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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 30 October 2001

Mardi 30 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 30 October 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 30 octobre 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

STUDENT PROTEST

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Last Tuesday, a group of 100 students from Kingston Collegiate and Vocational Institute, the oldest high school in Ontario, engaged in a peaceful demonstration in front of my constituency office, as well as in front of their school. The students rightfully pointed out that they had been made victim of Mike Harris's policy of profit over people.

As they pointed out in the pamphlet produced for the occasion, the rate of child poverty has doubled in Ontario in the last 10 years, the Harris government has cut welfare rates by 22.7%, tenant protection has largely been eliminated, water testing has been privatized and environment funding cut in half, with the tragic events in Walkerton being one of the results.

They further stated that the cuts to education have resulted in larger class sizes, reduced support staff for schools and overworked teachers having less time for students. They also pointed out that the rapid rise in tuition fees for university and college and deregulated programs have made post-secondary education inaccessible to many high school graduates.

The students also pointed out that Mike Harris broke his promise that home care would be available before hospitals were restructured. As you know, Speaker, our access centre is over \$3 million short, so our sick and elderly who need home care cannot get the necessary nursing they so desperately need. As their pamphlet so accurately stated, like education, health care has been made the victim of massive provincial cuts, leaving the people of Ontario with a manufactured crisis of a shortage of beds, nurses, doctors, equipment and clinics.

I would like to congratulate all the students involved, led by Jordan Bell, for the very constructive manner in which they expressed their issues and concerns. I challenge the government to listen to these young and eloquent students and adopt policies that will really deal with the problems facing many in Ontario today.

BOTTLING PLANT

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): "It is amazing what you can get for \$150 million." Those were the

words of Lowry Kline, vice-chair and CEO of Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc, as he unveiled the new Coca-Cola bottling plant to the Brampton community last Thursday.

This 630,000-square-foot plant is Coca-Cola's new production and distribution centre, making it the single largest investment ever made by the company in Canada. Sitting on 62 acres of land, at the epicentre of the Golden Horseshoe, we joined with over 400 suppliers, Minister Tony Clement and MPP Raminder Gill.

Jarrat Jones, senior VP, said one of their primary goals is to begin a program in early 2002 that will link the bottling facility with schools in Peel. Coca-Cola will bring schoolchildren to reinforce math and science, so they can see first-hand that what they're learning today in school really does apply to the real world. In fact, Jones said, the company even used curriculum consultants to ensure this program will meet their needs.

On behalf of the Ontario government, congratulations to Jarrat Jones, Chief Operating Officer Tom Barlow and everyone at Coca-Cola. Welcome to Brampton. All members can join me in a toast to Coca-Cola.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My statement is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I cannot express my thoughts better than a letter to you from a concerned constituent, Robert O. Schmidt. In part, the letter reads:

"It is with great disgust that I watch the lack of support our provincial government provides to the children and families of Windsor and Essex county who suffer from children's mental health difficulties. I have read the studies of services provided in other parts of the province for the families and children who suffer the scourge of children's mental health difficulties and I cannot understand the reason for the lack of funding and therefore services provided to this community...."

"I wonder what is the purpose of our elected leaders. Is your purpose only to serve those that support you, as if the 'Family Compact' never left town. I ask you, 'Is our government to serve all persons of the whole province or only the select few who are deemed worthy?'"

"In the Windsor-Essex county area we have lost a significant portion of a valuable service at Maryvale Adolescent and Family Service. This facility assists children and youth who experience mental health problems. By reducing the aid to the children and families

who suffer the direct effects of children's mental problems you and we as a province ensure the perpetuation of these difficulties for future generations....

"It is with concern that the money you and therefore we as a province do not spend today to deal with children's mental health will be guaranteed to be forced to pay out at a significantly higher rate as these children and youth enter the justice system."

I agree with Mr Schmidt's comments and, Minister, you should agree with them too.

HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My statement today is about the Co-op Housing Federation of Toronto awards which are taking place on Thursday evening. Each year for the last number of years, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto has celebrated the success of co-operative housing by honouring its member co-ops for their achievements. This year's awards ceremony will be held on Thursday night, November 1, and I am looking forward to attending.

The federation staff has spent considerable time and effort in order to ensure a successful evening. This year, the awards for innovative community ideas will be presented to co-ops across the GTA. These awards range from creative newsletter publishing and diversity issues to international co-operation and development.

Without giving them away, because it's a secret—the award winners don't know yet who they are—I want to personally congratulate and thank all the finalists, the federation and the people who work so hard to support co-operative housing as one of the most viable alternatives to providing decent, safe and affordable housing in the city of Toronto and across the province, especially now, when issues of affordable housing do not appear to be anywhere on the radar screen with this government.

I want to again thank them very much for keeping the issue front and centre before us and holding out hope for the people of this province that they will again have decent, safe places to live.

BOB BENSON

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): The Ontario government believes that every child benefits from a positive sport experience. It is well established that involvement in sport and recreation improves health, creates positive behaviours, builds communities and increases economic growth.

On Friday, October 12, I had the wonderful privilege of awarding the 3M Community Coach Award to Bob Benson, who was nominated by the Niagara Falls Girls Soccer Club. Mr Benson has been involved with soccer all of his life. It is obvious that he truly enjoys this game. He has been involved as a player, as a coach and as an administrator. For the past two years, Mr Benson has been the club president of the Niagara Falls Girls Soccer Club, and previously held other positions, including vice-president.

Mr Benson has been instrumental in creating two leagues: a league for ladies over 30 and a league for young ladies over 16. He has been coaching for over 25 years, originally in St Catharines, then with the Niagara Falls Boys Soccer Club, and for over 12 years with the Niagara Falls Girls Soccer Club. He has taken two teams to the Ontario Cup finals, and on September 15, 2001, for the first time ever, a girls' soccer team from Niagara Falls reached the finals.

I congratulate Mr Benson on being one of the first recipients of the Ontario 3M Community Coach Award. Thank you, Mr Benson, for your outstanding contribution to sport in Niagara Falls.

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HOME CARE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): For the last five months, members from this side of the House have been pleading with the Minister of Health to provide increased funding to our home care sector. While our cries for help have so far been unsuccessful, it's vitally important the minister understand that this is a matter we will not allow to fade away. Too many people are being denied the care they need to stay at home, and as a result the much more expensive hospital sector is being forced to take up the slack.

If the minister will not listen to all of us in the House who are fighting for our constituents, it is my hope today that he will take more seriously the front-line professionals in the medical field who have to deal with the daily fallout of a short-sighted funding cutback.

I'm going to send the minister a copy of a letter that all the doctors of the Marathon Family Practice have written, calling on him to provide the needed funding. They are concerned about the people they serve in the communities of Marathon, Pic River and Pic Mobert. They point out in no uncertain terms that the lengths of stay at Wilson Memorial General Hospital have increased because of the limited access to home care and nursing support. They also confirm that those patients who have been able to go home from hospital but still have some needed level of nursing care have to return to the hospital to use the emergency room to access these no longer available home-based services.

Minister, this is short-sighted, costly and in fact can be dangerous for those who must travel over northwestern Ontario roads to reach the hospital. How much more evidence do you need that your cutbacks to home care must be reversed? You must listen and respond to the dedicated physicians in Marathon. They know what the needs are in their communities and you must not ignore their plea.

BRAIN TUMOURS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): For many years now October has been designated as Brain Tumour Awareness Month in Canada. It has also been proclaimed in many

cities across Canada. Brain tumours, a devastating disease, strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors across all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and affect people in all walks of life. Brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children.

Early detection and treatment are vital for a person to survive brain tumours. Brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours. Each year approximately 10,000 Canadians of all ages are diagnosed with a brain tumour. Brain tumours are the second leading cause of cancer death in people under the age of 20 and the third leading cause of cancer death in young adults between the ages of 20 and 39.

As members may know, my bill to officially designate October as Brain Tumour Awareness Month in Ontario is before this House for third reading. I've received over 125 letters of support from across Canada for the bill. I hope I can count on all members of this House to support speedy passage of this bill so that the Brain Tumor Foundation of Canada can get more support for their very important work of educating the public to the early warning symptoms of brain tumours. Let's make October 2002 the first official Brain Tumour Awareness Month in Ontario.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Every month in Ontario thousands of acres of farmland in natural areas are gobbled up by unwise and unnecessary development. While municipal, provincial and federal politicians invariably run on platforms that call for the preservation of prime agricultural land and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, when the developer comes knocking, all of the resolve to act in the long-term interest of the people melts away as the arguments for short-term economic gain are advanced.

Agricultural lands containing good soils and blessed with favourable climatic conditions are sacrificed on the altar of reckless development. When will those in decision-making positions begin to understand that once the farmland is paved over and the natural areas destroyed, they are gone forever?

In Niagara, for instance, there are some who will not be satisfied until every last centimetre of land from the edge of Toronto to the border of Fort Erie and from the shores of Lake Ontario to the beaches of Lake Erie is covered with asphalt, and until they sap the strength and vitality of the city core in the interest of big-box development on the edge of the municipality.

What is needed is a strong, comprehensive provincial Planning Act that designates prime agricultural land and environmentally sensitive areas as off limits to development. Without provincial leadership and foresight, a valuable and irreplaceable heritage will be lost for future generations of Ontario residents.

HALLOWEEN

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My statement today is on Halloween. As you know, tomorrow is Halloween and many young ghosts and goblins will be coming to our doors seeking treats. In my riding and all across Brampton, Block Parents and the Rogers Pumpkin Patrol will be keeping a vigilant eye on our young trick-or-treaters to ensure this evening remains fun for all. We should all work together to ensure that Halloween is safe for our children.

Today I would like to offer just a few reminders to parents. Our children need to see and be seen. Remind your children to stay in well-lit areas and only visit homes that have their outside lights turned on. Ensure the children wear face paint instead of masks and non-flammable, brightly coloured costumes.

Caution is the key. We should remind our children that under no circumstances should they enter a stranger's home. As drivers, we should take extra time to slow down and be extra careful when we're returning home. We must also keep watch for any suspicious behaviour in our neighbourhoods and immediately report it to the police.

Parents seeking more information can visit my Web site, www.ramindergill.com. They can also visit the Wal-Mart store at Bovaird Drive and Highway 10 in Brampton this evening, where the Brampton Safe City Association will be handing out safety information. By taking a few simple precautions, we can help ensure that our children have a truly safe and happy Halloween.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm sure all members in the House will join me in welcoming, in the east gallery, Mr and Mrs Vander-made. They are the parents of our one-block-away Chadd, who is our page. They, with his sister, who's younger but taller, are in the gallery today to welcome Chadd as a page.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

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

Bill 109, An Act to enhance the security of vital statistics documents and to provide for certain administrative changes to the vital statistics registration system /
Projet de loi 109, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des

documents de l'état civil et prévoyant certaines modifications administratives au système d'enregistrement des statistiques de l'état civil.

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

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (STUDED TIRES), 2001 LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (PNEUS CLOUTÉS)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of studded tires / Projet de loi 119, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les pneus cloutés.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. It allows a motor vehicle to use studded tires that conform to prescribed standards and specifications, and those vehicles may be operated on a highway in the part of the province prescribed by regulations as northern Ontario. It may also be operated on a highway anywhere in Ontario if the address of the owner of the vehicle is in northern Ontario.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): September 11 was a wake-up call for governments the world over. It was a reminder that we cannot take cherished freedoms and security for granted, that we must keep working to protect the peaceful and tolerant society that we've created.

This is a complicated time in our history. It's a time when people need their government to lead decisively but also fairly. It's a time when people need reassurances of safety but also guarantees of privacy. It is a difficult time. But it is above all a time for action.

I want the people of Ontario to know that their government is moving forward with tough new counterterrorism measures. I want them to know that we're working hard to keep Ontario the peaceful and prosperous place that it has been for the past six years. We must not let these or any other criminal acts stop us from living our daily

lives. We cannot respond to a threat to our free and open society by abandoning its principles, and we cannot, and will not, respond to terror by living in terror.

Since September 11, our government has acted swiftly and decisively. We began immediately, within hours of the attacks, to offer our neighbours assistance and expertise. Days later, we announced \$3 million to help families of Ontario victims of these attacks. On September 24 in this House we announced a number of steps to protect the safety and security of Ontario families. On October 1, I announced accelerated tax cuts to help keep our economy growing, and I also announced the appointment of two new security advisers, former RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster and retired Major General Lewis MacKenzie, to give us advice on how to further strengthen Ontario's security. More recently, on October 11, we introduced legislation that would increase the security of vital documents.

Today I'm announcing four new measures that will help keep the people of our province safe.

First, our government will provide \$4.5 million to create a new rapid response unit of the Ontario Provincial Police. The unit will be specially equipped to combat terrorist threats and provide protection for our nuclear facilities and water treatment plants.

Second, to help stamp out terrorist activity in Ontario, we will invest \$3.5 million in antiterrorism units that will proactively work to investigate and track down terrorists and their supporters.

Third, we will give our front-line police officers the necessary equipment to respond to chemical, biological and other kinds of attacks.

Fourth, we will host a counterterrorism summit to allow the best minds in law enforcement and emergency services to share ideas and develop new strategies.

Tomorrow the Solicitor General will provide more details on these new initiatives and announce further steps that our government is taking to prepare our province for emergencies.

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade will also address the House tomorrow regarding some of the steps we have taken to keep our economy strong during this difficult time.

On November 6, the Minister of Finance will deliver the fall economic update, which will assure the people of Ontario that the fundamentals of our economy remain strong.

Our government is determined to protect the economic gains that we have made over the past six years, and we will continue to work hard to normalize trade along our border. We will co-operate with the federal government as well as American governments to develop an integrated border strategy and a secure perimeter that will ensure both Ontario's security and the free and timely flow of goods.

We will also continue to strengthen Ontario's security. We will continue to work with our municipal and federal partners to protect our citizens.

It is the responsibility of every government at every level and of every police force in every jurisdiction to ensure a decisive victory in the war against terrorism. It is the responsibility of this House to keep the people of Ontario safe, the province's economy competitive and to keep its future secure.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Our government's response to the appalling events of September 11 was immediate and continues to this day. As the Premier stated earlier, in the aftermath of the attacks we provided \$3 million to help families whose loved ones were victims of the attack.

Further, we established a victim response team and a 24-hour response line, a help line drawing on the skills and expertise of staff from Ontario's Office for Victims of Crime, an agency of my own ministry. These highly committed individuals have helped families respond to any issues that they have faced. These issues include financial assistance, travel, meals, trauma counselling and, sadly, funeral arrangements.

Our government hopes that all these efforts are a source of support and a source of comfort to those who are personally affected by this tragedy. While Ontario is still mourning the lives lost on September 11, our government has not lost sight of the fact that one of our most important duties is to protect our province and its people. To that end, my ministry is planning to undertake a number of initiatives to help ensure our security, help us respond to incidents occurring within our province and provide further assistance to victims.

I would like to express my growing concern about the rash of anthrax hoaxes in Canada. In recent weeks, we have all seen and read of bioterrorist scares. In fact, just last week in my own office we were the subject of just such a scare. While we were thankful that the scare at the Ministry of the Attorney General turned out to be a false alarm, these despicable acts of cowardice are diverting emergency personnel from true emergencies and, as a result, are putting the lives of innocent individuals and the personal safety of Ontarians at risk.

Let me be clear: our government will not tolerate these hoaxes. We are resolved to do everything in our power to bring the perpetrators of these hoaxes to justice. I am pleased to announce that my ministry will vigorously prosecute hoaxes to the full extent of the current law, and we will seek significant penalties for those who engage in such acts.

As part of our response, my ministry will be closely monitoring all cases where hoaxes occur. Designated crown attorneys will receive specialized training on terrorism-related issues. Senior prosecutors across Ontario will coordinate all terrorism-related issues, including the prosecution of these hoaxes. Any acts that threaten the safety and security of the public, including threats to justice facilities and personnel, will be taken extremely seriously, and such cases will be vigorously prosecuted.

I have urged Ottawa to create a new Criminal Code offence to deal with perpetrators of hoaxes, hoaxes such as bomb threats and anthrax. Officials from the Justice Department in Ottawa have responded positively to my proposal, and I sincerely hope that Minister McLellan will act quickly to implement these much-needed changes to the Criminal Code. This measure would send a much-needed message that perpetrating such a hoax will not be tolerated in this country. We are also demanding that the federal government ensure that the proposed penalties for terrorist crimes are stiff enough to punish convicted terrorists and to protect the public.

Today I am pleased to announce that we are establishing a counterterrorism task force. The task force will consist of crown attorneys who will provide expert advice on the enforcement and prosecution of crimes related to terrorism. They will aggressively prosecute terrorist crimes.

We will also be looking at a means of cutting off the lifeblood of terrorism, and that of course is money. I will be working with my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Business Services to review provincial laws governing charities to ensure that organizations are not contributing to terrorism. The review will look at a range of solutions, including revoking corporate or charitable status and/or freezing a charity's assets.

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In times of great tragedy and personal loss, victims' families should not have their government putting obstacles in their way during the healing process, during a time when they are trying to bring closure to their grief. For that reason, my ministry also plans to do more to help the families of Ontario's victims. We plan to remove legal obstacles to settling estates. I will be introducing legislation in this session to streamline the process for obtaining a declaration of death. A simplified declaration of death will make it easier to probate wills, make insurance claims and conduct other important legal business.

In addition, I will be proposing amendments to the Executive Council Act that would allow us to extend certain court deadlines so that any disruptions caused by an emergency do not prevent the people of Ontario from having access to their justice system.

We will be living with the consequences of September 11 for years to come. The events of that day opened our eyes to the extremes to which terrorists are prepared to go. However, our government and the people of this great province are resolved to fight terrorism and protect the rights and freedoms that make us who we are. By enhancing Ontario's state of preparedness, we will be helping to ensure that this province will remain a safe place, a place to live, a place to work and a place to raise a family.

TOURISM

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): I rise today to join Premier Harris and Attorney General David Young to report back to the

House on the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation's response to the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11. We were all terribly shaken by the acts of terrorism in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania. Make no mistake about it: it was an attack on all of us as well. To our friends and neighbours south of the border I offer my deepest sympathies.

International terrorism has led to an international decline in tourism, and Ontario is not immune to that decline. Ontario's hotels, restaurants, attractions and casinos are facing new and very real challenges. My main message to tourists is, don't stay in your homes for fear of travel. That lets the terrorists win. Get out and continue to do and enjoy all there is to see and to discover in the province of Ontario.

On several occasions I've met with tourism leaders from across the province. The consensus around the table was that we were not going to sit on our hands; we were going to fight back and boast about tourism in this province. We agreed that it is now more important than ever to market and promote all there is to see and do in Ontario. So, Mr Speaker, I'd like to provide you and the members of the Legislature with an update on the actions taken by my ministry since September 11.

On October 11, I announced that the Mike Harris government would invest an additional \$4 million into a new, aggressive marketing campaign in our domestic and traditional US border markets, a 35% increase in those markets. For the next 28 weeks, Ontario will be proudly promoted using a variety of media, including radio, TV, print, direct mail and e-marketing both inside this province and outside.

We have set up strategic partnerships with Niagara and Windsor to bring industry dollars and partnership to the table to extend the reach of the province's marketing dollars, and more regional partnerships are to come.

We also wish to establish confidence in the industry in the regions. We've moved ahead with the full construction phase of the new state-of-the-art, world-class Casino Niagara, as well as introducing a wine and culinary tourism strategy to help promote that growing niche tourism market in this country.

As well, immediately after the events of September 11 we extended the hours of operation at our travel information centres and our 1-800-ONTARIO line to help travellers who are stranded and to give up-to-date information on issues with visiting this country. We continue to provide up-to-date border crossing information through our travel information centres and our 1-800-ONTARIO line, as well as our Web sites. Since September 11, I've also released weekly bulletins with up-to-date information to everyone in the tourism industry so they can adjust their plans accordingly.

I have met with the federal minister responsible for tourism, Brian Tobin, and called for aggressive federal support for Canada's tourism industry. As well, I have spoken with my counterparts from New York state and Michigan, Brian Akley and George Zimmerman, and we agreed that it is imperative, now more than ever, to work

together to maximize our binational opportunities such as the Doors Open heritage tourism opportunity in our border areas.

All of our efforts to attract more visitors to Ontario and enhance our binational tourism opportunities will be in vain if our tourists run into a wall as they try to cross our border. I want to congratulate Premier Harris for his leadership in calling for a harmonization of rules and coordination of procedures to create a North American common security perimeter.

As I have mentioned, the tourism industry has not been immune from the impacts of September 11. What's at stake? It is estimated that in 2000, the tourism industry generated some \$17.5 billion in expenditures and employed almost half a million Ontarians, and was Ontario's sixth-largest export industry. Tourism accounted for 43% of Canada's international visitors, and many of those visitors were of course Americans. The impact on jobs and investment in hitting that wall would be tremendous.

There is no doubt that in the near future a fence will be built. A war on terrorism has commenced, and today the view of constituents in North America is that safety and security are of paramount concern. So as Ontarians and as Canadians, we have a choice to make: do we want to be inside or outside that fence? I'd much rather be inside that fence.

So I join with my Premier and my colleagues in encouraging our federal governments to work together to harmonize our customs and immigration procedures. It is absolutely crucial in order to preserve and build our borderland economies. In Ontario we have world-class attractions, we have a competitive marketing plan and we're ready to boast to the world about all there is to see and do in the province of Ontario. With a secure, coordinated, efficient border, I believe we'll be able to attract even more visitors than ever before from the United States and beyond to build a strong tourism industry, not only today but well into the future.

COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I listened with great interest and was pleased when I heard that the government was going to be addressing a matter of the utmost gravity, which is the longing felt by our working families, and indeed our businesses, for a greater sense of security and stability in our province. I hoped that there would be something of substance in these announcements. I hoped that the government had come to understand that it was going to take more than newspaper ads, tax cuts for corporations and expressions of concern and condemnations of terrorism and terrorists. I hoped that there would be considerably more than that, but this is pretty thin gruel.

The Premier in particular tells us that he's going to be offering some further assistance to the Ontario Provincial Police. We support that; we've been talking about that for quite some time. They talk about new equipment to

help our front-line police officers contend with the new challenges presented by chemical, biological and other kinds of attacks. We support that; we've been talking about that for quite some time.

It has been 48 days since the horrific events of September 11, and what has this government done—I mean in a real and substantive and positive way—other than running newspaper ads, expressing concern and condemning all things connected with terrorism? The fact of the matter is that they have done very, very little. On the other hand, two weeks ago now, we put before this Parliament and the people of this province a substantive Ontario security plan. It is specifically designed to inspire consumer confidence and to provide our families with the knowledge that this government could be and should be acting in real and positive ways to improve security measures in their communities. That's what our plan is all about.

This government has said that they're committed to \$1 billion in infrastructure expenditures. That is found in their last two budgets. This money is not being invented. They said it was there. They committed to do it. The problem is all they've invested in infrastructure is \$14 million. We say, take that \$1-billion commitment and begin to make those investments, and begin to make them now.

I know what the government has in mind. They have in mind to stockpile these commitments, cut cheques and hold photo-ops much nearer the election. But do you know what? These are not ordinary times, and it's important for this government to assume responsibility, to do the right thing at the right time. Now is the right time to make those investments.

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If we were to invest these monies as they are in fact dedicated, if we put money into our bridges, our roads, our water infrastructure, our schools, our colleges and universities, and our hospitals, not only does that create construction jobs and spinoff jobs, do you know what else it doesn't do? It doesn't compromise our fiscal flexibility in the future, which is unfortunately exactly what this government's response to this economic challenge is. They're saying, "Why don't we cut corporate taxes by another \$2.2 billion?" Our corporations are already competitive. They are already profitable, those that are designed as beneficiaries of this tax.

We believe what we should be doing is making these infrastructure investments today. In addition to that, we think we should be dedicating 10% of those monies which this government has committed but refuses to invest. Take 10% of those monies—that's \$100 million—and make those available to our municipalities, make them available to those municipalities that are struggling under some of the new challenges that are being created by the events of September 11. Some of them are concerned about protecting their water treatment plants. Some of them are concerned about protecting their courthouses. Some of them are concerned about the fact they don't have enough police officers or

firefighters. We heard some very specific concerns expressed by the mayor of Toronto on the matter of firefighters recently.

There are some things that can be done during these trying times, and we're going to need more than pap and drivel and very thin gruel. We need matters of substance and we need real leadership. We've put forward a positive plan. All this government has to do is take our plan and run with it.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): We have heard from the Premier and a couple of his cabinet ministers their details on what they believe they're doing or what they want people to believe they're doing to tackle the issue of terrorism. I actually want to go through a couple of fronts on this issue.

The first issue I want to raise is bioterrorism. It was interesting today to read in some of the larger newspapers that the issue that is worrying scientists is not so much anthrax, which can be treated with antibiotics; the issue that is bothering a lot of scientists and lot of people who worry about bioterrorism is the fact that a new strain of E coli could very easily be used to contaminate major parts of the food system or to literally create a toxic atmosphere across a broad spectrum of the food system.

What is interesting about that is that while scientists elsewhere in the world are worried about the use of a new strain of E coli to inflict that kind of bioterrorist damage, this government is laying off its very microbiologist expert who has an international reputation in that field.

The other issue that was interesting to note in the media today is that a lot of people who think about the issue of terrorism and bioterrorism are concerned about how new superbugs, bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics such as penicillin, could be used in a bioterrorism campaign. As I say, people in other countries are worried about this. What is this government doing? It's laying off the very microbiologist in this province who has supervised the research on detecting and addressing new superbugs.

The Premier says he's going to hold a summit on counterterrorism. That may be productive, but I want to point out to people across Ontario that at this very time this government is laying off an internationally respected scientist who just two years ago helped to coordinate and develop a conference on how to deal with emerging forms of bioterrorism. Go figure. For any government to come to this Legislature and say it's taking meaningful steps to deal with the threat of terrorism when meanwhile it is laying off the very scientific experts who are at the forefront of this and who are being sought out elsewhere in the world makes absolutely no sense.

Another issue the government referred to was the harmonization of immigration and customs with the United States. I merely want to point out for people across the province that the United States has not exactly had a very successful immigration and customs program. The United States has spent billions of dollars over the last 20 years on the Mexican border. They have employed no less than 16,000 customs officers and border

patrol officers, apparently for the purpose of keeping illegal Mexican immigrants, as they term it, out of the United States.

What has been the result of that? The estimate is that there are close to one million illegal Mexican immigrants entering and staying in the United States every year. In fact, Spanish-speaking immigrants have become the largest single ethnic group in the United States.

Is it now the policy of the Ontario government that they want to adopt an immigration and customs procedure that has been singularly ineffective, one of the largest leaks in the world? I want to say to the Premier that we are not interested in becoming the 51st state and we are not interested in giving up our own independent capacity over immigration and customs.

Finally, let me say there is an economic component to this. Premier, you know that your accelerated tax cuts are not going to address that. What is required to re-create consumer confidence is a reduction in the sales tax. That's what you need to do if you want to create some security in our economy.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO SECURITY FUND PLAN

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, by way of my earlier comments in response to the statements made by representatives of the government today, you will know that it is my considered opinion that your government has done precious little when it comes to shoring up a lagging sense of security on the part of our families and indeed on the part of our businesses. Two weeks ago, we proposed the creation of an Ontario security fund. If we dedicated to our security just 10% of the \$1 billion that you have promised but not spent on capital, \$100 million would be available for projects to make our province even safer, and it wouldn't cost the budget an extra cent.

Minister, I offered this plan in a non-partisan effort to increase security for our families. Why have you failed to act on our plan?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): With respect to the Leader of the Opposition, the best protection we have in Ontario is the prudent fiscal management and planning that has been done over the past six years under the leadership of the Premier, the fact that we have had three balanced budgets in a row, the fact that we have low competitive taxes, and the fact that we have prudent fiscal planning with a substantial reserve so that we have a strong, resilient, diverse economy in Ontario.

That's not the kind of thing that can be done overnight. That's the kind of thing that can only be done with prudent decision-making and planning and keeping commitments over the period of six years, which this

government has done under the leadership of Premier Harris. We have that solid foundation.

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Mr McGuinty: Minister, what was that? I asked you a question specifically about what you're going to do about my specific proposal to help shore up security in Ontario and you give me some ideological pap from years gone by.

Our families and our businesses need much more than that from you. You want the big job, you're going to have to start acting like you deserve it. We put forward a specific plan that would not cost the budget an additional cent. It talks about investing in infrastructure and about setting aside 10% of the \$1 billion that you've committed but refuse to spend because you're saving it for election purposes. It talks about setting up a separate Ontario security fund. Those are practical, they are meaningful, they are relevant, they are substantive and they will be effective. Why have you not adopted it?

Hon Mr Flaherty: As the member opposite knows, in terms of the economic security the Minister of Finance is engaged with, the Premier announced accelerated tax cuts that were in the budget from May 9 and were to come into effect on January 1. They're now going to come into effect on October 1. They deal with capital, the capital tax, with corporate taxes and with personal income taxes.

I can also tell him that in my discussions with the federal Minister of Finance and with the other provincial and territorial ministers of finance on Sunday in Ottawa, the consensus certainly was that we ought not to move into deficit financing. I don't know if you share that view. I rather doubt the Leader of the Opposition shares that view with the federal finance minister, but the federal minister, certainly, and the other provincial and territorial ministers feel that the key now is not to abandon what we've done, not to abandon the prudent fiscal management we've worked on so hard to accomplish the solid foundation in Ontario; rather to stay the course, not to run deficits and to continue—

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

Mr McGuinty: Minister, it is time to take that tired, old, one-trick tax-cut pony out to the glue factory. Its day has come and gone. We need new ideas. We need innovation. We need real leadership. You, sir, are not providing that.

One more time: we talked about a specific, substantive, positive proposal. It doesn't cost the budget an extra cent. What it means is that we will invest in infrastructure today, not later near election time when it serves your political purposes. It also means we take \$100 million and we make that money available to our municipal partners, our cities and towns that are struggling with how to implement new security measures to make their people in their communities feel safer.

What I'm asking you to do, Minister, is instead of pursuing that ideological pap, which is meaningless today, especially given these circumstances, why won't you pursue this positive plan?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that if I decide to take leadership lessons, I won't call him.

With respect to capital spending in the province, I heard the Leader of the Opposition say just a few minutes ago in this House that the capital investment currently in this province by this government is \$14 million—patently wrong, not even close to the facts. The facts are that more than \$8 billion of investment has been made on the capital side by this government. All those cranes around Ontario now, at our hospital sites, at our colleges, at our universities, all providing stimuli to our economy—all of that because of prudent decisions that were made over the past few years, not last-minute knee-jerk ideas like you come up with.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. I am very interested in some of the proposals and resolutions put forward by the youth wing of your party, but I think what Ontarians are more interested in are your opinions about some of the resolutions put forward by the youth wing in your party. On health care, they say, “A parallel public-private health care system, better known as a two-tiered system, is necessary to relieve the overstressed public system.” They go on to say, “Many of Ontario's hospitals should be privatized and the construction and operation of new private hospitals should be encouraged.”

You will understand, Minister, as somebody who is seeking the Premiership of this province, that Ontarians are very, very interested in where you would take us when it comes to the evolution of the delivery of health care in our province. So I'm asking you, do you agree with the health care policies espoused by the youth wing of your party?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Let me say this directly to the honourable member: I disagree with what they say, but I defend to the death their right to say it.

Mr McGuinty: Who knew until the leadership race began that this minister had a poetic bent? Who knew?

Let's try to be more specific now, because the youth wing talks about private hospitals and private operation of new hospitals. I'll have you be very specific, then, with respect to that particular issue. Do you support that or do you not?

Hon Mr Clement: I suppose it was common policy when his government was last in power. I believe Minister Caplan, at the time, actually approved the bill for independent health facilities in this province. We can get out the Hansard if the honourable member so desires. The fact of the matter is that we've always had a mix of public and private in the province of Ontario. The honourable member's doctor is a private sector deliverer of publicly funded health care. Diagnostics can be privately delivered. Nursing services can be privately delivered. Nursing homes can be privately delivered.

What we're interested in on this side of the House is not an ideological bent or some sort of ideological blinkers. On this side of the House we ask the question, “Who can deliver it better, cheaper, faster, safer?” That is what we're interested in on this side of the House when it comes to health care reform and better health care services and results for the people of Ontario. I encourage the honourable member not to have his ideological blinkers on.

Mr McGuinty: I take it from that answer, then, that you remain very much in favour of private hospitals and the private operation of hospitals, because I gave you the opportunity to say no and I didn't, throughout the length of that answer, hear a no.

I want to move you on to something else now. Something else the youth wing in your party is asking for is new user fees and medical savings accounts. Ontarians, of course, are very interested in your personal views, given that you are seeking the Premiership, when it comes to user fees and medical savings accounts. I wonder if you might enlighten us on those two particular fronts.

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member is talking about issues that are in the public realm. There is lots of discussion and debate. For instance, Liberal Senator Michael Kirby was in town today and yesterday examining user fees, medical savings accounts and other health care reforms. Perhaps the honourable member didn't get the invitation in the mail. But in fact a lot of Liberal Senators and other individuals have made presentations at that Senate committee hearing in Toronto and have indicated that perhaps this public debate is one that is happening nationwide.

We heard the other month that the Prime Minister was interested in the Swedish model of user fees, and that has become part of the public debate. We heard the other day that Roy Romanow has put user fees on the table, so I guess that's part of the public debate.

I agree with public debate; I think it's important to debate these issues. But the honourable member seeks to put words in the mouth of the government, which is not fair and not accurate.

1430

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, today your government made some announcements about what measures may be needed to protect Ontario residents. I want to ask you about an issue that was raised over a year and a half ago, because at that time environment ministry staff warned of their concern about “the potential for releases of infectious materials” in their communities either through “spills, vandalism or other types of releases.” They warned that you have no database on these dangerous materials and that you need a strategy and an action plan. They suggested a SWAT team should be assigned to work on this issue. Can you

tell us what your government has done to deal with the very dangerous issue of hazardous biomedical waste?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): We already have a SWAT team in place. Certainly our ministry has taken steps, and the steps were shared last week in estimates, to move forward and take all the necessary action in order to ensure that all of the hazardous wastes in this province are properly dealt with. In fact, we're looking forward to moving forward to introduce some measures in order to ensure that hazardous waste in the future will be pre-treated, similar to what happens across the border, and that there will be harmonization.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you should check the transcript from estimates, because in fact your officials indicated that the so-called SWAT team is doing absolutely nothing to address the issue of biomedical waste. We're talking here about potentially contaminated blood. We're talking about infected human and animal body parts. We're talking about pathogens. We're talking about infected hospital instruments and waste.

My question was, what have you done since you were warned about this a year and a half ago? The SWAT team is not even addressing this issue. Your answer indicates that you've done absolutely nothing about it. Your answer indicates that you have some prospective ideas.

I would suggest to you, as your officials suggested to you, that this is a very serious issue, that this kind of biomedical waste can be used in a number of ways, as the officials suggest: vandalism or some other means. I think you owe it to the people of Ontario to tell us now, what are the steps that you're prepared to take immediately, since we're dealing here with pathogens that can potentially infect all kinds of people in the most serious ways? What have you done so far and what are you prepared to do about it now, since your government now admits you need to protect people?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member knows full well, our government has indicated our commitment to continually work to strengthen and improve the management of hazardous wastes. Certainly, if we take a look at all that we have done and all that we are doing, we will work very closely with the Ministry of Health and also with the Solicitor General on this particular issue, and we plan to do so.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Minister, that is not good enough. Instead of protecting the public, first of all you lay off five renowned scientists, and now you minimize this issue today. Don't you think, after Walkerton and particularly after the events of September 11, that you should act now to correct this very dangerous situation?

I'm asking you now to address the serious concerns raised first of all by your senior ministry staff. I'm going to send you a copy of this warning they raised on March 14, 2000, in that leaked cabinet document that we re-

ferred to in the past. Senior members of your staff raised this concern. I am asking you to report back to this House on what action you plan to take to correct this potentially very dangerous situation.

Hon Mrs Witmer: For the member opposite to indicate that our government is minimizing the seriousness of this situation is totally incorrect. As the member opposite knows full well, the Premier today and certainly other ministers have indicated that we take the whole issue of the events that happened on September 11 and everything subsequent very, very seriously. In fact, our government has moved forward more proactively than the federal government and is taking every step possible to ensure that the citizens of this province are appropriately protected and we will continue to do so.

I look forward to receiving the information from you and we will certainly follow up.

BRUCE GENERATING STATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of Finance. The scandal over your government's sale of the Bruce nuclear generating station to British Energy continues to grow. We've watched your government try to avoid having the Provincial Auditor look at the deal. I invited you yesterday to table the documents about the deal; we know that you haven't tabled them. But what's interesting is that British Energy also conspired to keep the issue out of the news. In what is singular, British Energy hired Hill and Knowlton to—get this—execute a plan on the announcement in such a way as to minimize media coverage post-announcement. Imagine that: hiring a public relations firm so that you don't get any media coverage of the deal.

Minister, why are you afraid to table the documents? Why don't you want the Provincial Auditor to look at this issue? Why is British Energy conspiring to try to keep the deal out of the news as well?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): To the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Again the honourable member is in error. The deal has been public since shortly after it was signed. It's available in the local library up in Bruce; it's available here. The CBC has done several stories on it. I remember personally giving the CBC a copy of the deal some year and a half ago.

Before Bruce Power got its licence from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to operate the plant as the lessee of the plant, there were public hearings in Ottawa and at the local community level by the commission in which all the documents were available.

I'd be happy—in fact, I think I will—to just bring a photocopy later on today and I'll give you it because you're the only one in the province who obviously thinks it isn't available. Ask your local librarian.

Mr Hampton: We spoke to the CBC investigator and reporter who were doing this and their response to us

was, "The government very carefully gave us documents that do not deal with the nature of the financial transaction. The government was very careful not to give us any of those documents."

But I want to quote for the minister again. This is what Hill and Knowlton say:

"British Energy: Bruce Power Announcement Strategy.

"Ensure that the announcement of the sale of the Bruce nuclear plant to British Energy was executed ... in such as way as to minimize media coverage post-announcement."

You wouldn't let the Provincial Auditor look at this. You won't table the documents here. You were very careful to give CBC only the non-financial documents. Now we've got Hill and Knowlton and British Energy colluding to try to keep it hidden as well. Minister, what is it that you're trying to cover up? What is it that you don't want the public to see about your sweetheart deal with British Energy for one of Ontario's very valuable public assets?

Hon Mr Wilson: This government certainly welcomes the Provincial Auditor's examining the deal. The auditor has all the information. Everyone who wanted the information has it. I don't know whom you were talking to at the CBC, but I would recommend one thing: you should hire the same firm, Hill and Knowlton—which obviously Bruce Power did, according to this guy, anyway; if it's true, because it's not always accurate in here—and bring your own profile down a little bit, because you're killing your party with these conspiracy theories. I can tell you that.

1440

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. I understand that on the weekend you found some time to meet with parents who have a very real interest and concern about the London Health Sciences Centre and your cuts. I understand that you made a commitment to parents during the course of that meeting, Minister, and specifically you said that you were going to review cuts to the pediatric programs. One of the things that parents are now concerned about is that the hospital is proceeding, notwithstanding, to wind up programs, and doctors are continuing to leave.

If you are genuinely committed to reviewing the decision that your ministry has made on this matter, will you now advise the London Health Sciences Centre to cease and desist in terms of moving forward with any cuts to any of the programs, and certainly the pediatric ones, and not to let any of the doctors go?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd be happy to inform the honourable member and this House on the status of this issue. In fact, our response has been absolutely consistent over the past few weeks on this issue, and that is that we on this side of

the House are concerned about clinical outcomes: the best outcomes for our kids, the best outcomes for any patients of the London Health Sciences Centre. From our perspective, that is how we are judging any proposals or indeed any counterproposals. How can we get to the best clinical outcomes for our kids and for other patients at the London Health Sciences Centre? That is how we judge things. If people have proposals, that is how we judge them. If they have counterproposals, they go through the same judgment process. I would expect the honourable member to judge things through the same prism as I propose to do.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you know before you even utter those words that they will lend no comfort whatsoever to those parents you met with. You told them that you were going to conduct a review when it came to cuts to pediatric programs.

Let me remind you a little bit of the record. Just prior to the election, your predecessor was in London and said that not only are these wonderful programs, not only do they smack of excellence, but your government would even consider adding further financial resources to those very same programs. After the election, of course, you broke the promise, but recently you met with parents. You gave them your word that you were going to review these cuts.

There is only way you can express your real commitment to a review. I want you to stand up now and assure parents that you're going to be advising the London Health Sciences Centre that they are not to proceed in any way, shape or form with anything that would in any way interfere with the pediatric programs already being offered by the London Health Sciences Centre.

Hon Mr Clement: I'm sorry, but for me to have that position would be irresponsible. The honourable member knows, or should know, that the deputy chief coroner for the province of Ontario reviewed some of the programs of the London Health Sciences Centre and found them wanting. That is from the deputy chief coroner. So for the honourable member to advocate holus-bolus, across the board, across the slate, keeping the status quo when we have a report from the deputy chief coroner that raises issues about the safety of these—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry to interrupt the minister. Members come to order, please.

Hon Mr Clement: —is, quite frankly, irresponsible, and I would not take that position.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): My question is to the Minister of Health. A number of weeks ago the London Health Sciences Centre board of directors decided that pediatric cardiac procedures should not be performed in London, based on clinical outcomes. That was based on the regional coroner's saying that the mortality rates with some of these procedures were higher in London than in Toronto and some other areas.

I want to thank the minister for meeting with Dr Frewen and some concerned parents on Friday. I asked Dr Frewen this question directly: "Do you agree with the

regional coroner's report based on that?" He said that out of the 35 pediatric cardiac procedures, there are two which he has concerns with that should not be performed in London. Of the other 33, the clinical outcomes are the same as at Sick Kids in Toronto and ought to be kept.

Minister, will you ensure that you check the clinical outcomes on those 35 procedures?

Hon Mr Clement: I thank the member for London-Fanshawe for the question. That is precisely the kind of judgment that all health professionals and the Ministry of Health have to engage themselves in: what are the clinical outcomes? How can we ensure that our kids have the best outcomes possible?

I will say to the honourable member—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry again, Minister. Members come to order, please. I can't hear the answer.

Hon Mr Clement: I would say to the honourable member that, as he is aware, he, as the member for London-Fanshawe, the member for London West and the Honourable Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities also met with those individuals—concerned parents as well as the doctor. We came to some very important conclusions about how we can move forward to ensure that we have the best services in London for the people of London, especially for the kids, and that's the kind of positive interaction that the members on this side of the House are having as opposed to the members on the other side of the House, who are making an irresponsible issue out of some very serious issues when it comes to clinical outcomes.

Mr Mazzilli: The one thing that concerned me from the outset of this was some of the professional integrity that was questioned between doctors. In fact, when we got to the bottom of it and started questioning people, what we found was that Dr Frewen in fact does agree with the regional coroner that there are these two procedures—the Norwood and one other procedure—that they've had very little success at in London, if any. In good conscience, you cannot recommend to any parent that procedure in London and the child ought to go to Sick Kids. But for the other 33 procedures that are performed, the results are the same, if not better, than Sick Kids.

Dr Frewen also explained that an ideal model for this province should be that the Ottawa hospital retain these procedures and that the London hospital retain these procedures but that the high-risk procedures go to Toronto. Do you agree with this model or will you check into this model?

Hon Mr Clement: Let me explain two other things that the group around the table in I think a very positive meeting agreed upon. First of all, Dr Frewen and the gang that were there were absolutely delighted that we announced on that day the new alternative funding arrangement for the pediatricians of the London hospital so that there is no problem with retention and recruitment of those pediatricians. This is good news for Londoners in keeping the pediatricians in London.

The second thing that I agreed to do was to review across the province pediatric subspecialty care so that we can ensure that we have a seamless, coordinated, coherent system when it comes to complex pediatric care. That's the kind of positive to-ing and fro-ing that we had at that meeting that reached a conclusion that I think will be better for the people of Ontario, quite frankly, and that is something that we can move upon to ensure that there are no gaps when it comes to pediatric care in the province of Ontario. That's the commitment of myself and the ministry, that's the commitment of the Mike Harris government.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. The evidence is starting to come in on the impact of your decision to make people pay for their hearing tests. You keep saying that hearing tests are still covered by OHIP, but in fact you changed the rules so that far fewer tests could be done at public expense. We now know that there has been a 48% reduction in the number of OHIP-funded hearing tests that have been done since August 13, when your rule changes came in. We know that when your rules are finally in place, there will be a 96% reduction in publicly funded hearing tests. We know that your cost-cutting strategy is working. We know you're going to save the money you wanted to save. What we don't know is what's happening to people who are concerned about their hearing. Are they paying for their own tests or are they simply going without?

You have told the audiologists that you are going to stick with your decision. I ask you, why do you insist on forcing people to make this choice: either to pay for a hearing test or to go without one?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Let me assure this House that hearing tests are still covered by OHIP, they are still part of the OHIP system, just as they were before the announcements to which the honourable member refers. There are audiologists in our hospitals, there are audiologists in our children's treatment centres, there are ENT specialists in the community that are available for OHIP-funded hearing tests. So the honourable member is incorrect if she is implying that this is not funded by OHIP. It is still part of an OHIP billing system, it still can be made available and will continue to be so throughout the province of Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, that's simply nonsense. You know very well and you knew it when you made the rule changes that if all the people who now get publicly funded hearing tests or got them before August 13 were still to get them it would cost you about four times as much as what you have currently been paying. What you have done with your rule changes is ensure that you can save at least \$7 million, which you set out to save, by forcing 96 out of 100 people either to pay for their own tests or to go without a hearing test at all. I tell you, when you and your party talk about choice in health care, the

only choice that you keep providing the people is the choice of either paying for care or going without it, and we're seeing that time and time again.

1450

Minister, you set out to save \$50 million by making people pay for hearing tests and physiotherapy. That's a matter of fact. There are now growing concerns that you're not going to stop there. There are concerns that you're going to look at cutting services provided by optometrists, by podiatrists, by chiropractors. In fact, it may be that you're looking at finding another \$150 million in cuts to publicly funded services. The finance minister, your colleague, wants to speed up his tax cuts and you're planning to pay for it with more cuts to health care services.

Minister, you're shaking your head. I ask you to do two things today: first of all, will you agree that people are already paying too much out of their own pockets for health care? Second, will you give us your personal assurance that neither you nor your colleague the Minister of Finance, nor the departing Premier, will bring in any more cuts to health care services?

Hon Mr Clement: First of all, let me say on the question of the 96%, I don't know where she's getting her figures from. Any medical professionals—

Mrs McLeod: The audiologists.

Hon Mr Clement: Well, from the audiologists. Boy, that answers that question. The honourable member should know that OHIP billings can be billed for six months after the procedure, so I don't know what sort of figures she's relying upon. I would suggest to you they're inaccurate.

She's talking about cutbacks. On this side of the House, we have increased health care expenditures six years in a row, to \$23.5 billion. Some 45% of the program spending of the province of Ontario now goes to health care. The only cutting of health care in the Dominion of Canada, let alone the province of Ontario, is from the federal Liberal government. When it comes to their commitment to health care, that's what we should question. If the honourable member wishes to spend her time questioning health care policy, I'll give her Allan Rock's name, address and phone number. She can do the job there, because clearly her leader isn't when it comes to sticking up for the interests of the province of Ontario when it comes to health care spending and health care delivery in this province.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Citizenship. Minister, as you've informed the House, you've been meeting with community leaders across the province in preparation for the introduction of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the legislation that you've stated will be tabled within a few weeks.

As part of those consultations, I understand you met recently with stakeholders in Ottawa. Minister, you've said repeatedly that everyone in the public and private sectors—as a matter of fact, all levels of government—will need to work together to prevent the creation of new barriers and eliminate existing barriers if persons with disabilities are to achieve full citizenship.

As the seat of the federal government and Canada's capital, Ottawa, one would hope, is at the forefront in improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. Can you report on what you've found during your visit to Ottawa?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): First of all, I was in Ottawa last week for my third visit with disabled persons. Ottawa has a very progressive committee. It's been in operation for over 10 years. They are doing extensive work in terms of transit conversion and curb-cutting, some of the best work in the province, I might add. Under their leadership they're engaging the disabled community directly in planning decisions, in reviewing buildings. They're currently doing audits of municipal buildings.

They have a concern though, quite frankly, that if we're going to find solutions in sharing the responsibility to make sure Ontario becomes more accessible, we are going to need to work with the federal government and we're—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Fed-bashing.

Hon Mr Jackson: We're not bashing them, member from St Catharines. I'd think he'd be the first one to suggest that the federal government should do its fair share. We haven't seen much evidence of it, but I believe that the federal government, especially in a city like Ottawa, is willing to do it for its own employees because any legislation we do in Ontario will not cover federal government buildings in this province.

Mr Galt: Thank you, Minister. Also compliments to you for the extensive consultation that you've been carrying out on this particular bill. Extensive consultations are, of course, a hallmark of our government.

Minister, as you have previously stated in the House, involving persons with disabilities in the public policy development is indeed a stated goal of the government. In your meetings with members of the Ottawa accessibility committee for the disabled, did you get an indication as to how they would like the government to proceed with an Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the type of approach the legislation should pursue?

Hon Mr Jackson: Very clearly, the Ottawa Accessibility Advisory Committee feels very strongly, as does this government, that any legislative initiative and any efforts put forward to make Ontario more accessible should involve the disability communities directly.

I've stated in this House before that from what I've seen in Ottawa and how it works, it is working very well, and we're encouraged by that. In fact, since amalgamation in Ottawa, they have actually even strengthened their rules of participation. The committee is made up of 13

members of the disability community appointed by council and includes one councillor. It happens to be Councillor Madeleine Meilleur from Ottawa. The committee is chaired by Barry McMahon, who is a member of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. He has indicated his full support for the government's approach of ensuring active and ongoing participation of disabled persons. Clearly we need to achieve full accessibility as everyone's business and to everyone's benefit in Ontario.

LOW-INCOME ONTARIANS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): A question for the Minister of Finance. Minister, this is today's report from the Centre for Social Justice, entitled *When Markets Fail People*. This report shows that your corporate tax cuts indeed have helped the wealthiest people in Ontario, but the fact that you've frozen the minimum wage for now going on seven years has hurt the lowest-paid workers in this province. It has fuelled an incredible gap between those who are well off and those who are working very hard at minimum wage, trying to make ends meet. It points out that your refusal to raise the minimum wage is at the heart of this.

My question to you is this: after seven years of tax cuts for the well-off and seven years of freezing the wages of the lowest paid, will you commit to increasing the minimum wage?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The member opposite is talking about income levels, disposable income for people with lower incomes in Ontario. Let me give you a quote: "Overwhelmingly, the best thing one can do for low-income families is to make sure that they either pay very low taxes or no taxes at all." That's Paul Martin in the federal Parliament on February 18, 1999.

I'm very proud of the record of our government in personal income tax cuts. Our budget this year will remove another 75,000 low-income persons from the tax rolls—completely off the tax rolls. They pay no income tax in Ontario. Unfortunately, some of them still have to pay federal income tax. The Ontario tax cuts to date have taken 325,000 people totally off the obligation to pay provincial income taxes in Ontario. That's real money in their pockets.

Mr Hampton: Minister, this report also goes into your apparent explanation here today and it points out that by increasing a host of user fees, by increasing tuition fees, by downloading on to municipalities and forcing them to increase property taxes, not only have you frozen the incomes of the lowest-paid workers in the province, but when you add up all the user fees, the co-payment fees, the administrative fees, they are paying more taxes than ever before.

The question is a simple one: after looking after your corporate friends for seven years, after looking after the well-off in this province for seven years through tax cuts, will you finally raise the minimum wage for the lowest-paid workers in the province?

Hon Mr Flaherty: What's of importance to people in the province of Ontario, no matter what their earnings are, is that they have more disposable income, more money in their own pockets.

He talks about rich people. Let's talk about a one-income family with two children and a net income of \$30,000. A one-income family, two children and a net income of \$30,000 will pay \$1,635 less Ontario income tax when these tax cuts are completed. That is a saving for that family of 100% of what they would have been obliged to pay in personal income tax.

You're talking about caring for people and caring for children. Look at the budget this year and what we did for the 19 children's treatment centres in the province that help children—babies with autism and serious learning disabilities and spina bifida. Look what we did. They needed another \$20 million. They were fully funded in the budget this year. That's real action. That's real caring for real people, including babies in Ontario who need that kind of assistance on a timely basis.

1500

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to ask you about the situation at the burns unit of the Hamilton General Hospital. As you know, it is one of the most prestigious units in North America. Since spring of this year, this unit has doubled the number of patients from 45 to 90, without one additional cent being given to look after these people.

This unit has 10 beds. It is currently working at its limit literally year-round. Recently two patients had to be taken to the United States because there was no room there or in any other burns facility across Ontario. To add to this, we now have a situation where the London Health Sciences Centre is closing down its burns unit. Of course it's going to add more to the needed capacity and ability of the Hamilton General Hospital to look after patients who are going to be there.

With this type of situation, with the seriousness of burns and with the intensive needs people have, even a handful of additional patients can overwhelm the system. In view of this, will you commit today to additional resources and funding to open up more beds at the burns unit at the Hamilton General Hospital?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The honourable member raises a legitimate and important question. Let me assure him and this House that under no circumstances would we allow a change of program at any one hospital to occur without the pickup at some other hospital or some other facility in Ontario. There should be no gaps in the system. I think it should be expected by the public, and certainly on their behalf by us, that any changes that occur, and changes do occur on a regular basis, will be factored into the operating and budgetary plans of each individual hospital.

The honourable member raises a legitimate point. That is the kind of thing on which we are in discussions with Hamilton Health Sciences about their plans and operating projections, not only now but in the future as well.

Mr Agostino: The reality is that even before the London closing you have ordered to go ahead, this unit is already at its maximum. They already have had to send patients to the United States. So your empty rhetoric really doesn't deal with the issue. You know there's a problem. You know the unit does not have the capacity to handle more patients. They have no full-time physician. We are short two part-time nurses at this particular facility. It is the only facility that is going to be left between Windsor and Toronto to look after people.

You have a responsibility here not to tell us, "It sounds good; we're going to look at it in the future." The crisis is today. I find it astonishing how you can continue to justify \$2.2 billion a year in additional corporate cuts, but you can't stand up today and say, "Yes, I will give the additional money necessary to open up more beds at the Hamilton burns unit." Are patients and health care and well-being your priority when it comes to people in this province or does it continue to be your corporate tax cuts? Stand up today and commit that you will give more money to ensure we can handle the need at the Hamilton General Hospital burns unit.

Hon Mr Clement: We know the Liberal Party is against tax cuts. We heard that again today, where the honourable Leader of the Opposition wants to send to the glue factory the "one-trick tax-cut pony," according to his own words. The honourable member should be aware that along with tax cuts, we have also increased hospital funding in Ontario to a record \$8.6 billion this year, \$450 million more than last year. That is the kind of commitment we're making to increased hospital services.

Now, we do expect results out of that. We expect better results for our patients. But we are there for the hospitals. We have spent tens of millions of dollars in Hamilton, more this year than last year at St Joseph's and at Hamilton Health Sciences and we will continue to do so.

The honourable member has a particular concern. Perhaps we can look at the operating plan based on his question, but I can tell you that we are looking at the operating plans of Hamilton Health Sciences with a view to ensuring that the services they purport to deliver are delivered with the right resources and the right accountability to make sure there is value for money for the taxpayers.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Since the events of September 11, everyone's world has been turned upside down. What we knew to be normal before the attacks on New York and Washington is now a distant memory. Heightened security at our border crossings is one of the ways our world has changed.

You have said in the past that while we recognize the desire to tighten security at the Canada-US border, we must maintain swift and efficient access for legitimate persons and business transactions. I support the concept raised by Premier Harris of a secure North American perimeter. Where are we now on this issue?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): This is the second year in a row the member from Niagara Falls has asked me a question on his birthday. I'm not sure what that means, but happy birthday, Mr Maves.

This is a critical issue, not just for Ontarians, but for Canadians. That's why our government is sponsoring an industry leaders' round table this Friday.

Trade with the United States is clearly a critical issue for us: 93% of our trade is with the United States. In the year 2000, that represented over \$200 billion, 1.5 million jobs dependent on exports.

Our Premier, along with a number of other Premiers, has been talking about the whole question of a North American security perimeter. I think if we look at questions of infrastructure, we can look at questions of customs clearance, but the overriding concern here is security. Provincial Premiers recognize this, business leaders recognize this, Canadian citizens recognize this. It begs the question, who doesn't? Apparently they all reside in Ottawa.

Mr Maves: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Minister, I do agree with you: issues of national security need to be addressed by our federal government, and there is no time for continued hand-wringing and bungling when our neighbour to the south is at war and is looking for our help.

Minister, setting aside for the moment the Allan Rock fiascos and bungling, what is the next step we should take in making sure Ontarians aren't left behind because of indecision and poor decisions in Ottawa?

Hon Mr Runciman: I want to make it clear that our government wants to work with the federal government on this issue, and Mr Manley has been saying, I think, some very promising things. But if we look at this file, in the past the federal government has been lethargic, complacent. We've heard the Prime Minister talk about sovereignty as a concern. That is indeed, in our view, a red herring.

Any country that doesn't have security doesn't have sovereignty. That's the bottom line.

I can assure the member and I can assure Ontarians that Ontario will be in the forefront on this issue. We're going to ensure that our trade and our economy do not become victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Yes, Speaker, a question to the Minister of Labour, please.

The Speaker: Stop the clock, if we could, please. Just a quick moment here, please. Now that the minister has rushed in, I apologize. In the rotation for a new question, yes, it was a question, but it was the wrong order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: No. I didn't give him much of a chance. I do give people a chance to stand up. I did not give him much of a chance. It was my fault. I apologize to the member for Niagara Centre. He stood up with such authority, I thought he was right. I apologize.

It is the rotation for the Liberals.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I'd like to ask the Minister of Health about the funding crisis facing community care access centres across this province. The minister will be aware of the crisis since he froze CCACs' budgets at the year 2000 level. I'd like to know why the shortfall is going to amount to \$175 million. In North York, the CCAC, for example, is facing a \$10-million shortfall.

So will he now recognize that CCACs face a serious funding crisis, and will he do the right thing and fund CCACs properly so that they can meet their 2001-02 commitments?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm happy to do the right thing and pass the question over to the associate minister of health.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. As the member knows, this government has put substantial dollars and substantial expertise into community care access centres over the previous four years. Since 1995, the budgets in the Toronto community care access centres have grown by about 120%, some of the largest growth in the province of Ontario and definitely across North America.

This government is concerned as a result of a number of reviews we have done that money is being spent effectively in the province of Ontario. We have taken on a review to look and see what services should be provided, to see how we can better manage the system, how we can have an effective management system within the CCACs. We will continue this review and make the recommendations necessary to ensure that we have a high quality of care in community services in the province of Ontario.

1510

Mr Cordiano: The minister would have us believe that everything is just fine, that they are funding things properly. Let me tell you, real people are facing a real crisis out there.

Let me tell you about those people in my riding, people like Mr Frank Derango, who is a 70-year-old, if you can imagine, who has been caring for his 90-year-old mother. He now unfortunately is undergoing cancer treatment and has applied for home care. Guess what? He's been put on a waiting list. There is no service. In the Oddi family, a daughter-in-law who suffers from a heart condition has been looking after an elderly parent who suffers from Alzheimer's. She's been waiting for home care and there is none.

Is this your vision of Ontario, where 70-year-olds who are ill themselves are now forced to look after 90-year-

olds who can't take care of themselves? Is this your new vision for Ontario, Minister?

Hon Mrs Johns: As the Premier said earlier this year, we've invested 120% more in community care access centres in Toronto. Have we increased the service by 120%? The speaker opposite is agreeing with the government when he says there needs to be some review done of this. Substantial dollars have flowed to these community care access centres, and when we did a study, an operational review in Hamilton, what it showed was that they had ineffective financial management, they were short on their monitoring, they had no standards to ensure there were effective dollars being put into effective services.

We all agree in this House that there need to be operational reviews. There needs to be a review done by the province because we can't continue to put 120% into new funding in these areas without knowing that we're getting the services back that we need. That's what we intend to do.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Attorney General. I understand that my colleagues on Ontario's Crime Control Commission, David Tilson, Bob Wood and Joe Tascona, have held hearings across the province on the federal government's proposed Youth Criminal Justice Act. I'm happy to hear that the Crime Control Commission has asked for and has been granted an opportunity to share their findings with the Senate standing committee on legal and constitutional affairs. I'd like to point out that when the Crime Control Commission asked to appear before the federal Commons committee on justice and human rights to share these same findings, the Liberal majority on the committee refused to allow it. It's important to me and my constituents in Scarborough Centre to know that at least one level of government, the Mike Harris government, is listening to the concerns of Ontarians.

Minister, could you please tell us how extensive these Crime Control Commission hearings were and when you will be sharing the results of their work with the Senate?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): First of all, I'd like to take a moment to thank the member for her question. There is no one in this Legislature who cares more about this issue. The member has raised numerous similar issues, all with one goal in mind and that is the protection and the safety of individuals in her community. I applaud her for that today, as I have done in the past.

I also want to say that this government has gone to the people to ask for their opinion about the Young Offenders Act and the successor legislation, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, or bill, as it is. What we have heard as a result of the efforts of the Crime Control Commission is that the people of Ontario have little or no confidence in the Young Offenders Act and have absolutely no interest in the replacement Youth Criminal Justice Act that the federal Liberals have brought forward. The Crime

Control Commission has been to 14 different municipalities across Ontario and what they have heard is that amendments to the proposed legislation are essential to keep our communities safe.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that answer. I know that our colleagues today will distinguish themselves.

Minister, I understand that you'll be appearing before the Senate committee tomorrow afternoon. I know you also have serious concerns about this proposed legislation and have developed the "no more free ride for Young Offenders Act" amendments meant to strengthen the very weak-kneed Youth Criminal Justice Act as a response. Can you please provide me and my constituents in Scarborough Centre with a few examples of the Mike Harris government's common sense proposals for cutting youth crime?

Hon Mr Young: What we have done over the past eight months is attempt to take a constructive approach to what is a very real and serious problem in this country. The Mike Harris government has come forward with a series of 100 proposed amendments that we have asked the federal government to simply implement, apply, add to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, amendments that, if passed, if adopted, would make it very clear that a young person who commits an adult crime will do adult time, amendments that will make it just as clear that if you use a weapon during the course of an offence, you will serve some time in jail. We've also said that if you commit a serious violent crime, then you should be identified, then the people in your community should know what you have done, not only to help the community but to help the individual involved so that resources can be there to assist that young person.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): My question is to the Minister of Labour. The inquest into the death of Robyn Lafleur was completed last week in Welland. The evidence at that inquest was clear that there had not been a single Ministry of Labour inspection for the four years prior to Ms Lafleur's slaughter in that workplace. We heard evidence from a plant manager telling the jury that she had never read the Occupational Health and Safety Act and that she made up her own safety rules based on common sense. The minister's own director of occupational health and safety testified that it is not the Ministry of Labour's role to make sure that all workplaces are safe at all times. Minister, do you share that view of the role of your ministry?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): To be fair, we have to put that quote in context. The context of the quote is this. The question was asked as to whether or not they inspect these places every year. The response was that due to budget limitations, the answer is no. Because there are literally millions of workplaces in the province of Ontario, it is financially impossible to inspect every workplace every year.

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): That's not true.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The member over across there, who used to be Minister of Labour, suggests this isn't true. Mr Sorbara may think, in his mind, that the Liberal government did inspect every year. The fact of the matter is, when you put that in context, no Ministry of Labour officer can possibly go to every single workplace every single year. It's financially virtually impossible. But the education, the mailings—that work is done on a very regular basis.

Mr Kormos: This was an exceptionally dangerous workplace. It dealt on a daily basis with explosive materials. It had not undergone an inspection in four years. Indeed, the business place's own manager acknowledged that she had never read the Occupational Health and Safety Act and effectively made up the rules as she went along.

Sir, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union has taken up this cause on behalf of Robyn's family to try to make sure that a tragedy like this doesn't occur again. They have developed extensive recommendations for positive action, including calls for mandatory annual workplace inspections and for mandatory training of managers who wouldn't even read health and safety laws otherwise. If you won't agree today to implement or to contemplate those types of changes, Minister, will you please meet with representatives of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers and with Robyn's family to hear their submissions and listen to their plea for the need for you to effect some significant changes in how unsafe workplaces are inspected?

Hon Mr Stockwell: To answer the first part of the question, of course I'm prepared to meet with them. They've suffered a very real tragedy. There's a great, sincere loss they've had. We all understand that. I don't want to play politics with you. If your request is to meet with them and hear their concerns, in a heartbeat, in a second, I will meet with them to hear their concerns.

But be fair: inspections are up 32% since we took office; convictions are up 24%; fines are up 113%; fines for convictions are up 73%. This is over your administration and over their administration. That someone dies in the workplace is a tragedy. We all feel for that tragedy. But to pin this on some kind of inspection process that this government introduced is not fair. We inspect more, we have more fines, we have more convictions, and to the ex-Minister of Labour in the Liberal Party, you should know that.

1520

PETITIONS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): There is no way to overstate the physician shortage crisis in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. We have a petition signed by over 40,000 people, with great concern being expressed. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Our community is facing an immediate, critical situation in accessing physician services and in providing hospital care to the people of northwestern Ontario. While the recruitment and retention of physicians has been a concern for many years, it is now reaching crisis proportions. Training more physicians in northern Ontario is certainly the best response to this problem in the longer term. We are, however, in urgent need of support for immediate short-term solutions that will allow our community both to retain our current physicians and recruit new family doctors and specialists in seriously understaffed areas.

"Therefore, we, as residents of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, urge you to respond to our community's and our region's critical and immediate needs. For us, this is truly a matter of life and death."

I am very pleased to add my name to this very large petition.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I have a further petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario dealing with the issue of puppy mills that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Criminal Code of Canada considers animal cruelty to be a property offence; and

"Whereas those who commit crimes against animals currently face light sentences upon conviction; and

"Whereas those who operate puppy mills should, upon conviction, face sentences that are appropriate for the torture and inhumane treatment they have inflicted on puppies under their so-called care;

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

"That the Ontario provincial government petition the federal government to move forward with amendments to the cruelty of animal provisions in the Criminal Code as soon as possible."

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

EDUCATION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions concerning the education system in Ontario. This is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government wants to take an additional billion dollars out of the education system this year and every year; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has decided to hire uncertified teachers in kindergartens, libraries, for guidance, physical education, the arts, and technology; and

"Whereas the Ontario government wishes to remove the right to negotiate working conditions; and

"Whereas the Ontario government will remove at least 10,000 teachers from classrooms across the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has become the sole decision-maker on class size, preparation time and the length of the school day; and

"Whereas the Ontario government proposes to take decision-making powers out of the hands of locally-elected community-minded trustees;

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal the education bill and create an accessible public consultative process for students, parents, teachers, and school board administrators to study alternate solutions that have universal appeal and will lead to an improved educational system."

Since I agree with these sentiments, I am delighted to put my signature on this document.

OHIP SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): This petition was sent to me by N.P. Armstrong of Winchester, Ontario. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Speaker, I agree with the petitioners and I've signed my name to the petition.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to read a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial Durham riding, including Clarington, Scugog township and portions of north and

east Oshawa comprises one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada; and,

“Whereas the residents of Durham riding are experiencing difficulty locating family physicians who are willing to accept new patients; and

“Whereas the good health of Durham riding residents depends on a long-term relationship with a family physician who can provide ongoing care; and

“Whereas the lack of family physicians puts unnecessary demands and strains on walk-in clinics and emergency departments;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything within its power to immediately assess the needs of Durham riding and the Durham region and work with the Ontario Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, local health care providers and elected officials to ensure there are enough family physicians available to serve this community;

“Make every effort to recruit doctors to set up practice in underserved areas and provide suitable incentives that will encourage them to stay in these communities;”

“Continue its efforts to increase the number of physicians being trained in Ontario medical schools and also continue its programs to enable foreign-trained doctors to qualify in Ontario.”

I'm pleased to support this on behalf of my constituents.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned”—from places like St Thomas, London, Wallacetown, Stratford, Sarnia and Waterloo—“petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government take immediate action to ensure that these important health services are maintained so that the health and safety of people throughout southwestern Ontario are not put at risk.”

I'm in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

OHIP SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I'd like to thank the members of the Quinte Old Timers Club 513 in Deseronto for sending me this petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Speaker, I agree with the petitioners. I've signed my name to this.

1530

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Criminal Code of Canada considers animal cruelty to be a property offence; and

“Whereas those who commit crimes against animals currently face light sentences upon conviction; and

“Whereas those who operate puppy mills should, upon conviction, face sentences that are appropriate for the torture and inhumane treatment they have inflicted on puppies under their so-called care;

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

“That the Ontario provincial government petition the federal government to move forward with amendments to the cruelty of animal provisions in the Criminal Code as soon as possible.”

Since I agree, I am happy to attach my name.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'm pleased to present petitions from and on behalf of the following communities: Brampton, Stoney Creek, Winona, Kingston, Gananoque, Trenton, Arden, Hartington, Napanee, Belleville, Barrie, Bolton, Aurora, Bradford, Cayuga, Mount Hope, Fergus, Lindsay, Whitby, Oakville, St Thomas, Aylmer, Fenelon Falls and London.

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

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

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

"Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario;

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

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

I affix my signature to these petitions, which contain 1,000 latest names.

HOME CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition signed by constituents in my own riding. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

"That the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to take control of policy-setting for home care services through rational, population-based health

care planning rather than simply underfunding the system; and

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

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

I agree with the petitioners and I've signed my signature to it.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to read a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham on the issue of Highway 407. I'll read it here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province of Ontario has proposed the extension of Highway 407 into the Durham region"—which I support—"and the proposed routing, designated as the technically preferred route, will dissect the property of the Kedron Dells Golf Course Ltd in 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"—it's landlocked, you see;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the routing"—that's very important—"to one of the other identified alternative routes, thus preserving this highly regarded public facility patronized annually by thousands of"—my constituents—"residents of Durham region and the GTA."

I'm very supportive of the Kedron Dells Golf Course in the riding of Durham just south of Taunton Road and east of Durham College.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I too have signed this petition.

OPPOSITION DAY

ONTARIO SECURITY FUND PLAN

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I move that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government to protect Ontarians by enacting my plan to establish an Ontario security fund, with half of the funds being directed to security projects at the municipal level.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr McGuinty has moved opposition day number 2: that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government to protect Ontarians by enacting Dalton McGuinty’s plan to establish an Ontario security fund, with half of the funds being directed to security projects at the municipal level.

Mr McGuinty: It has become a cliché, but it remains true nonetheless, that our world has changed. Our families in particular have been horrified and shaken, I would argue, in one of the most profound ways they’ve ever been in the last several decades. They look to us now to assume responsibility for lending greater stability to the world in which they find themselves, and they look to us to provide real leadership when it comes to making sure that we’re doing what we can to strengthen our economy and that we’re doing what we can to make sure they and their children, our families, are leading safe lives.

That’s why I was so disappointed today when the government came forward with these initiatives that

really weren’t worth the paper they were printed on. It’s going to take more than newspaper ads telling us, “Don’t worry. Be happy,” it’s going to take more than tax cuts for already profitable and already competitive corporations, and it’s going to take more than a continuing series of expressions of concern about all things related to terrorism. It’s going to take much more than that if we are going to convince our working families that we have done what must be done to ensure they enjoy life in a safer Ontario.

What we’ve been doing is making a real and genuine effort to put forward positive proposals to the government. I believe there is a very legitimate expectation on the part of our families today that, given these extraordinary circumstances, we will do what we can in a non-partisan way to look out for their interests. The message I’m getting from our families is, “You people will work together in my interests, and I have very little time for infighting and bickering and partisan activity.” That’s why early off the mark we put forward a positive proposal to the government. We put it forward two weeks ago. It works in the short term and, just as importantly, it does not compromise our fiscal flexibility in the long term. I want to tell you a little bit about that.

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The objective here is to shore up consumer confidence, it’s to help arrest this downturn in our economy which had begun prior to the events of September 11 and it’s to make life safer for our families. That’s the three-fold objective of this positive proposal. We call it our Ontario security plan. First of all, we take the \$1 billion which had been addressed in the last two budgets, \$1 billion in commitments that this government has made as promised investment in infrastructure, and we contrast that with the \$14 million this government has spent—\$1 billion promised and committed, only \$14 million actually spent or invested.

What we’re urging the government to do, understanding that there are more than 800 applications on the books hanging around in some governmental limbo, we’re asking the government to simply move ahead with those projects. Let’s invest this money now. We’re talking about roads and bridges and water treatment plants and schools and hospitals and universities, those kinds of things which have not only immediate value in terms of creating jobs and spin-off jobs, but have lasting value in terms of supporting the infrastructure that we are trying to have in place here as we cultivate a knowledge-based economy. It doesn’t cost us—again, this is very important, notwithstanding the government’s remonstrations to the contrary—an extra cent. The money has already been committed. Sadly, what the government is doing is holding these investments in abeyance. I know why they’re doing that. They’re doing that for purely political purposes. They want to cut cheques and engage in photo ops much closer to election time, which I think is irresponsible and cynical, given the trying times that we all find ourselves in.

Further, what we are suggesting is that of that \$1 billion, let’s hive off 10%. That’s \$100 million. We call

that our Ontario security fund. We believe that what we should be doing with those monies found within that fund is enabling municipalities to make application for some of those monies. We'd dedicate half of it for our cities and towns.

I've met with mayors, reeves and councillors, and they're telling me that they feel a sense of urgency here, notwithstanding that the government does not. They feel that they must take on some responsibility to make life safer for the people who live in their communities. They want to put some extra security around some of their municipal infrastructure. Maybe they might want to hire a few more police officers or firefighters, all with a view to making life safer for their families. In the grand scheme of things, surely one of the most fundamental responsibilities we share, those of us who enjoy the privilege of elected office, one of the most fundamental responsibilities is to make sure that the people we serve are safe. I understand why municipalities are looking to us to assist them in this regard. That's what this fund would serve to do in part.

I would look to the other half of that fund, the other \$50 million, to use to help shore up some of our provincial areas of vulnerability, like our nuclear power plants, like our oil and gas pipelines, maybe some of our courthouses and those kinds of things, this chamber itself, the legislative precinct, some of our financial districts perhaps. All of those things are important for us to address.

The government has had 48 days during which to get a good handle on what is happening out there and then to become as proactive as possible. Some of this is reactive, understandably. None of us could anticipate that people would fly airplanes into buildings and cause death and trauma for much of the world. None of us could anticipate that, but I think surely one of the real tests of leadership is, when these things do happen, how do you react and what are you doing to protect the interests of the people whom you serve? This government has come up painfully short in that regard.

I am proud to say that my party and our caucus began to pull together some of the very best ideas. We met with business leaders, we met with labour leaders, we met with municipal leaders and just representatives from the families that make up our communities. That's why we came up with this very specific plan. The government's best shot at this was to accelerate corporate tax cuts.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): One-trick pony.

Mr McGuinty: That's that tired, old, one-trick tax-cut pony, which should be taken out to the glue factory and put out of its misery. It's time for new ideas. It's time for innovation. It's time for genuine leadership.

The government has it in mind that we will have here in Ontario the lowest corporate taxes in North America. I just want to tell you, and I want to tell our viewers and those who are paying attention to this very important debate, that we have a more progressive definition of competitiveness, one that is suited to our province at this

time in our history. We want competitive taxes, and our taxes already are competitive. But you know what else we want for our families? We want clean air. We want safe drinking water. We want enough textbooks in our schools. We want enough beds in our hospitals for our parents, should they require the use of those beds. And we want responsible fiscal management.

We think it was irresponsible to add \$20 billion to the debt, and we think it's irresponsible to compromise our fiscal flexibility by going ahead with another \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts. That is completely out of keeping with a progressive vision for our province.

What I'm doing today is putting forward my plan once again to this government, and I am urging the government members to receive it in the spirit with which it is being tendered. I think it's a good idea. I think it will help shore up a sense of security in the minds of our families, and I think it will help arrest the downward turn in which our economy finds itself. It's put forward not for any partisan purposes, but just because we think it's a good idea for our families and for our future.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): The phrase coined by the Leader of the Opposition, "one-trick tax pony," certainly that term belongs to him. He includes everything and solves every problem, clearly, by raising the taxes. He's made that eminently clear today.

I want to be on the record, and it's a privilege to stand as the minister's parliamentary assistant and to respond to the leader of the official opposition on the economic plan for Ontario.

It should not surprise Ontarians that the leader of the official opposition has called on this government to fast-track about \$1 billion of capital spending that has already been announced and set aside \$100 million in a security fund to help municipalities improve emergency services.

The Liberals propose—and I will outline it for you—to set aside 10%, or \$100 million, of promised capital spending for an Ontario security fund; to use half of the fund, or \$50 million, to update emergency measures response plans and to hire firefighters and police to protect drinking water and municipal airports. The other half, or \$50 million, would be used to improve provincial security at nuclear facilities and hydro installations.

Once again, the Liberals are slow off the mark. Clearly they're not up to the job. Such a position is consistent with the tax-and-spend methods of Liberal governments of the past and the prospects, unfortunately, some would think, of the future.

The Progressive Conservative government has committed over \$5 billion to municipalities to improve their infrastructure, including transit and health and safety priorities in our communities. The government is already spending millions of dollars on protecting the safety and security of Ontarians and is well equipped to respond to emergency needs. The government is investing in building infrastructure that will provide long-term benefits for future generations, including better quality of life, more services closer to home, and jobs and investments in our local communities.

1550

These projects are not being delayed. Good work takes time and negotiations, and we are taking the necessary time to make sure that local priorities are being considered to meet the health and safety of Ontarians and that Ontario's safety is protected through our SuperBuild initiatives.

The tragic events of September 11 demonstrate more than ever that in Ontario we need to work together cooperatively. All parties and all levels of government, indeed each citizen, under the strong leadership of Premier Mike Harris and this government, are working hard to ensure that Ontario is the safest province in all of Canada. We are committed to making available every cent needed to do exactly that.

It would be no surprise to the citizens of Ontario that there are significant concerns on our part with the plan of the Liberal opposition that is being put forward here today. All the Liberal plan does is talk about where to find money. It has no specific suggestions on what programs to invest in. I'm not surprised by that lack of planning and lack of foresight with any vision. Capital is one-time money. The serious issues we are talking about require more than one year's commitment, but the Liberal plan makes no mention of how to sustain these projects over time. Our approach is to strategically look at programs, determine what's necessary and do an appropriate costing to ensure funds are adequate and properly available.

I don't want to dismiss any suggestion that would help to keep the people of Ontario safe. However, this is a need we have both today and into the future. We must ensure adequate funds are also available for future generations of Ontario's young people. We must not saddle our children further with a debt that would be their inheritance from previous governments, often referred to as the lost 10 years.

Contrary to what the Liberals might like to lead Ontarians to believe, there are not delays in flowing SuperBuild money. Projects are not being held back. As partners with other levels of government, we are in negotiations with other parties as we work toward building local priorities in our communities. SuperBuild monies are flowing. Since 1999 the government has already invested in more than 3,000 projects worth close to \$9 billion. That's more than 3,000 projects in communities all across the province. That's jobs, strategic investments, closer-to-home services and better-built communities across Ontario. Work is already underway. One only has to look at the cranes.

I look in my riding of Durham and I see the work going on at the Ontario Institute of Technology, at Durham College, at Lakeridge Health and at long-term-care facilities and a number of other projects. The construction industry is already operating at close to full capacity because this government had the foresight under the leadership of Premier Harris and the Minister of Finance, Mr Flaherty, to anticipate the need for more investment in infrastructure and to encourage more investments in the future.

SuperBuild projects are just part of the government's broad range of policies designed to strengthen the Ontario economy. Unlike the Liberals' quick, not-well-thought-out plan, this government has a strategic and balanced economic plan for Ontario today and into the future. SuperBuild projects will boost the vital infrastructure of the province and improve the quality of life, health and safety of all Ontarians.

Three SuperBuild projects were announced in the 2000 budget: a \$1-billion millennium partnership initiative, \$600 million for OSTAR—the Ontario small town and rural development initiative—and \$300 million to the sports, culture and tourism partnerships initiative. OSTAR was launched to assist with Operation Clean Water, which introduced a stringent new drinking water protection regulation. The government's more-than-\$9 billion transit plan was announced in this House, as we know, by the Premier on September 27.

Throwing money into a big pile and letting everyone fill their hats, which is the way previous governments did it, won't put one more carpenter, one more electrician or one more labourer on the payroll. This is the essence of the Liberal plan. This is tax-and-spend government as practised by previous Liberal governments.

Trades people and labourers are on the payroll because the government had the foresight to anticipate the need for infrastructure investments and the courage to make them available. Previous governments have given us graphic examples of waste and mismanagement. We don't intend to emulate previous failed plans. We have no intention of throwing money at problems in the faint hope that some of it will end up in the right place to serve the right people.

As I said earlier, good work takes time. This government, led by Premier Harris, will take the time to do the job right the first time.

When I look at the overall needs of infrastructure and the neglect over the last decade, it is clear from data provided to me that at the beginning of the Liberal mandate there was a clear disconnect between real output and the capital stock necessary to keep our economy and our society productive.

If I want to look at the strategic investments under SuperBuild, in education there are a number of projects. These are primarily post-secondary: 218 projects. The investment total is \$2.078 billion. Of that, \$1.277 billion is the portion contributed by the this government. In health, there are 674 projects. The investment total value is \$3.389 billion, of which \$1.864 billion is the provincial share. Under environment: 187 projects for a total value of \$1.054 billion, of which the provincial share is \$478 million. Under highway and other transportation, there are 229 projects. The total value of those capital projects is \$3.226 billion. The province's share is \$3.164 billion. Other projects, including northern development, tourism, OSTAR, sports and culture, millennium and justice projects: 688 projects for a total capital value of \$3.288 billion, of which the province's share is \$2.072 billion.

The total capital investment by this government and its partners is \$13.035 billion. Of that total, the province's investment and commitment to date is \$8.855 billion, the largest single capital investment in this province's history, by this government and this Premier, Premier Harris.

For the record, it's clear that the federal government, like their Liberal counterparts here, isn't up to the job. The federal commitment is \$681 million for Ontario. Let me repeat that: \$681 million is the federal commitment to the infrastructure of this province. This province, with one third of the people of this country, gets a paltry sum, and I compare that to our \$8.8-billion investment. The federal government's is \$681 million. Who is paying to build the infrastructure? The province of Ontario, together with partnerships in our communities.

I pledge to this community and to my community to work on their behalf, not to just simply raise taxes but to invest wisely into the future. We're well on track to meet the goal of our commitment under SuperBuild of \$20 billion in capital investment in the term from 1999 until the end of this particular Legislature. I committed as well in the comments I've made that we're well on track to build Ontario's future together.

The opposition's motion today is clearly too little, too late, and not well planned. I don't expect to be supporting it. I'm sure other members will listen to the arguments and will clearly see that this province is well managed and well governed and making the investments that make our society and our communities a better place to live and to invest.

1600

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'm very pleased to speak to my leader's motion. Dalton McGuinty advanced a \$100-million plan specifically to address circumstances post-September 11. What is amazing to me is that as I sit here and my leader advances solutions for what we can do as we all, in every community across Ontario, have suffered the effects of September 11, never is this more clear than when you travel down the 401 and back to my community of Windsor. Our Windsor community is so reliant on smooth traffic across the border to Detroit. All traffic ground to a halt on September 11. We have struggled with the challenge of revving back up and trying to get to what is now going to be called the "new normal" in our community of Windsor.

Just to give you some idea, there are thousands of people in Windsor and Essex county who traverse the bridge and tunnel every day to go to work. They leave in the morning and they come back at night. Many of those individuals are signed up for a program that would have allowed pre-clearance so that they roll through the gate as they head across the bridge. All of that ground to a halt on September 11. Now things are starting to pick up again. People are starting to go back and forth with ease in some cases. Every time there's a new incident or a new threat, the first thing that happens is that our borders grind to a halt again. What might take just a 15-minute

stop will in essence create hours-long delays for the trucks that have to go across.

Our community is very much auto-based. Our system of supplying our auto plants is literally just-in-time. They have about a two-hour window to move parts back and forth across that border to get them from parts-manufacturing plants to the assembly plant in my community. When those events of September 11 hit, I think none of us realized how dramatically we could be affected and for how long, and we have struggled with that. We have done everything. All of our political leaders and our business leaders have worked diligently on this issue since the events of September 11. Herb Gray is bringing in yet another minister to the Windsor area on Friday morning to see for himself the tunnel and the bridge, to have a discussion about what more we can do at the federal level, at the provincial level, at the municipal level.

Today we know that with security threats again right across North America, they are now considering that they will be clearing all trucks and passenger vehicles from actually stopping or waiting on the bridge span or in the tunnel. That is going to have a dramatic impact. It started already last night, backing up all of these vehicles on our road system, a road system that certainly wasn't designed to be the holding spot for trucks and cars that have to go back and forth across the border to Detroit.

We have talked about this for many years in our community. The Windsor-Detroit corridor is the most significant corridor in North America. The greatest volume of trucks in North America crosses that border: the greatest number by volume, the greatest number by value of goods. We know that our Ontario economy is so devoted to an export business that we at all costs must have the perfect trade corridor. In my view, that corridor is the 400-series highways from the significant border crossings in Ontario, most notably the Windsor-Detroit corridor, the Port Huron-Sarnia corridor and the Niagara corridor. Those are the corridors that are paramount.

If this government was really interested in what it could have been doing these last six years, then in fact what it should be doing from this point forward is moving forward with SuperBuild, which is the only available infrastructure program now that this government has advanced, instead of talking numbers after numbers that are frankly meaningless or announcement after announcement which again is meaningless. We already noted with interest that to date, after two years of the SuperBuild project, only \$14 million has actually gone out the door; instead, it's been nothing but talk.

What we want and what we need are trade corridors that are going to expedite traffic across our borders because that, for us in Windsor and for Ontario, means jobs, means security.

The plan that my leader advanced is a \$100-million security plan: \$50 million to municipalities to deal with our increased costs. Our policing cost alone is going to have some kind of disadvantage for our local police budget.

These are concrete solutions, things the government should take care of, seriously looking at real solutions and not just espousing more mantra. It's time for some action and a Dalton McGuinty government is prepared to lead by example.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to enter the debate on the Liberal opposition day motion. Let me say at the outset that we will be supporting the resolution, but not without some serious reservations that I and a couple of my colleagues will be addressing as the afternoon unfolds.

The first one is the whole issue of \$100 million. The first concern we have is that it sounds rather arbitrary. It's a nice, round number and has a nice ring to it: \$100 million. Whether that is sufficient to meet the need or not remains to be seen. Although we're supporting this on the final vote, we're not entirely satisfied the plan is as well thought out as the proponents would have us believe.

Having said that, we also have a concern about where the money is coming from. We agree with the idea that infrastructure spending is crucial for a whole host of reasons, not the least of which is the underfunding of municipalities since this government came to power, the downloading that has put added pressure on local municipal budgets and their ability to maintain infrastructure maintenance programs, let alone to expand them where necessary. It's leaving municipalities, if we take money away from the infrastructure program, that much further behind, because quite frankly even the infrastructure program, SuperBuild, as it's being talked about—and by the way, we agree with the notion that a lot of this foot-dragging is because you're hoping to have these projects all teed up for the next election so that you can hold the photo ops and roll in with nice announcements and try to save whatever seats you can in the next go-round. We believe that is exactly what's going on.

But taking 10% of an inadequate amount to start with, if you look at it strictly from the point of view of a municipality's needs—and it doesn't take long, if you sit in on the pre-budget consultation process, to have the municipalities come in from all across Ontario as they speak to the needs they have—not just on the programs side, and on the programs side the pressures are strong enough, but if you start talking about the infrastructure side, every single municipality that comes in is in need of more and more investment, not public spending and make-work projects, but real investment that communities need to survive economically as well as to provide the quality of life this government says they want local governments to provide.

So we have a concern that \$100 million, 10% of an inadequate amount to start with, would be taken away and used in this fashion, recognizing that the proposed use is a valid one.

We think that to pay for any kind of security measures that are being taken as a result of the current world situation we find ourselves in, there is money there either by backing off on the accelerated corporate tax in-

creases—which, by the way, to the best of our knowledge require legislation that has not yet been tabled, so there's lots of latitude to adjust that to find the money necessary—or you've got the rainy day fund set aside, and I believe there's about \$1 billion there. Both of those would be better alternatives, in our opinion, than taking away from the importance of the infrastructure program.

Having said that, and those are our concerns, the notion that the provincial government has an obligation to assist municipalities is one that we wholeheartedly support.

1610

Certainly when we take a look at what's happening—I see my friend from Hamilton Mountain; our ridings abut one another. As we reflect on what's happening in Hamilton and we take a look at the number of, I grant you, hoaxes, but when we take a look at the number of calls that police and emergency response units are tending to as a result of potential terrorist threats that may be manifesting themselves in our hometown of Hamilton, we see that the cost is at some point going to cause some real, serious pressure on our police budgets as well as on our other municipal budgets, not the least of which would be public health, which is part and parcel of almost all these responses.

So municipalities need that help. They're still the front line. We can make all the speeches we want here. As wonderful as the OPP are—and nobody is going to say that more than me, as the former head of the OPP—the front-line folks are still in our communities and in our cities. It's going to be the Hamilton police department and the other emergency response units in Hamilton that are going to respond. It costs money, and it also takes personnel—police and other emergency workers—away from legitimate, real issues that are happening on the streets of Hamilton. But they cannot afford to ignore it. Who can ignore, in this climate, a 911 call about a potential anthrax threat? No police department I would support is going to ignore that.

I would like to show the members of the House examples from just one community, Hamilton: “Anthrax Scare Hits Hamilton; Anthrax Alarms Spread.” Bear in mind that nothing has happened yet in terms of there being a real, legitimate threat, but when you're in the business of emergency response, you don't sit back and reflect, “Do we think this is real or not?” You go out there. You be there. That's the job.

“Hamilton Prepared to Tackle Anthrax Threat.” That's great. That makes the citizens of Hamilton feel good. But understand it costs money to be prepared like this, money that municipalities, and in particular police budgets, don't have.

As of October 19, in an article in the Hamilton Spectator written by John Burman, police said that they had checked out reports of 20 suspicious letters, four of them requiring tests. Five days ago, the same reporter, John Burman, referred to police media relations officer Sergeant Maggie McKittrick, who said that the police at that point—as of five days ago—were responding to five

to seven reports of suspicious items a day. Again, in the context of talking about Ontario that may not sound like the world, but when you're talking about the number of police officers and other emergency response individuals who would be a part of this, that's a significant drain on an already stressed police and emergency response network of individuals.

So the notion the official opposition is putting forward that a lot of this money—whatever amount that might be—should go to municipalities is one we wholeheartedly embrace. Municipalities need the help, and in this case help means dollars. Expertise, that kind of advice, is needed, but I think that's already being provided, either at the federal level or at the international level, as we're hearing with the police chiefs from around the world meeting in Toronto this week. What local communities really need is some money.

I was pleased, and I give the official opposition credit for recognizing that at least 50% of the money—who knows, 50%, 40%, 60%, but at least the recognition that there's a partnership with municipalities, and that within those municipalities lies the initial response to protect airports. We have the John C. Munro International Airport in Hamilton. Without some help from this government, our municipality is going to have to find the money to provide the public part of the security—not the security that the private interests there have to provide. They have different responsibilities under federal legislation. In the times we're in now, we're talking about a different level of security and a different kind of security. It's going to be, at the end of the day, police, firefighters, ambulance, public health, emergency preparedness individuals, and all those folks are paid for overwhelmingly out of the municipal budget.

If this government is serious about ensuring that Ontario is ready, that we look ready and that Ontarians feel satisfied that our emergency services are ready, then there needs to be an injection of money, real support for our municipal partners. In the absence of that, while the announcements of the Premier today were helpful, that's not nearly enough.

I remind the members of the government again—and each one of you has your own city—that I'll bet these are not rare headlines, when you see things about anthrax scares. This is not fear-mongering. This is reflecting in this Parliament what's happening on the streets of our communities. In order to deal with these legitimate responses to potential threat, our municipal police and firefighters and ambulance and paramedics and public health and everyone involved in emergency response need our help. They need the help of the senior level of government, and I hope that the backbenchers would reflect more on the needs of their own hometowns rather than on the needs of their cabinet colleagues who are urging them to oppose this.

Last night we were debating partnerships between the provincial government and municipalities. Here's a chance to put your money where your mouth is. Here's a chance to say, "We are in partnership and here's how we

will show that partnership in a meaningful way: help our local emergency response units." You say you want to do it. You say you want to be partners with municipalities. You say you want to help with brownfields. You say a lot, but without it being backed up by something meaningful, in this case real money being invested, then that's all it is: words. That's not what the people of Ontario and certainly not the people of Hamilton want. They don't want words. They want to know that we're ready, and to be ready means that we're going to have to spend some money, be accountable for that money but spend it nonetheless.

That way, we've got real partnership. I say this as much as possible, Speaker, in a non-partisan way. When the emergencies happen—when September 11 happened, nobody was thinking as a Tory, a Liberal or a New Democrat. We were thinking as Hamiltonians, Ontarians, Canadians, members of the human race on this planet. Politics was the last thing on anybody's mind. As we prepare, or at least be as prepared as we can be, for the potential for future action, we should also be acting in a non-partisan fashion. That's what our constituents expect. That's what our constituents deserve.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Mr Speaker, I got a little carried away in the local discussion about the issues and everything else, so thank you very much. It is indeed a pleasure to speak about this motion.

I certainly want to echo the words of my colleagues from all sides of the House today in expressing concerns about the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and agreeing definitely, as you would agree, that our world has changed since then.

Regardless of political stripe, we all want to see a comprehensive plan that'll provide the best security possible for the people of Ontario in this new age, to live, to work, to pay minimum taxes and to raise our families.

I want to thank my colleague the member from Durham, who spoke on this motion earlier. This is a risky scheme put forth by the Liberals. They want to derail the SuperBuild projects that will energize this province. The Liberals are asking for \$1 billion in instant spending. The SuperBuild fund is a real commitment with real teeth, and projects are only chosen after rigorous examination, unlike shameless Liberal reversals. I do remember, Mr Speaker, as I'm sure you do and other members in this House, about Jean Chrétien's 1993 red book promise of more bridges and more infrastructure. Surprisingly, I don't remember driving on any new bridges lately. That reflects the Liberals' approach to picking a dollar figure—hopefully a big, nice round one, also called a boondoggle. I think it was the Liberal leader who said, "It's not a boondoggle, it's only \$3 billion," whatever that means. Our approach to investment is to assess the need and find the means, and that means finding the means not only from the government but also from the private sector.

1620

Capital spending needs careful studying. The SuperBuild funds are waiting for matching funds in many cases. As you would have seen in the last few months, we've taken the lead and we've promised \$3 billion in transit, but where is the federal government to match that? They're still deciding whether they want to play that game or not. They do want to play the verbal game but they don't want to put up the money where it's needed. David Collenette and the federal Liberals have broken their promise to invest in public transit. SuperBuild depends on partnerships to make big dreams come true. Unfortunately, our federal partners often disappoint us.

In any case, SuperBuild investments are in fact proceeding and they're proceeding very nicely. In my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale alone over \$24 million worth of highways and sewer improvements are underway.

Ontario's double cohort students who will occupy 73,000 brand new spaces in Ontario's colleges and universities would be very surprised to hear the Liberals malign the plans for SuperBuild. I've said before, Mr Speaker—I know you were here—that my own daughter, Sonja, is in grade 11 now and she's part of the double cohort. Along with not only the members but the parents whose kids are in that double cohort, I am quite concerned, and I've seen it from not only the government side but also talking to the principals and the presidents of the universities. I've been assured and I've assured myself after talking to both sides of the equation that there will be enough spaces when the year 2003 comes along.

We are proud of the significant changes that SuperBuild has made to the landscape of our province. In fact, the Ottawa area's share of this investment will be more than \$47 million, to create over 6,100 new student spaces. I'm sure Mr Dalton McGuinty would not want to deprive his own present and future neighbours of a place to live and learn, if he takes money away from that.

I invite Ontarians, because I'm sure as they're watching today they must be wondering, what is SuperBuild, how is it progressing? I want them to look at the SuperBuild Web site. Certainly they can access it through my own Web site, which is, as I said earlier in my statement, www.ramindergill.com.

As I said, SuperBuild is working just fine. We don't need the Liberals derailing the Ontario success story. We can compare Mr McGuinty's panicked reflex to the government's response. SuperBuild and Ontario security are both priorities of this government. It is irresponsible to say that they are in conflict. You would have seen that Premier Mike Harris was the first one to reassure Ontarians that we are very concerned about safety, to reassure the people concerned, to reassure people that some of the threats that might have come through after—to reassure the minorities. People were quite confused after September 11. He's had discussions with the church leaders, with the Muslim leaders to make sure that they have a place here, they are an important part of this

society and there should not be any security threat to any of the minorities, or anybody else, for that matter.

There is a difference between a fund for investment and a one-time spending spree. Most security costs are operational, requiring ongoing commitments. McGuinty's proposed binge will not meet future security needs. Therefore, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr McGuinty, doesn't even understand the difference between capital costs and operational costs. It just goes to show that they are and he is not up to the job.

On the other hand, we take the need for security very seriously. We've been on the forefront of the anti-terrorism response. We've also responded quickly to those in need. We've offered direct immediate financial assistance to those Ontario families torn by their loss in this tragedy. We were the first Canadian government to take such a step. We sent Ontario's chief coroner and other forensic experts to assist the team in New York City. I know firefighters from Brampton, as you heard before, were the first ones heeding the call of duty to go and assist their brothers and sisters in the New York tragedy. We have taken steps to make the province more secure.

We've engaged the services of two very respected experts, Norman Inkster and Lewis MacKenzie, to advise the government. We've created a special unit to help track down those who are in Ontario illegally. We manage these situations well and we take these situations very seriously. Just today we have announced more measures, more resources and a new rapid response unit to guard high-security facilities and a counterterrorism summit to help Ontario develop responses in the years to come. In none of these cases have we been playing politics. We are already doing what Mr McGuinty is proposing. He just wants to take the credit for it. He's trying to rebrand his party. But we know who Ontarians trust to keep this province safe and prosperous. When the economy is at stake or when security is at stake, the people of Ontario turn to the Harris government and they remember that Dalton McGuinty and the members in the opposition are just not up to the job.

Our efforts continue with the attention to health and safety. Ontario's chief medical officer has issued detailed alerts on symptoms and treatment of conditions caused by biological weapons, the specific facts on anthrax, protocols on all aspects of a bioterror response. These alerts have gone to all the major stakeholders. In fact, in January the medical officer issued a memo on anthrax and public health. This memo was sent to all 37 local medical officers of health all over Ontario. This was done long before the September 11 attacks because this is a prudent and security-conscious government.

Additionally, the Ontario government is working with Health Canada on all bioterror-related contingencies like the provision of vaccines. Of course, we have to be very certain that we make ourselves clear that there's no misunderstanding, as in the case of the federal government, when we deal with Health Canada. Our bioterror response has many aspects. It includes the involvement of health officers, Emergency Measures Ontario, hospitals

and local emergency services. We take our responsibility very seriously, like I said.

This motion is asking us to do what is already being done. Like all Liberal ideas, it says spend first, think later. We don't need a fancy name like Ontario security fund to protect Ontarians. The people of Ontario deserve a government that's strong and not screeching. Instead of playing shell games with promises and taxpayers' dollars, we are acting immediately and firmly to protect the people and the economy of Ontario. Needless to say, we will not be supporting this motion.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): You know that a government is adrift and spent and tired and getting tired when it cannot even fulfill a law-and-order agenda that but 10 years ago it called its own. Today we have a great opportunity for the people of Ontario to consider on the one hand the McGuinty security plan and on the other hand this announcement from the government of Ontario, which arrived, I want you to know, in this humongous envelope. This is what I received as a critic to the Attorney General in terms of a statement. It came in this big envelope. I thought maybe it was going to be a big announcement, so I opened it up and out came a little piece of paper, and I can tell you after reading it that the envelope didn't justify the contents of this announcement, which could have, frankly, been put on a small Post-it note.

1630

On the one hand, Dalton McGuinty is calling for \$100 million to be set aside in a new Ontario security fund to pay for security improvements and to help municipalities improve emergency response plans. To give you an example in the riding of St Paul's, right in the heart of the riding the second-largest water reservoir in the largest city in Canada was subject to a break-in, and there was great concern as to what might have happened to this water supply. It turns out the water is safe. It turns out that in fact the water supply wasn't touched and that the mystery liquid found near the reservoir was in fact not toxic.

When I asked the Solicitor General of the day to deploy additional police officers so that we could at least, during this time of urgency, restore personal and economic security to Ontarians, and in particular with respect to this event the people of St Paul's, the Solicitor General told me to stop fearmongering. I say to the Solicitor General, to the Attorney General and all ministers over there who have accused the opposition of fearmongering to take a close look at your announcement and ask yourself whether or not you in fact are guilty of stepping up the rhetorical agenda at the same time as your agenda of action remains frozen in a paralysis of analysis.

The Attorney General says that they're going to vigorously prosecute hoaxes, bomb threat hoaxes, to the full extent of the law. Well, what were you doing before this announcement? He refers to this as an announcement. The Attorney General says he's going to create a counterterrorism task force of crown attorneys. Well, I certainly agree that specializing attorneys on this par-

ticular task is important. But there are no new crowns announced here. There's nothing new here.

Lastly, there's this incredible announcement with respect to asking the federal government for a new Criminal Code offence for uttering bomb threats. Well, surely the Attorney General knows that section 264.1(1) makes it an offence to utter a bomb threat and that alternatively, under section 430 of the Criminal Code, it would be an offence to utter a bomb threat. He knows that this is already an offence, which means that this announcement is nothing less than a hoax.

When we asked the government of the day to restore security for water reservoirs, nuclear plants and water treatments, this government did nothing. When we called on the government to close birth certificate registration loopholes, the minister laughed it off. When we called for the government to in fact implement antiterrorist amendments to Bill 30 on October 22, this government voted those amendments down. Now we find out in a re-announcement that it's going to try to do exactly what we have been calling on the government to do, which, again, was referred to by the other side as fearmongering.

Lastly, when we asked the government of the day to sign on to the national counterterrorism plan, the Solicitor General admitted that in fact the government had not done so and provided no indication as to when that would happen.

It's time for the people of Ontario to understand that when it comes to providing personal and economic security, the McGuinty plan is the answer, not this hoax of an announcement from the government today.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I will be speaking to this matter for as much time as I'm allowed, because my colleague, the member for Timmins-James Bay, Mr Bisson, wants to speak to it, as you've heard from Mr Christopherson. We are eager to debate this resolution. We support it; however, not uncritically.

One of my real fears, one of my real concerns, is seizing on the, yes, tragedy of September 11 and responding to it in such a way that it amplifies and extends its impact, in other words, playing into the hands of terrorists. Let's understand what the goal of terrorists is. The goal of terrorists is to create fear, to generate disruption, to shut down the day-to-day operation of a society, be it a community or a nation or a continent. I say to members in this assembly that we should be very, very cautious about doing and saying things in response to September 11 that in fact make us not only victims of the terrorists, but in a perverse way almost collaborators, because we're doing what they want us to do, because they want us to amplify and generate the sense of fear.

What we need is courage, and we need a united sense of resistance and condemnation of the type of violence that's inherent in terrorist activity. We have to let terrorists know that, no, they cannot hijack our communities, our country, our continent; they cannot hijack our civility. We have to let terrorists know that they cannot hijack the freedoms that we value in this country that have made this country so attractive to so many people for so many generations and decades. We have to let the

terrorists know that they will not divide us by provoking more racism than what we have had to endure to date.

That's why I say I believe all of us have to and should be incredibly cautious when we approach these matters. That's why I joined in this debate and I join in cautious and not uncritical support of the resolution, the motion put forward today. I'm very concerned that it might have as one of its motives seizing upon the tragic events of September 11 and, in a peculiar way, exploiting those in a manner that would make the terrorists pleased.

I was interested in the announcement by the Premier earlier today, because it's impossible to discuss this resolution without the comments of the Premier. I was shocked and disappointed that the Premier today, when he rightly acknowledged our police as among those front-line forces that help make us safer and more secure, be it against terrorists or any other type of criminal, I was shocked and amazed that the government today, the Premier, in announcing its funding, didn't consider firefighters, those women and men who are there on the front lines in my own communities and in each and every one of yours and who risk their lives and who perform heroic deeds on a daily basis in this province, just as they did in New York City on September 11.

Just as the Premier and other members in this Legislative Assembly might be concerned about the capacity of our police forces, understaffed and under-resourced as they have been now for around seven years, to confront and deal with some of these catastrophic scenarios, we should be equally concerned about the capacities of our incredibly understaffed and under-resourced firefighting services, our incredibly under-resourced and ill-treated paramedics, and indeed, in terms of what is the reality of the assaults that confront people in communities in the year 2001, the betrayal of public health services in community after community that have found themselves with services increasingly downloaded on to them, working with fewer and fewer dollars, cutting to the bone and then being told by this government that they have to somehow tighten their belt, when tightening that belt means putting people at risk on a daily basis.

Mr Bradley is going to be speaking to this motion. He should know that I prevailed upon Mr Bryant not to use all of the balance of time for the Liberal caucus, because I'm confident that Mr Bradley, in speaking to this motion, will remind—

The Acting Speaker: I'd just like to remind the member that we need to use riding names, not proper names, in this place.

1640

Mr Kormos: Mr Bradley from the riding of St Catharines. I'm confident that he will raise, as I am going to now, what SuperBuild has meant to the people of Niagara region and the communities of Niagara region: \$39 million announced not once but indeed at least twice, possibly thrice, and after the expiration of a year or a year and a half plus, not a single penny has flowed. The audacity and arrogance of the Premier to stand up today and somehow talk about new funds to keep Ontario safer when Niagara region and the communities that are part of

it had serious commitments to their own infrastructures, very much a part of maintaining the health and safety of those communities, be it water systems, be it sewage systems, be it safe and adequate roadways—that's how you keep communities safe. Today, after denying the people of Niagara region and those communities and that regional municipality even a penny—not a cent, not a nickel, not a dime of that \$39 million has flowed—the people in Niagara and the residents of those communities that make up Niagara region are becoming increasingly concerned about their public safety, about the quality of their drinking water systems, about the quality of roadways, about the quality and extent of the resources that are being made available to municipal fire services, about the quality of police communications and the technology that police in Niagara should have available to them but don't because of the scarce resources available to the regional municipality, flowing 100% from the enhanced and incredible weight and burden of the downloading on the municipality.

I have no qualms about supporting a proposition that there be some money from SuperBuild to the tune, yes, of \$100 million freed up immediately. Lord knows we've waited long enough for the meagre amounts that have been promised to date. The gross mismanagement of SuperBuild to date on the part of this government, certainly as it applies to Niagara region as I know it applies to Sudbury and other communities across the province, has already put people at risk—it has. For the Premier today to talk about \$4.5 million—look, resources appreciated for the Ontario Provincial Police.

Niagara is a special part of the province. It's a border community. A whole lot of the stuff we've been talking about since September 11, the cops down in Niagara know about already. They've got two major border crossings. They've got Niagara Falls, they've got Fort Erie and indeed they've got the Lewiston-Queenstown Bridge. The Niagara Regional Police are actively engaged in dealing with a whole lot of the phenomena that occur as a result of our being part of one of the largest border crossings in all Canada. We know all about organized crime—drug trafficking and other activities that organized crime is attracted to and that involve international activity. We know all about it, and our police have carried more than their share of the load as a result of not only knowing about it but being confronted with it on a daily basis. Our courts know all about it, and our crown attorneys' offices know all about it. I put to you that the small amount of what is one-time-only funding today will do precious little to alleviate the incredible burden being carried by the Niagara Regional Police force with their exceptional and special policing duties already existing down in Niagara region.

The omission by the Premier of the firefighters, the failure on the part of the Premier to include firefighters as recipients of some enhanced funding because of the special new responsibilities—not just because of September 11 but certainly brought to our attention as a result of September 11. I appreciate and acknowledge and agree that prior to September 11, we in North

America, blessed as we have been by literally centuries of being untouched by this level of violence, felt ourselves I suppose immune from it. But the world has changed, and I put to you that as much as it was changed for North Americans by September 11, it was changed prior to that by Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma City in the bombing there and the incredible catastrophe and loss of life. This was not part of our reality. This wasn't part of our sense of what could or should be anticipated in our culture in North America. I put to you that the need for enhanced caution and to give our front-line emergency services the proper tools to deal with these catastrophes precedes even September 11. It's not a pleasant thing to have to acknowledge, but let's put this in its fair and accurate perspective.

I believe that, yes, our water systems should be secure, not only from the prospect of any sort of vandal or criminal, of anybody of any criminal ilk invading them and violating their integrity and infecting the water supply of a community, but secure in terms of being as high-tech, as efficient, as modern and as safe as the engineering will permit, and similarly with our sewage systems and with our capacity via our public health departments and, I dare say, our whole health care system, our hospitals.

Let me put this to you. We now have in Niagara region venues, places—the Niagara Falls casino is one, for instance; the Fort Erie Racetrack is another—where there are, I presume, thousands of people at any given point in time. Let's not dwell on the September 11 phenomenon, but on anything that happened before that that has simply enlightened us as to the enhanced capacity of human beings to do things we thought human beings could never do. But those venues, should there be a catastrophe at any of them, would generate a load—we're talking about personal trauma. Our emergency wards in Niagara, be it Welland County General, be it the two hospitals in St Catharines—one already crippled by this government, Hotel Dieu—are already crowded, lined up on to the street with the day-to-day events that happen in people's lives, never mind a catastrophe at any one of those venues in Niagara that attract and have in them at any given point in time huge numbers of people.

I put to you that an honest, sincere, genuine effort to upgrade those services in response to the potential for disaster that this new millennium poses would have gone far beyond mere millions of dollars for some very specific areas of policing—I want to speak to that in just a minute—and would have recognized the relevance of other front-line emergency services: firefighters, paramedics, public health departments, and our hospitals and our health care system in general.

Quite frankly, a fast-tracking of Ms Churley's Safe Drinking Water Act would go a long way to securing our water supply systems. Was it only September 11 that awakened us to the catastrophes that can occur when infrastructure is not attended to, when it doesn't receive appropriate resources either to maintain it or to upgrade it or to ensure it's operating properly? Was Walkerton not a catastrophe? Surely it was. Small-town Ontario, where people die and thousands of others are sick from drinking

the tap water, and yet nothing in the Premier's announcement today addressed that reality for Ontario and Ontarians in the year 2001.

For this government to make the announcement it did today, this paltry announcement, in the shadow of its termination here in the province of Ontario of the jobs, the firing of five internationally respected biohazard scientists—one of them, Dr Martin Preston, having developed the method for fingerprinting E coli 0157. We're all familiar with what that is now, aren't we?

1650

Another, Dr Ching Lo, chaired the 1999 LAB Ontario conference, Terrorism and the laboratory of the future, an expert called upon by the government to work on the West Nile Virus project; Catherine Smitka, who received the Amethyst Award from the Premier for groundbreaking work on infectious diseases; Dr Norma Harnett, noted expert on antibiotic-resistant superbugs; Dr Stephan Wang, an expert on chemical toxins. The province of Ontario fired this expertise, terminated their jobs. They were Ontario's own. They were made-in-Ontario front-line experts, internationally acknowledged, who made our communities secure against any of the catastrophes we're contemplating during the course of this debate. This government, this Premier, fired them, sent them packing.

I recall the response of the Minister of Health when confronted with the tragedy that the firing of these people created for the people of Ontario. He said, "Oh, well, we can access the international centre for disease control in Atlanta." When we called the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, they said, "Are you kidding? We can't deal with our own backlog. We're not about to do Ontario's work for them."

This Premier, this government, fired five of the world's leading scientists, who were dealing very specifically with the biohazards, the toxins, the superbugs that are very much a part of the sad reality of life in the year 2001, whether we're dealing with terrorism or whether we're dealing with the natural catastrophes that can confront us or the type of catastrophes, the ilk of catastrophe, that can flow from this government's abandonment of Ministry of the Environment services—slashing staff, destroying the role of inspectors so that there simply aren't inspectors there to inspect the water we expect to be able to drink.

Earlier today I was compelled to raise in this House again the tragic death of Robyn Lafleur down in Port Robinson at the Esquire firecracker factory. They were dealing with explosives—gunpowder. The coroner's inquest was just held last week, where a senior official from this government's Ministry of Labour said it wasn't the job of the Ministry of Labour or its officials to ensure safe workplaces. That was the unrefuted evidence that was given, sworn. That was the evidence that was part of the explanation of why that woman lost her life in the most tragic of ways. Further evidence was that that factory hadn't been inspected or looked at by an official for four years prior to Robyn's being slaughtered in that same workplace. And the manager of that plant, in her

own evidence, acknowledged she had never read, never cracked the binding of, the occupational health and safety literature she had, and that she made up the rules when it came to plant workplace safety as her whim moved her on any given day.

If we're going to talk about making Ontario safe for Ontarians—and we should be talking about it. We should be talking about it as a result of September 11, but we should also be speaking about it as a result of the six years before September 11, 2001. I'm not in any way trying to trivialize or minimize the catastrophic nature of the September 11 attacks on the United States; it would be just impossible to do that. But let's understand that an evil act done under whatever guise is still the same evil act with all the incredible risks inherent in it for the public of any given community. Here of course we're speaking about members of this provincial community, as we should, Ontarians who deserve far better than they've gotten from this government.

You know, Speaker, that New Democrats have been very concerned about this government's failure to very specifically address the safety of people in this province who have become the targets of haters and hate-mongers—very specifically about those people. I'm speaking now of women who, as Muslims, wear garb, the head covering or the hijab, and who make themselves what I have called visible Muslims, because of course Muslims come in all colours, all ethnicities; we know that. But it's that very specific community of Muslim women, old and young, who are now prisoners in their own homes because of their fear of walking the streets of their own communities because they will not abandon their faith, notwithstanding the intense level of fear they have about being threatened or, yes, attacked.

We are incredibly concerned about the prospect of ethnic or racial profiling in the effort to hunt down terrorists.

We in the New Democratic Party are incredibly concerned about the prospect of the attack on the traditional rights and liberties of Canadians. We wish there were far closer scrutiny of the current amendments to the Criminal Code that are being contemplated and that are close to being passed in the federal Parliament, because once again, to put ethnic communities at risk of attack or even put them in positions of fear, to attack all people's civil liberties and rights, rights that are an inherent part of not just being Canadian, but of standing on Canadian soil—I won't talk about the rights of Canadian citizens; no, those rights that are Canadian rights are the rights of every person who steps foot on Canadian soil. The diminishment of requirements for due process in the zeal for seeking out real or imagined terrorists creates risk and fear as well.

The resolution before the Legislature is a modest one. We comment, I suppose inevitably, on the arbitrariness of the numbers, but we also acknowledge that there is some urgency about flowing SuperBuild funds out into the communities of Ontario, because this government has failed to do it. This government has promised it over and over again but has failed to do it. We acknowledge and

insist that the flow of those funds has everything to do with public safety: public safety in the context of international terrorism, public safety in the context of government negligence and public safety in the context of a government that has stripped the role of supervisory and regulatory bodies within any number of ministries, putting whole communities at risk here in Ontario.

Those monies should flow and flow properly. Not only should our police forces be given more resources to confront crime and criminals, but our firefighters need those resources too, as do our paramedics, as do our public health departments, as do our hospitals and as do all those people who are eager to pursue the goal of public and community safety in Ontario.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): Let me begin by emphasizing that this government takes the security of Ontario very seriously. Public safety is and always has been our number one priority. Following the tragic events in the United States, we made a commitment to ensure that Ontario is both better protected from terrorism and continues to be an open and tolerant society. This government always lives up to its commitments.

Let me tell you how my friend Minister Turnbull, the member for Don Valley West, and his Ministry of the Solicitor General are fulfilling those obligations.

First of all, Premier Harris announced \$4.5 million for the Ontario Provincial Police to establish a special provincial response team comprised of highly trained and specially equipped officers. This will be a rapid response unit, should Ontario be threatened or attacked by terrorists.

We are also establishing an anti-terrorism unit at the cost of \$3.5 million. This unit will work in partnership with federal, provincial and municipal police services. It will conduct multijurisdictional intelligence operations targeting individuals and/or organized groups involved in terrorism.

1700

We are also providing \$1 million to make sure our front-line emergency workers have the necessary equipment to respond to chemical, biological and other kinds of attacks.

Finally, the Premier announced that the Ministry of the Solicitor General will host a counterterrorism summit to find better ways to combat terrorism.

These initiatives are in addition to the earlier steps taken by this government.

Following the tragic events of September 11, Premier Harris has named two eminent Canadians as security advisers. They are retired Major General Lewis MacKenzie and former RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster. These two men have extensive and distinguished careers nationally and internationally. Major General Mackenzie served Canada courageously for 33 years in our military. Among his contributions to world peace and security was his mission as chief of staff of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia in 1992. Major General Mackenzie commanded the troops of 31 nations in Sector Sarajevo. Mr Inkster has a long and distinguished career in policing. He served as commissioner

of the RCMP from 1987 to 1994. He was also the president of Interpol from 1992 to 1994. He continues to serve as Interpol's honorary past president.

Furthermore, we are advocating as strongly as possible that we need a North American security perimeter and new ways to guard against the entry of criminals and terrorists.

The Harris government has also pledged our cooperation to international intelligence and law enforcement officials. But that is only the beginning.

We have asked for a comprehensive review of Emergency Measures Ontario and all aspects of emergency response. This review is focusing on identifying, minimizing and eliminating risks, improving emergency plans and training, ensuring communications and notification networks are up to date, and drafting recovery and assistance plans for communities affected by emergencies. We will be introducing legislation that, if passed by this House, would require all municipalities to maintain emergency response plans and to train their employees.

Let me remind you how well Emergency Measures Ontario responded to the tragedy in the United States. EMO's provincial operations centre swung into action within minutes of the first plane striking the World Trade Center. It remained at full activation until the situation in the United States quietened. Although there was never an emergency here, EMO monitored the American situation and coordinated Ontario's response to it. It set up telephone donation lines to deal with the outpouring of offers of assistance. With the Ministry of Transportation and the OPP, it coordinated additional assistance along the highways and border crossings, as well as assisting local police services. And it established a Web site to help ease traffic congestion by providing better and faster information about conditions at border crossings.

The head of public safety in Ontario and Ontario's chief coroner, Dr James Young, went to New York City, along with the deputy chief coroner, Dr Barry McLellan. They worked as medical liaisons between the Canadian consulate in New York and local emergency relief officials. They also provided both important information and emotional support for the families of Ontario victims of the World Trade Center disaster.

But that is only the beginning. For the last six years this government has dedicated itself to ensuring that the citizens of this province are safe. Years before the tragic events of September 11 this government followed through on its commitment to put 1,000 new police officers on the streets of Ontario. As well, the new adequacy standards regulation came into effect in January of this year. It is now mandatory that all police services in Ontario develop an emergency plan that addresses the roles and responsibilities of members of the police service. The government will build on the provisions of this regulation with regard to municipal emergency plans and training in the wake of the events of September 11.

In closing, let me reiterate that no one takes safety and security in Ontario more seriously than the Harris government. Public safety is the number one priority of

this government. We are committed to making sure Ontario is both better protected from terrorism and that it continues to be a tolerant and open society. You have our word that we will continue to work with all levels of government to strengthen the safety and security of our province.

I ask every member of this House to work with the government during these trying and difficult times. We will all need to remember that the public needs reassurance and not fearmongering.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I am rather disappointed and in fact tired, along with many of my constituents and the citizens of Ontario, with the bickering that goes on, particularly when there's a crisis. I'm not about to stand here today and put down anything the government has attempted to do as a result of the events that took place on September 11.

We're asked often, as an opposition, to be constructive, and what is being suggested by Dalton McGuinty's motion today, that we establish an Ontario security fund, is that it will complement what the government is doing. We feel there are some areas the government hasn't stepped into, and one was mentioned earlier today by the member from Niagara Centre, and that is the firefighters. They were on the front line and have been for some 48 days in New York. Our firefighters have gone to help and assist, and yet there's nothing in today's announcement for that. This would complement that because half of the fund we're suggesting would be invested in municipalities.

I suggest, as well as firefighters and upgrading their equipment and readiness, our water plants. I thought we would have learned from Walkerton that there's much more we can do to make our water plants more secure. We had an example in St Paul's riding where there was no security and the perimeter of a water plant was breached. Thankfully it wasn't a serious one. We can help our municipalities increase the security and the early warning detection of any problem in our water systems by taking some of this money we're suggesting be made available to our municipalities.

It would also assist in the area of public health, making sure our public health services are ready for that day we hope never comes again, but that they are ready and can make us feel more secure because they are.

One other area I'd like to mention is emergency measures. Each municipality is supposed to have and will be required to prepare an emergency measures plan, which will cost money. Beyond that, not only will the plan cost them money but the ability to carry out the plan will also require some funding. There was nothing about that in the announcement today, but this fund we're suggesting be established would assist in that.

All I'm asking the government to do today is to take this motion in the spirit in which it's given. It's an attempt on our part to add some constructive measures to what the government is already doing. Just this once I think the people of Ontario would like to see the government of the day accept some measure of support for what they're trying to do.

1710

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I want to indicate my strong support for this motion this afternoon. It's compelling, reasonable and constructive, and I think many of the arguments that have been advanced in its favour are very good arguments.

First of all, there is an opportunity to advance some infrastructure programs. The reason is—the member for Niagara Centre mentioned this—we have met with our local elected representatives who have said, “Where on earth is the SuperBuild money?” What I've said to them is, “SuperBuild is simply all those grants you used to get.”

They came from various ministries and they were based on the needs and requirements of the community. I can remember, as Minister of the Environment, that the environment staff would come forward with a list of recommendations—it didn't matter whether they were in government ridings, opposition ridings or anything political about them—of what the needs were in terms of the environment and the applications made. They would be processed on a timely basis. The program would be implemented. Jobs would be created and the environment would benefit.

Now we've got this SuperBuild program, which is constipated somewhere in the apparatus of this government. It is to be controlled politically, quite obviously now, and second, it is to have its announcements made as close to the election date as possible. That's what it's all about.

Dalton McGuinty, in his suggestion to the government, has said, “You have these programs that are on the books, these projects that are right there ready to proceed. People have been making application. People have been asking for this kind of investment on the part of the government. Why not proceed with those now when we have a lull in the economy, a downturn in the economy?”

The government instead has said it's going to give a tax gift to the corporations of this province of over \$2 billion, a Christmas present, if you will, for the corporations. That, I think in the view of most economists, will make virtually no difference, whether you accelerate that or indeed whether you give that particular tax cut. Instead we should be investing that money in infrastructure and the needs of the province, in things such as health care.

I saw the finance ministers in Ottawa and there they were, large as life, asking the federal government for more money, on the one hand demanding that the federal government, as my friend the member for Brockville would, spend more money on security, police and things of that nature, and at the same time you have the finance minister saying, “Please give Ontario more money for health care,” and the finance minister of British Columbia too.

If they have money for these huge tax cuts, surely they have money for health care. I can only come to the conclusion, and unfortunately nobody in the media down in Ottawa asked this question of the finance ministers—I wanted them to; they didn't. I would like them to ask the question, “Don't you really want that money to pay for

your tax cuts? You don't want that money to spend on social programs, on health care or education. You want it to pay for tax cuts that are going to cost your treasury dearly and force you into a deficit position.”

I think we have to put that on the table, and I challenge the Ottawa press gallery, next time we have a gaggle of provincial ministers down there, to ask that particular question.

I think our suggestion that there be greater security at nuclear plants and water plants and other facilities is addressed by this.

I believe that the Conservative government today is preoccupied with a leadership campaign and is not dealing as assiduously as it should with the issues of the day.

I think our program is a reasonable one. I'm glad to see we've had some very constructive suggestions, and I implore members of the government to accept those suggestions and implement them. Of course, I will be the first to applaud if they do so.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I'm surprised more members aren't taking the opportunity to speak on this opposition motion today, because I think it is a very important motion that has come forward by Dalton McGuinty, the leader of the Liberal Party, after the events of September 11, which I know shocked everybody around the world, let alone us in Ontario who have been very close to the events that have happened in Washington and New York. I know that while we need to get on with our lives, be vigilant but still get on with our lives, it's very hard sometimes to change the focus from the bombardment we get from the constant 24-hour newscasts that we have on these news networks and all the events that are happening.

It's important that we have strong leadership right now from our governments, and that is the effect that this motion is trying to accomplish by bringing this forward right now, to say that the Ontario government needs to establish this Ontario security fund. This fund needs to be activated immediately in order to allow not only our provincial security forces but also our municipal emergency operations, the municipal police forces, to have the resources required to do the job not only of the day-to-day emergency work that we've been used to up till now, but also to try to anticipate and to react to some of the unthinkable things we've seen over the last little while. This is going to be very important.

As we know, across Ontario there never has been a mandated emergency service delivery at the local level. We have let the municipalities decide whether they want an emergency service plan. It's up to their discretion, and we've never mandated that. I think we now would all agree in this House that it's important that all our municipalities be prepared for the absolutely unthinkable.

Who would have thought before September 11 that people would have commandeered airplanes, fully loaded with fuel and passengers, and crashed them into buildings? Nobody would have imagined that. Now we see the anthrax scare in the United States: in New Jersey, Washington and now New York City. Again, this is something that we need to be prepared for. We know that not only is

that a threat but that other biohazards can be used as a weapon. It's sad for us to acknowledge that the world has changed, but that's the sad reality: the world has changed, and we have to be ready for that. To do that, we have to make sure that our municipal partners have the resources for that. We can't continue to download responsibilities to our municipalities without giving them the resources to do the job.

As we've seen in the United States, much of the reaction to these emergencies does happen at the local level, and that's right and proper. While national and provincial agencies can obviously help oversee and offer some expertise that the local levels cannot provide, the very initial first response happens at the local level. We have to make sure, as representatives of the provincial government, that our municipalities have those resources to respond, to react in a timely and effective manner to all of these potential disasters. We have to be ready for this. We have to basically bite the bullet and say that monies are going to have to be earmarked from the general revenues for these new responsibilities that unfortunately have been foisted upon us. This is going to be our task, and we have to make sure that these responsibilities can be carried out, especially at the local level where, as we know, from all the downloading that has happened through the last six years of the Harris government, the resources are stretched to a minimum. Our municipalities are having a difficult time trying to manage all the responsibilities they have. And since September 11, we have a whole new set of responsibilities that these municipalities are going to have to potentially face, and they must be ready for that.

1720

Another aspect of this motion that I think is very important is that these events have also caused an incredible ripple effect through the economic viability of North America and around the world. This is the time when governments can step up to the plate by investing in many of the needs we have out there, particularly a lot of the infrastructure needs across the province. This is very important. Some immediate work that we know is out there that governments and our municipalities require—we've got to make sure these needs are met.

I'm pleased to stand in my place today to talk about this. Of course I'll be supporting this motion, and I ask all members of the House to do so.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I'm very pleased to rise in support of the resolution put forward by my leader, Dalton McGuinty. It's a resolution that makes a great deal of sense, and a plan that makes a great deal of sense. If you look at the horrific tragedy that occurred on September 11, which other members have spoken to—just unthinkable, unbelievable acts of barbarism—we as elected leaders have a responsibility to respond appropriately and in a fashion that is going to make sure Ontarians are safe.

What we've had from this government to date is nothing more than rhetoric: a few feel-good announcements but very little concrete action to deal with a threat to this province. What our leader has put forward is a

plan that makes a great deal of sense, a plan that is going to help stimulate the economy of this province, unlike the government across the way. They're basically obsessed with corporate tax cuts. They think the answer to every problem is simply to give their corporate friends more money and that's going to have some sort of trickle-down effect. The reality is, that is not the answer today. The answer today—the plan that Dalton McGuinty has talked about—will lead to a much more direct stimulus to the economy and our infrastructure that has been put in place.

The government says this going to derail the infrastructure program—the SuperBuild fund—that the government has put in place. The reality is that the SuperBuild fund has been nothing more than a political slush fund for this government. You announced \$3.4 billion. You should have spent \$1 billion by now, and all you've spent is \$14 million. Here's an opportunity: instead of playing politics with this and having the Premier or the new Premier, whomever the government picks, run around the province three months before an election and re-announce projects that have been announced, our plan would immediately put this money into those communities, advance the infrastructure programs and ensure that instead of playing politics, we're doing something positive and constructive to help Ontarians deal with this very serious problem we're facing today.

This resolution also addresses a real plan to help municipalities. We all talk about a municipal response plan. We all talk about the fact that to some degree municipalities have a plan in place—some more than others. The reality is that any plan that was in place before September 11 has to be dramatically different after the incidents of September 11. Those plans would never have imagined the type of horror we saw on September 11. As municipalities work to develop new plans, it's also going to cost a lot more money. This province, this government, has a responsibility to ensure that municipalities across Ontario have the budget in place, have the ability to properly respond to emergency situations.

At a meeting the other night, I was talking to our chief of police, Ken Robertson, and I discussed with him what is the ability to respond to these types of emergency situations? He said, "Frankly, we need more financial help. We need specialized provincial help. We need more resources at the municipal level, which have to come from the province, to deal with this."

We believe the Dalton McGuinty plan, the Ontario security plan, is something that should be adopted, should be moved, should be fast-tracked by this government. We think it will stimulate the economy. We think it will give people a sense of security to some degree, although we can never again be secure the way we were before September 11, regardless of what governments do. But it does give people a sense of security knowing that something is being done.

We hope this government will do the right thing today, will stop playing politics with this fund and will help the people of Ontario in some concrete and direct way the people of Ontario in regard to this.

I hope we support the resolution today. I congratulate our leader, Dalton McGuinty, for a bold and visionary plan here that will address the issues we have in Ontario today.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to speak, but I want to start by complimenting and praising my leader, Dalton McGuinty, for being a leader. The difference that we're hearing from one side to this side is the fact that we have some true leadership. That means taking some decisive actions, and those actions are explained several times by my colleagues on this side.

What I want to do is speak to the people and let them know that there are some things you're going to hear from that side, there are things you're going to hear from this side, and it's started. Because starting today—actually, it's been going on a little bit earlier—they are doing their little political game of branding. They're going to come out and say the things they've been saying since 1999 because they paid their lobbyists, they paid all of their PR people and their political minds to come up with, "What do we do and how much money do we spend in order to win the election," in order to tell us that our leader isn't a leader? That's what they've done. They spend millions of dollars doing that.

So here's what they're going to say from here until the next election. They're going to say Dalton McGuinty is not up to the job. They're going to say—and here's the key one. On top of that they're going to add this new one that they've now got the new spin on: "Be careful because they're now going to go into the tax-and-spend mode." That's what they're going to say, and I just want the people to know that that's all you're going to hear from that side.

Now, let's take a look at the idea—I want to make it clear that there are two more things we need to do right now, and that is to get rid of the spin from that side that they've spent all these gazillions of dollars from SuperBuild. Let's review for you the exact information that's available on anyone's Web site, even on that side.

The name of the fund is SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships. Its purpose is to invest in infrastructure and environmental projects, water and sewer, public transit and urban centres. The date it was announced: May 2000, in their budget. Their funding commitment: \$1 billion over five years. Funds that should have been spent in 2000-01 and 2001-02, for that two-year period: \$400 million. We did our homework, and guess what? How much have they spent of that to date? Four million dollars.

Ontario small town and rural infrastructure, OSTAR, to invest in rural infrastructure and economic development: when was it announced? May 2000 budget. How much funding committed? Six hundred million dollars over five years. Funds that should have been spent in the two-year period mentioned before: \$240 million. How much spent to date? Nine million.

What about sports, culture and tourism partnerships, the SCTP program to build and enhance sports, culture and tourism facilities? May 2000 budget: \$300 million

over five years; \$120 million supposedly spent in the two-year period. How much spent? One million dollars.

Public transit investments, expanding public transit structure, September 2001: \$3 billion over 10 years. How much should have been spent? Three hundred million. To date: zero.

And it goes on and on and on. So that takes that myth and blows it apart.

Just today, firefighters across the province are now starting to find out their municipalities don't have the funds, and the fire marshal is threatening to come in because they're not spending money because the government is not giving them the money to do so. Not one word spoken today by the Premier of this province on how he's going to invest in the firefighters of the province of Ontario.

Here's something else. Two more units created; we now have 24 special units of the OPP, not counting the special units in all municipal forces. Here are some of the units that are already in existence in the OPP: the victims' support unit, the physical surveillance unit, the photo surveillance unit, the geographic profiling unit, the criminal profiling unit, the field services unit. They also have an anti-rackets unit and many, many other units that could do the job.

Quite frankly, we have to be careful to say to this government, "Let's make sure you're talking with everybody else. This is a collective idea."

Finally, last but not least, emergency measures. The Solicitor General has a report on his desk that's been there since June 2001—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?
1730

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'm pleased to speak to this motion. In response to the motion that was made by the leader of the official opposition, if I read it correctly, what he says is that he wants to establish an Ontario security fund—I thought that was a little funny, because we have an Ontario Securities Commission; it could be really confusing, but nevertheless—with half of the funds being directed to security projects at the municipal level. I'm a little puzzled, because there really wasn't much beyond that. If you're going to have leadership, I think you should do it from the provincial level.

This government has not waited for the opposition to come forward with a vague proposal but in fact has actually made specific commitments, beginning immediately after the disastrous days of September. We started out within a few days of the announcement of help being needed and said that we would commit \$3 million to immediately help the families of victims from Ontario that were injured or died in the attack in New York City.

More recently, of course, we've just completed most of the bill on vital statistics and clamping down on the issuance of additional birth certificates. I know that in fact there was an amendment to the bill in committee the other day from the member for Brant, which was an excellent amendment to the bill, and we were very

pleased to adopt it as part of the bill. Together, we now have, I think, a bill coming back to the House that is good, that is strong and that all parties will be comfortable working with in making sure that people do not create or use additional birth certificates to obtain false identification for nefarious purposes.

But I want to remind people of the commitments that the Premier made in his comments earlier today and some that are in fact coming over the next several days from various ministries in very specific ways. The \$4.5 million to create a new rapid response unit of the OPP: This new unit will be specially equipped to combat terrorist threats and provide protection for our nuclear facilities and also most particularly for our water treatment plants. That is together with the other unit that the Premier announced, that will be looking at a special squad of front-line police officers with the necessary equipment to respond to chemical, biological and other kinds of attacks.

We know there are two kinds of biological attacks that can take place. Basically they're either airborne or they are communicated through either water or other substances. The reality is that probably the easiest way to engage in some sort of chemical or biological attack is through our water system, and therefore it's clearly identified as a paramount area of protection that we require.

We aren't doing this just now in response to the attacks of September 11 and the threat of anthrax, of course, which has gone on in recent weeks. We began this process, actually, last year after the difficulties that were experienced in Walkerton, where clearly there was a set of guidelines that were there for people and the accountability for those guidelines really was never put in place and was not very well enforced. So it was important, and we acted immediately after it was determined what the cause of the problems was in Walkerton, that we had to clearly put in very clear-cut regulations, not just guidelines, under legislation, with a very clear-cut procedure for reporting, monitoring and accountability for what was going on in the monitoring of our water supply systems. We began way back then to act for the better safety of the citizens of our province.

One of the things the Premier also mentioned is that we'll be investing \$3.5 million in a special anti-terrorism unit that will proactively work to investigate and track down terrorists and their supporters. I think in some of the news we saw today it was determined that there were at least five people who seemed to be very actively engaged in underground activity, or whatever the phrase is—it escapes me at the moment—people who are clearly engaged in planning deeds that are harmful to our society, whether it's on this side of the border, or whether Canada and Toronto are being used as a staging ground.

Regardless of the activity, we are very proud of the fact that these announcements, together, working in tandem, will probably be—I think it will be—the most aggressive action that can be taken by any government to protect its people. I'm very proud that Ontario will likely be the leading jurisdiction in this area.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I just wanted to put a few of my comments on the record this afternoon, speaking on behalf of the constituents of Perth-Middlesex. My reaction is that this is a cruel hoax on the people of Ontario. Here we are talking to a motion about Dalton McGuinty's plan, and there is no plan. I've seen no plan. I've heard no plan. I think this is a cruel hoax on the part of those purporting that this a serious motion that should be debated.

We note that after the events of September 11 there have been many programs put forward. Just today we had three announcements: one by the Premier, one by the Attorney General and one by the Minister of Tourism. I think those are the kinds of programs and the kinds of plans that we should be supporting.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to put my comments on the record today.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): First of all, I want to thank both my good friend Mr Spina and my good friend Mr Johnson for allowing me the opportunity to participate in this debate.

I want to say upfront that generally I support what the Liberal opposition is trying to do here in regard to ensuring that we find ways of securing the province when it comes to potential activities that may cause some danger to the public of Ontario, when it comes to the acts of September 11, when it comes to acts of terrorism.

I do want to say, however, at the outset that I am one of those people who is a little bit worried at times that we get overzealous in this whole approach to what's happening in regard to those particular events. I would hope that the response the government puts forward in regard to this whole issue is a measured one, so we don't get into the whole issue of fanning the flames further than they need to be fanned. I certainly hope that calmer heads will prevail in this whole crisis we find ourselves in now around the world.

I've never been one to believe that violence begets—excuse me. Let me say that again. I'm not one who believes that you can fight terrorism by way of bombs and traditional forces. If you look at history over the past number of years, Vietnam is a good example. There was not terrorist activity on the part of the North Vietnamese, but it was certainly a war that was fought by—what's the word I'm looking for?—not commandos but guerrillas. Never were the French, the Japanese nor the Americans able to succeed by traditional methods in being able to push the North Vietnamese into submission when it came to that particular issue. The strongest military powers of the day, namely, France, Japan and the United States, were never able to succeed. I think one of the reasons was that you can't combat terrorism, you can't combat, in my view, guerrilla warfare by way of a traditional response by military means. I think there are a whole bunch of other things that you need to do to be able to get at those who were responsible for September 11. Unfortunately, I don't have the opportunity to speak to that.

I know that my good friend Mr Prue, the member for Beaches-East York, wants to say a few words and I'll give him the floor at this point.

1740

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I'm really learning the ropes of this House, to run from committee to here and being all over the place.

In the few minutes remaining, I'd just like to say that I think the proposal is generally a good one, but it reminds me of a person who has their house robbed. That's usually when they go out to get the security. They never think about it before, they never think it's going to happen to them, but once they're robbed they're all gung-ho and they're calling up the security companies. It looks to me that that's very much what we're doing here.

People who speak about the problems or foresee the problems usually have it fall on deaf ears. That's true all over government. What we're seeing today in the federal sphere is, in terms of immigration, wondering who we have coming into Canada, who is making refugee claims, who some of the people are who arrive without documentation. This whole story has been talked about for years inside the immigration department and the national newspapers, and yet there never seemed to have been a concern by federal minister after federal minister until September 11.

The same thing is true in this province: the problems about laying off staff; the problems of not having enough scientists, and we continue to lay those off; the problems of not having health inspectors and the ensuing problems in Walkerton.

Today I think we have an opportunity to do something about that. We're talking about the Ontario security fund and the support for security measures. But I don't want anyone in this House or anyone watching to think that it has only to do with September 11. It has to do with a whole range of problems that this country has been very complacent about, not just since September 11 but really for the last 10 or 15 years.

Dr Sheela Basrur has reported today and we know that money is needed for medical measures. We know the police budgets in many municipalities are not what they should be, and certainly the police officers in Toronto have not got the budget they've asked for ever since amalgamation. We know in Toronto especially there are 55 too few firefighters to actually man or person or staff with no problems the fire trucks—55 of them—so they cannot even meet the calls they're required to do, never mind an emergency. We know that in small communities that were forcefully amalgamated they're losing their volunteer firefighters. We know that there are problems with the drinking water in many places.

The question comes right down to, in the 40 seconds left to me, is it right, though, to take it from capital funding? I have some problem with that, but that is the motion before us. I suggest it would be better to forgo the reductions for corporations and ask those same people who will be getting the tax breaks if they would prefer security. I think the answer you would find from them was yes. Ask them if they have the wherewithal to

provide private security on the monies you're going to give them, and I think you'll find that the answer is no. Then, ask all the people of this province if they are better off if we are all protected and not just those who can afford it.

That, Mr Speaker, would be my contribution to the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? There being no further debate, Mr McGuinty has moved opposition day number 2, that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government to protect Ontarians by enacting Dalton McGuinty's plan to establish an Ontario security fund, with half of the funds being directed to security projects at the municipal level.

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

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1745 to 1755.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Cleary, John C.	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Colle, Mike	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sorbara, Greg

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael D.	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, Bert	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Kells, Morley	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Klees, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Maves, Bart	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Mazzilli, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn	
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 36; the nays are 49.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

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

The House adjourned at 1758.

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