers and their families.

Our caucus has talked about cutting the provincial sales tax to stimulate the economy, because we're talking about and recognizing that ordinary working people and their families help the economy when they spend money. This takes us in the opposite direction. How does eliminating good-paying jobs and replacing them with minimum wage jobs help the economy? What are you going to do for those 900 workers who will be put out of work in the midst of a horrible recession? I didn't hear any of

the government backbenchers talk about that today. They didn't talk about those families. They didn't talk about how they're going to buy winter clothes for their kids this winter. How are they going to make their mortgage payments or pay their rent? How are they going to put food on the table? Is that not your concern at all? Do you not have some responsibility somewhere in your heart for the people who are going to lose their jobs?

And what about the public service that we're talking about? Again, you want to talk bottom line. What about the integrity of the driver's licence testing program itself? It's important to us. You know, all it takes is one bad driver to cross a line on a highway and a family's wiped out. And when you pay people peanuts, you're not going to get professional performance. So it makes good public sense from a public safety point of view.

The Solicitor General should have been on his feet in this House, or more importantly, in cabinet, saying, "This isn't good for public safety," because you are not going to get the kind of quality, high-calibre workers when you pay minimum wage. It's not going to happen. Those people who have those skills are going to go elsewhere.

It's going to end up being treated much like the concerns we all now have over airport security. I've raised this in another context. There's real concern over the fact that airport security is performed by people who are paid close to minimum wage, barely a little more, and yet look at the responsibility we place on them, the importance of the job they do. All of that's wiped out when you privatize the way you're going to here.

What happened to the party and the government that cared about public safety? Where are your comments on that today? Let's see, we've talked about the decimation of people's economic future in terms of 900 people and their families. None of you commented on that. There ought to be a legitimate concern on that side of the House about the calibre and quality of the people who will be performing this important public service vis-à-vis public safety. Not a word from you about that. All the things that matter to the majority of people, you never talk about. Oh, a little bit of rhetoric here and there, but you never really address it head on.

In the few moments that I have left, I want to talk about the concern about access to the databases. It's been referred to by friends earlier. We've got a court case going on in the province of Quebec right now where an employee of a private sector entity had access and accessed the provincial records, and that information found its way to an outlaw motorcycle gang. As a result, a high-profile, respected journalist in the province of Quebec was almost assassinated.

There are medical records attached to driver's licence information. You're supposed to care about that. You're supposed to care about our personal medical information. There's not one of you on that side of the House who wants to put your entire medical history on the floor of this Legislature, nor should you be asked to. You're entitled to have that personal information protected by law.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): No.

Mr Christopherson: I hear Mr Johnson saying no. I'm not sure which part of what I said he's saying no to, but I suspect—

Mr Johnson: All of it.

Mr Christopherson: All of it. Well, that figures. That truly figures. I suppose, then, before the week is out, to prove me wrong, the honourable member from Perth-Middlesex will be tabling his entire historical medical records to show that this is a totally moot point that I'm raising. It's not going to happen.

The fact of the matter is that nobody should be expected to, and people have a right to have their medical information protected. When you make this information available outside of government protection, you leave all of us vulnerable. None of you talked about that. All you talked about was that money was going to be saved. You didn't say where it was coming from; you just said it was going to be saved. That's the difficulty. When you rip off the bumper sticker sloganism and take a look at what's really going on, Ontarians get hurt.

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So let me summarize the three main issues that I've raised here in the last two minutes that I have:

(1) You're going to privatize, and you're going to save money how? Not because you're going to do things better but because the people who perform that work will be paid significantly less.

(2) You've mismanaged that whole department so badly that it takes over half a year to get an appointment to have a driver's licence test, and rather than adequately dealing with that legitimate public service problem, you're just going to wipe it right off your slate and hand it off to somebody else who is then going to raise the cost through user fees and screw all those hundreds of thousands of Ontarians yet again.

You talk a great record on public safety. My friend Mr Kormos is here. He can talk better than anyone in this place about what happened with the Victims' Bill of Rights, when you talked about caring about public safety and caring about victims and at the end of the day marched in government lawyers to argue that Ontarians didn't have those rights. The judge said shameful things about the way you approached victims in this province. You treated them worse than any government in the history of Ontario, the exact opposite of what you said.

This bill is absolutely no different. You say that it's going to make for a better driver testing system. It is not. It's going to put decently paid jobs out the window, it's going to increase costs to Ontarians, and you're going to put the lives of Ontarians at risk because we won't have the kind of dedicated, experienced individuals that we now have performing this service. Shame on you once again.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the order of the House, I'm now required to place the question.

Mr Clark has moved third reading of Bill 65. 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 five-minute bell.

I have received from the chief government whip a letter asking that the vote be deferred until October 24, 2001, during routine proceedings.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):

Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Sarnia-Lambton has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Finance. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant and/or minister may reply for up to five minutes.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): Yesterday during question period I asked the Honourable Mr Flaherty about Cabinet Office and Cabinet Office expenses. His response unfortunately really did not even address the question. He commented and he said, "As the member will know," and he talks about the Common Sense Revolution and about the size of the Ontario public service that has been reduced dramatically since 1995. He did not respond to the point I was trying to address yesterday, which was that Cabinet Office has increased 116% from 1995. Also in his response, he commented: "If the concern is to have more detail with respect to line-by-line budgeting of Cabinet Office, that can be obtained."

That wasn't the point. The point is that Cabinet Office expenses have increased dramatically; every other sector in the province has not. The aspect that really is remarkable is the salaries and wages, which have increased from \$3.45 million in 1995 to \$8 million by the time we got to 1999-2000—this is just salaries and wages—and in 2000-01 they're over \$10 million.

I'd like to remind the minister what Cabinet Office does, because he didn't seem to understand—

Interjection: What do they do, Ms Di Cocco?

Ms Di Cocco: Well, they're the "central agency that supports the Premier, cabinet and its committees," it says, "in their efforts to set the broad direction of priorities of the government in the determination of this legislative program. It also coordinates the government's policy initiatives and provides support to the Premier and cabinet on order-in-council appointments, the Premier's correspondence, freedom of information requests and other administrative issues."

It's not that the mandate of Cabinet Office has changed; it's just that the cost has dramatically increased by 116%. This is a government that seems to constantly wave about the concept of smaller government, leaner

government. In this case, definitely as their own figures show, that's not so.

This week, last week and the week before, they fired scientists and closed down a specialized unit at London Health Sciences Centre. In Sarnia-Lambton they have denied a program for children and youth who are at risk. It's the family support system of the St Clair Child and Youth Service. They have denied them funding.

The answer from the minister yesterday was totally inadequate—

Interjection: Totally.

Ms Di Cocco: Absolutely, because he says in here, "I'm sure the honourable member is concerned about saving money in government ... that there has been substantial downsizing of the Ontario public service, but the level of performance," the standards of performance, are up.

That's not the question. The question has to do with Cabinet Office. The salaries and wages in Cabinet Office have increased and, again, the minister could not provide to this Legislature yesterday a response that was even adequate. I believe the people of Ontario have a right to know and understand why we have that increase. That

was the question. Take a look at the Ministry of the Environment, which has been cut. Its operational funds have been cut by 40%. The students in this province don't have enough books. Yet this is one sector that has increased. Cabinet Office has increased by 116%. I look forward to some response.

There being neither the Minister of Finance nor the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance—

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Mr Speaker, if I may, it is my understanding that the question was asked to the Minister of Finance as the Deputy Premier, and I am the parliamentary assistant to the Premier.

The Deputy Speaker: The form we received clearly said the question was asked of the Minister of Finance. Therefore, it needs to be the Minister of Finance or the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance who replies.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1811.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: 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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