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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 8 November 2001

Jeudi 8 novembre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 8 November 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 8 novembre 2001

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS
AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2001

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

Mr Spina moved second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'm very proud to be bringing this bill forward to the Legislature. I'd like to give a bit of a description and talk about some people to whom this is very important.

"Congenital" means inborn or existing at birth. A congenital heart defect occurs when the heart or the blood vessels near the heart don't develop normally before birth. Congenital heart defects exist at the time of a child's birth, and were originally thought to be a rare occurrence. Today the medical community has identified congenital heart defects as one of the most common birth defects and as the leading cause of defect-related deaths.

Medical research has identified more than 35 different types of congenital heart defects. They are present in about 1% of live births and are the most frequent congenital malfunction in newborns. In fact, in most cases scientists don't know how they occur. One out of every 100 live births is affected by a defect or defects. Ontario has the highest per capita.

Over 50% of children born with CHD will require at least one surgery in their lifetime; 20% of these children will not survive the first year. More children are born with congenital heart defects than with Down's syndrome, spina bifida and HIV combined. Canadian doctors perform over 3,000 pediatric cardiac surgeries per year, with Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital performing approximately 600 per year. There are in existence about 82,900 children under age 18 living in Canada with some form or forms of CHDs.

I want to acknowledge a group in the members' gallery that has come from across Ontario, some from as far as London and Woodstock, to see this important topic debated here in this Legislature. These are everyday people who have been touched by someone with a congenital heart defect. This group is led by Debi Smart, spokesperson for the Children's Heart Association for Support and Education, acronymed CHASE. She is also the founder of the heart and stroke congenital heart defects fund, and proud mother of 3-year-old Matthew, who is with us today.

I'll give this as an example of many children who have these problems: Matthew was diagnosed during his mother's pregnancy with tricuspid atresia, ASD, VSD, and a hypoplastic right ventricle. Matthew was born in Mount Sinai Hospital in April 1998 and was immediately rushed to Sick Kids, where he would undergo his first heart surgery the next morning. It was five days later when mother Debi could hold him again. After 13 days, he was finally sent home on medication. At the age of six months, Matthew had his second heart surgery, the first of a two-stage operation. In this surgery, they rerouted the blood from the top half of his body directly to his lungs. As Debi has told us, it was an excruciating experience to endure, seeing her child in the intensive care unit, paralyzed, with so many tubes, wires and intravenous lines. The surgery was on a Monday, and the family was finally able to have Matthew home on Saturday.

Because there has been so much trauma to his tiny body so early in life, Matthew's teeth have been decaying, and dental surgery was performed last year to try to repair some of that damage.

Matthew was to have the second stage of his surgery performed in November 2000, which would reroute the blood from the bottom half of his body directly to his lungs. However, his doctors felt his heart function was not strong enough and that the risk of complications and chances of death outweighed the benefits. So Matthew has been placed on two different medications and goes back in for tests again. His family prays that the medicine will improve his heart function.

Also in the gallery—I'm happy to see that they were able to change their appointment at Sick Kids for 10 am this morning to this afternoon and join us today for this important event—is Michael, son of Joanne and David Hills from my own riding of Brampton. Joanne, by no coincidence, will be president of CHASE for 2002.

Michael was born with a defect known as hypoplastic left heart syndrome. A normal heart has four chambers,

two collecting and two pumping chambers. Michael was born with only one. Incredibly, he was not diagnosed until he was five and a half months old. Joanne and David, like most parents, were devastated, but comforted by the confidence they had in the staff at Sick Children's. Within a 36-hour period before and after Michael's first surgery, he endured three cardiac arrests. Since then, Michael has had two more heart surgeries, three cardiac catheterizations and numerous tests.

Michael is on a blood-thinning medication because he is at risk of developing a blood clot and having a stroke. He is also on blood pressure pills to help his heart pump more effectively. Michael is three and a half years old and has spent over six months of his life in hospital. At some point in time, Michael will need a transplant.

The Hills have acknowledged that their lives have changed and they live each day for Michael's heart. They balance risks and consequences associated with Michael. They hope that CHD Awareness Day will help show people the miracles of life. The disability is hidden, often behind a scar or scars on the chest. Michael will begin school next year, and his parents have to start to put their trust in others to look out for Michael's interests.

Thirty, 40 or 50 years ago, most babies born with a congenital heart defect or defects died at birth or died very young. In the present day, most children can be saved, and many grow up to lead a full and active life. I know a couple named Linda and Gene who in 1947 saw their two-year-old suddenly turn blue. Not knowing how to diagnose it, he was treated for rheumatic fever with antibiotics. Of course it didn't make much difference, but he was able to survive. At age 5, he was finally diagnosed with some sort of heart defect. At age 11 it was determined that he had to have a bypass, because blood wasn't getting to his lungs. He lived. At age 26 he had full open-heart surgery for a tetralogy of Fallot, repairing not only the hole between the ventricles but also other parts of the body that needed to be repaired through that procedure. That child was me.

1010

I understand the pain these parents are going through, because my mother and father were in the same place. Seeing a child in pain and not being able to do anything about it is the worst feeling in the world. The wait for surgery and handing over a child who doesn't look sick is another terrible experience. Not knowing if he will have a normal life is a terrible burden. These are the things that parents of CHD children live with on a day-to-day basis. Normal, everyday things suddenly become so important. Youngsters like Matthew and Michael can't handle a large daycare setting, and it's difficult to find places that will look after the children on a regular basis. That is why awareness is needed. Until now, parents like Debi and Joanne have relied on Internet support groups such as PDHeart and CHD-Ca. These are international groups that support the mothers and fathers and families of children born with congenital heart defects.

People around the world have been contacting government officials about proclaiming an awareness day.

Almost all the US states, as well as many countries, have proclamations in place. It is crucial that parents, pediatricians and all people who work in health professions have a greater awareness of the potential for CHDs among newborn babies. All are encouraged to learn more about congenital heart defects, to participate in this special observance and to support its valuable goal of raising public awareness of a serious health matter that affects newborn babies.

To all the children with CHD, I ask that the Lord keep you in the palm of his hand, and may the people of the world understand that these are special children.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I think it's important that we go on the record that we will be fully supportive of what's been put forward today.

This is about children. We've had a lot of debate in this Legislature in the last little while about the cuts that have taken place in London. I read the background material that was provided to me by the honourable member. He steered me to a number of Web sites to help me in my awareness of what's happening. As you go through the Web sites, they take you to different places, different sites. One of the sites they lead you to is the London Health Sciences Centre. In fact, one of the sites for information and resources on congenital heart diseases talks about pediatric cardiology departments. Do you know the only one listed? It's the London Health Sciences Centre. It talks about the London Health Sciences Centre and the great things it does for adults and, more important, for pediatric cardiology services to the people of southwestern Ontario. It talks about the different services that are provided at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario and the great things they've been able to do to help kids in southwestern Ontario.

The tragedy is that as we stand here today, we've got a program that helps kids in southwestern Ontario. Because of budget constraints being put forward by this government, we're seeing this program, which helps kids, destroyed. We had a debate in this Legislature this week about this program, and we Liberals wanted to see a halt to the cuts to this program. It didn't happen. The government voted to allow these cuts to continue.

I can understand that the member is emotional about this. I do, because while I've never had to deal with this, I've met a lot of families over the past month that have had to deal with this and that go through what these families have gone through. Here we are, as individuals, standing up—it's so important that we stand up and bring awareness to this issue. We have to bring awareness to this issue. But I implore all of you, as we bring awareness to the issue today—and I'm sure there will be unanimous support in this Legislature for the bill that's in front of us—to look in your own hearts and think, if we're going to bring awareness to a program and the important things it does, why we as legislators would allow a program to be cut that does the very things we want to do here today.

I want to talk—and I'm not trying to make this political. I'm just trying to bring it back—

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): Not very much.

Mr Peters: Well, obviously—I'm not going to go there; I'll leave it.

Hon Mr Sampson: You should.

Mr Peters: I should go there. Why are you allowing this to happen? Why are you allowing these cuts to take place in London? Children now have this surgery available to them in southwestern Ontario, and you're going to force them and centralize the services to Sick Kids in Toronto. Come on.

This is a letter I received from Dr Yves Ouellette, who is in pediatric critical care medicine at Children's Hospital of Western Ontario: "The loss of cardiac surgery services will have a profound effect on all pediatric care delivered at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario. Pediatric cardiac surgery is a key program at CHWO. Approximately 250 children with congenital heart disease are treated at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario. Most are admitted to the pediatric critical care unit for some time before and after surgery," some of the very surgeries these children over here have had to go through. "The program is foundational and fully integrated with most of the other programs offered at the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario."

One family talks about their young child being rushed to the emergency department at the children's hospital. Without the close proximity of the children's hospital and the cardiac services, it's not likely that she would be alive.

Here's another family from Kitchener—this was in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record on October 15, 2001: "A Kitchener family and their infant daughter who has congenital heart disease are victims of health care cuts in another region." This young lady "was born with half a heart. When she was five months old, she had life-saving surgery at the London Health Sciences Centre." The program is disappearing.

We're talking today about congenital heart defects. Look at the heart programs that have been announced to be cut by the London Health Sciences Centre: cardiac transplant, pediatric and adult; cardiac arrhythmia surgery—I saw a reference to that in the materials the honourable member put forward—pediatric cardiology surgery, another program that's being cut.

This is from Dr Kostuk, a cardiologist at the London Health Sciences Centre, dated October 9, 2001: "London came to be recognized as one of the leaders in cardiovascular medicine. Two developments that contributed to this recognition were heart transplantation and arrhythmia surgery. Now that other academic centres in Canada have developed similar programs we have learned that the London Health Sciences Centre will divest itself of these important programs...."

"We cannot afford to lose pediatric cardiac surgery, cardiac transplantation, arrhythmia surgery or endovascular procedures. The fallout from loss of these services will be profound. Inevitably it will lead to the loss of other support services. We will lose our ability not only

to attract, but to maintain the young clinician/investigator. These are the very individuals that are vital to maintain" London Health Sciences's "high standards of patient care and clinical research into the future."

1020

As you look at the material that the honourable member provided as background for us to refer to as legislators to support this, it took us to the Web site in London:

"The Children's Hospital of Western Ontario at the London Health Sciences Centre is one of three tertiary pediatric cardiovascular centres in the province. Pediatric cardiology offers a wide range of cardiovascular services for children in southwestern Ontario. These ... include fetal echocardiography for prenatal diagnosis of congenital heart disease, as well as a comprehensive range of invasive and non-invasive diagnostic procedures. Pediatric cardiology is an integral component of the pediatric heart transplant program, a co-operative venture between the Children's Hospital of Western Ontario and the multi-organ transplant service at the London Health Sciences Centre."

In dealing with cardiac surgery, adult and pediatric:

"The London Health Sciences Centre provides the only tertiary pediatric surgical service between Toronto and Winnipeg. This service has developed both in volume and complexity, with almost all aspects of pediatric heart surgery offered to infants and children. In addition, children from across Canada are referred to" London Health Sciences Centre's "service for heart transplantation."

We're going to support this resolution, and it is something we must do to recognize what families have to go through. But I think it's incumbent on every one of us in this Legislature to ensure that we provide the best services we possibly can to all our citizens and to not centralize services in Toronto, that we continue to maintain services for children all across this great province, from London to Ottawa to Kingston to Toronto. Don't allow these cuts to continue.

To the member, I commend you for bringing this forward today.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Thank you kindly, Speaker. Thank you for the chance to speak to this.

New Democrats support the bill before the Legislature today, of course. At the end of the day, the bill, I'm confident, will pass second reading. At some point it will be put forward for third reading. It will become a statute. It will be in the statute books, and people who are inclined will be able to access it in the RSOs, the Revised Statutes of Ontario, or on their statutes of Ontario disk.

But really, it's the families and friends and neighbours of children who have suffered from congenital heart disease who will carry on, as they have before and without this legislation proclaiming February 14 as Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day, with the knowledge that perhaps here in the province of Ontario, and

hopefully in other jurisdictions as well, there's been some statutory notice of the significance of that day to them.

When this bill passes second reading, this Legislature, short of third reading, will have been completed with the bill. It will then be put into the books. It'll be there. It'll be there forever. And we'll move on to other things.

These families will continue raising their children. They'll continue going to incredible reservoirs of courage that I can't even begin to imagine—the strength that families, that parents of kids with congenital heart disease, have to muster to permit them to carry on, the strength their kids have to acquire, even the most infant of little kids, the courage, the strength, the tenacity.

By passing this bill, have we done them the service we would like to think we have? I fear that perhaps we've betrayed these children. The bill proclaiming February 14 as Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day will pass, but the real commitment has to come from our collective commitment to invest sufficient resources in health care and in supports for families struggling and coping with congenital heart disease in their children. The real commitment comes in our investment of resources to make sure medical resources are available to every family at the earliest possible opportunity.

There are incredibly compelling comments reported in the Windsor Star, where Dr John Lee, a leading pediatric surgeon, says, "Parents in Windsor and across south-western Ontario have a right to be very worried for their children. There is an overwhelming fear right now that the whole pediatric program will be decimated because of the decisions announced in London this week."

We've got a government that's been driven by its passion to provide tax cuts for the very wealthy, to provide more and yet more tax cuts for profitable corporations like the big banks with their billion-dollar-a-year profits, knowing full well that every penny of those tax cuts is going to come from the education budget or the health budget. Those are the two big-ticket items in its budget that the province of Ontario ought to be investing in.

We heard from the Ontario Hospital Association recently, here in Toronto and persistently and continuously across the province in community after community where hospitals are based, that hospitals are facing ongoing crises because of the lack of funding for those hospitals and those services. London pediatric was compelled to make some very dramatic decisions about the types of services it's going to be able to continue to provide, as a result of its suffering under the burden of a huge deficit as it has struggled with the underfunding and the cuts to its budgets, cuts that are not cuts when they appear on a linear basis from year to subsequent year in budgets, but cuts that are real cuts when one examines (1) the increased demands placed on London and its specialized services, and (2) the increased demands on hospitals across the province as we see aging communities, certainly in Niagara, one of the oldest communities now in Ontario. We see incredible new stress on hospital services, on health care across the board, and a government

that would rather give tax breaks to profitable corporations, a government that would rather give tax breaks to the highest-paid, the wealthiest people in this province.

I disagree fundamentally with a tax break at the expense of health care. I disagree fundamentally with a tax break at the expense of education. I believe that in a civil society, in a civilized society, in a caring society we don't force families to fend for themselves. We don't impose on them yet more and more burden, more and more cost by way of user fees or the extraordinary expenses that families, parents of children with congenital heart disease and quite frankly any other number of ailments, have to bear as their own personal burden when they have to travel great lengths, great distances to achieve medical care for their children, to acquire medical care and the appropriate medical services.

As a New Democrat, I believe it is impossible to sustain the largesse the Conservative government has provided for its corporate friends and its wealthy friends and at the same time demonstrate any sense of responsibility to health care in Ontario or any sense of obligation to the families of children with congenital heart disease.

1030

Every person who feels compelled to vote for this bill proclaiming February 14 Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day ought to be committing themselves today to rolling back this government's corporate tax cuts for wealthy, profitable corporations, and indeed to rolling back some of the obscene tax cuts for some of the wealthiest people in this province, to ensure that there are adequate revenues, adequate investments in hospital care, in specialized hospital care, in research and in supports for families of children who suffer from congenital heart disease and any number of other ailments as they take on incredible burdens out of their passion for their child's welfare and well-being, out of their love for a little baby born with the defects that have been enumerated, knowing full well that kids die because of the increasing scarcity of medical resources.

The corporate tax cuts of this government have to be held to large account for the burdens young children with congenital heart disease continue to face and for the increasing inaccessibility of adequate and appropriate treatment.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate with respect to the bill brought forth by the member for Brampton Centre, who gave a very impassioned and personal speech with respect to his reasons for bringing forth the act, which is to proclaim Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day. The act reads very clearly that, "February 14 in each year is proclaimed as Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day." I think that not only the member's intent but also his reasons for wanting this to happen are very fundamental and should be well received by this House.

I want to read something from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada in terms of dealing with the causes of congenital heart defects:

“Congenital heart defects are present in about 1% of live births and are the most frequent congenital malformations in newborns. In most cases, scientists don’t know why they occur. Some are caused by viral infections, such as German measles. If a mother contracts German measles during pregnancy, it can interfere with the development of the baby’s heart or produce other malfunctions. Certain conditions affecting multiple organs, such as Down’s syndrome, can involve the heart as well. A high number of congenital heart defects result from excessive drinking or using drugs such as cocaine during pregnancy.

“Forty years ago, most babies born with congenital heart defects died at birth. Those who lived were often seriously incapacitated by their defect. Today, most children can be saved and many grow up to lead full, active lives. Although there are still many challenges that research is struggling to solve, the past 40 years have seen tremendous improvements for children born with congenital heart defects.”

Certainly that goes without saying in terms of the member for Brampton Centre’s story about himself and what he and his family faced in this situation.

Also, the public should be aware of the Hospital for Sick Children cardiac programs. They are the largest cardiac programs in Ontario. They treat a total of 1,000 kids per year. They perform a high percentage of neonatal surgeries under the age of one month; they perform 110 to 120 surgeries per year.

The only pediatric heart transplant hospital in Canada is Sick Children’s. They perform a procedure called the ABO mismatch, where a heart of one blood type is transplanted into a child of another blood type. They’ve been doing this surgery for five years and only one has been done in the United States. There are 7,000 to 10,000 outpatient visits per year at Sick Children’s. A number of these are for checkups and adjustments of medicines.

Also, the Sick Children’s cardiac programs perform fetal echocardiography, as well as at Mount Sinai and Women’s College Hospital. Ultrasound 17 weeks into gestation can detect and identify cardiac defects in utero. When women are giving birth, they can immediately treat and provide the proper care for the infant. They also provide specialty outpatient clinics like nutrition clinics, monitor diets, watch weight gain, and provide visits by nurse practitioners. The idea is to move children out as soon as possible because children get better quicker in their home environment. Outpatient clinics also pick up problems that may occur. The child can be quickly diagnosed and treated safely. As well, they educate post-op parents on how to look after their children, to look for warning signs etc, and provide family teaching materials.

Certainly, for my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford the Hospital for Sick Children plays a vital role in providing that particular service that we fundamentally need in my area; it’s been very well received and obviously is needed.

I’m speaking on the bill. I’m not getting off into the rhetoric that was brought forth by the other people who

have spoken on this bill, but I’ll say that the member from Brampton Centre has brought forth something that I think is necessary in terms of public education and communication, to have February 14 in each year proclaimed as Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day. I hope that the members here focus on what is trying to be accomplished here in terms of information and certainly public education, something that is important to the children of this province in terms of their health care.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I’m sorry to interrupt the debate but I wanted to take an opportunity to extend a very warm Ontario welcome to a group of students visiting Ontario from France, along with their teacher and host, a great friend of mine, Greg Lawrence.

The Acting Speaker: You would know that’s not a point of order. Welcome. Further debate?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I’m pleased to join the debate, to lend my support to the bill and to commend the parents and the young people who have encouraged us to do this.

We’re all familiar with various challenges that young people face. Collectively, by investing in finding solutions, finding cures, finding medical advances, we’ve been able to change the course of events for young people. Fortunately, in Ontario there are just so many examples of that, where 30 or 40 years ago young people who may have faced these challenges now have some terrific cures and remedies and can look forward to a very healthy, active and successful life. I welcome you here, particularly the young people. I always love to hear the sound of young voices in the chamber.

Bills like this are helpful. They do focus attention on issues. They remind us that with a little bit of investment by all of us we can make some fundamental changes. I think all of us have experience with some people who were born with significant heart defects that through medical advances have been either significantly reduced or cured, and thank goodness for all of that.

1040

I do think it is, however, important to remind ourselves that those do require public investments. I go back to the issue I’ve been raising for many, many months in the Legislature, and that is that we have to debate our priorities in this province. I do believe it’s timely, because we have a bill before us that is designed to get corporate taxes in the province of Ontario 25% lower than in the United States. I say to all of us, there’s no magic in finance. If you choose to have taxes in Ontario dramatically lower than our competitors in the US, public services in Ontario will be dramatically lower. I would also say to the corporations that the statistics that the government provide us suggest that every employee in Ontario has health coverage that costs \$2,500 per employee less in Ontario than in the United States—Michigan or any of the US states—because of the way we fund our health care system.

I do think that all of us need to not only debate the merits of the language in the bill, but also to debate our

actions here. I repeat, not only does the government want them 25% lower, they've told the federal government to cut corporate taxes federally by another \$7 billion to get them 45% lower than the US. That's what Mr Harris and Mr Flaherty have been urging the federal government to do. We asked a question as recently as a week ago today: why would you want corporate taxes 45% lower than the US? At the same time, by the way, the Premier wants the federal government to provide more funding for health care but he wants them to cut corporate taxes by another \$7 billion. So I would say to the people in the Legislature—

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): That's how you get the money. You know that.

Mr Phillips: Mr Guzzo is making a point that perhaps he does support cutting federal corporate taxes by another \$7 billion when we are told by the Minister of Finance we have a severe problem to fund our health care system in Ontario. We will support the resolution very much, but we also think that perhaps it's time for the government to take action. Rather than corporate taxes 25% lower than the US, let's have them competitive.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I am standing in support of Mr Spina's private member's bill today. I believe in awareness days for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Ms Churley: I would say to the parents who have their children here today not to worry about them making a noise, because you can see they're quieter than some of the members on the floor from time to time. So don't worry about it. It's a very pleasant noise as compared to the heckling that happens across the floor from time to time. Now be quiet over there.

I am very happy to support this bill before us today. It's infrequently in this place that we share with each other human stories, talk a bit about who we are as human beings and what we've gone through in our own lives. I, I'm sure like everybody, was very moved and touched by Mr Spina's personal story, and we're very happy to see him here alive and well and boisterous, causing all kinds of trouble in the House every day from time to time.

I do want to welcome the parents and their children here today. I would say that as a mother of grown-up children now who was very lucky in terms of overall these children growing up without major health problems, with sisters and brothers who have children overall growing up without serious problems until recently, where, in our family, my brother's daughter—my brother is a year younger than I and we're very close—at the age of 15, so you can never take anything for granted, was diagnosed with a tumour on her pituitary gland. This was over a year ago. We were shocked to the core and devastated, and we're still living with this. There was an operation; it was not totally successful and we don't know what's going to happen. My brother and his wife—they have two other children—are going through the terror of living day to day not knowing what's going to

happen to this beautiful eldest child of theirs. We spent time together as a family, all of us, over the summer. It's very difficult. I only have a tiny glimpse of what it must be like for you to have your beautiful children and have to live with this day to day.

I also learned from my sister and brother, however, that you do get on with life, because you have to. You take your kids out, you have fun with them and you do the things that you do on a day-to-day basis, but as well you carry that with you all the time. I believe that this is important because, as I started to say, awareness days are important. I agree with people when they say that it's just to bring awareness to the issue, and then there's the whole issue of how we spend our tax dollars. I'm concerned about what's happening in London, very concerned about the health centre there. I'm concerned about what's happening overall with our health care system. I agree that we need, as legislators and as people, to talk about what our tax dollars pay for and the value of those tax dollars.

But I also believe—and the reason I'm glad this resolution is here before us—that most people, unless you're directly affected with congenital heart disease, don't think about it. It's not one of those high awareness ones. I'm involved in some breast cancer awareness and prostate cancer awareness and all of those kinds of diseases out there—multiple sclerosis—that are life-threatening, terrible diseases, and we've all in some way been affected by them. But how often do you hear congenital heart disease talked about? How often is there an awareness of parents like these here today who are living day to day with this?

Do you know what's important about bringing this awareness to the Legislature? Every year now, on February 14, we're going to get up and talk about this and hopefully, because we're talking about it and other people out there who have to live with it are talking about it, we will bring in the funding, the public policies, the support groups, more research and all of the things, more and more than we're doing now because of an awareness. I'm hoping that out of this resolution today, which no doubt is going to be passed—with great pleasure—people will learn more about the disease and will be wanting to sponsor more walks, more awareness, and out of it will grow more opportunities to do more research and find newer ways to try to make these children healthier and live long, happy lives.

The other thing we should bear in mind is that although, as I understand it, children are born quite frequently with these heart defects, it can happen to children at any time. I have a story here from a young girl who's involved in trying to save the London children's pediatric critical care unit. She has written a little story about it. She says: "My name is Mary Klein. I received a heart transplant on December 3, 1998, and this is my story. I was in grade one when I got sick with a virus that affected my heart." Then she tells the story of getting sicker and sicker and eventually having a heart transplant in that unit. As I was reading through the story it seemed

to get happier and happier but it ends with, "I found out recently that I will need another heart soon. This one is not working properly any more." She's going to have to go through that again.

All of us who feel that our children have escaped that and we're happy, you never know; it could strike. We need, on behalf of all Ontarians and particularly those children here today, to pass this resolution today.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to rise today to join to the debate on Bill 117, An Act to proclaim Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day. I think the member for Brampton Centre has brought this bill forward in large part because of his personal experience as a survivor of congenital heart defects. I think that often happens around this House. I'm sure the member for Toronto-Danforth and her experience of adoption and finding her son is a large part of the reason she has brought forward her vital statistics bill which is being debated at this time.

I'd like to join in the debate and read a letter from some parents who are involved with this who are here today: Michael and Carol Ferry, who I believe are here with their kids, Justine, Michael and Natalie. Their letter states the situation very well, so I'd like to read that into the record.

1050

"Dear honourable government member:

"I am writing you on behalf of the many people of Ontario whose lives are affected by congenital heart defects. Ranked as the most common birth defect, it is estimated that almost one in 100 children are born with some type of defect. At least 35 types are now recognized. While some of these children are repairable or require no surgery, a full half of these children will face one if not many surgeries in their lifetime.

"In July 1998, my daughter Natalie was born with a complex heart defect"—and I might not get some of the medical terms perfect here—"called hypoplastic left ventricle with double outlet right ventricle, an atrial septal defect, a ventricular septal defect, stenosis of the mitral valve and an open patent ductus. This is a very severe birth defect requiring several complicated open-heart surgeries. Until recently"—that being 1983—"this defect was considered fatal and very few options existed. Her first surgery took place on September 29, 1998, at the age of 2.5 months, after several misdiagnoses. After months of cardiac checkups, several catheterizations and numerous other tests were followed by her second open-heart surgery in April 1999. Finally, her third and final open-heart surgery took place January 11, 2001. The surgeons were happy with her recovery and she is doing extremely well since. Her heart will never be 'corrected,' and since hypoplastic left heart syndrome is the number one heart defect requiring transplantation and the field of cardiac surgery becoming more diverse each day, children like Natalie are surviving longer and her chances of leading a normal life are increasing.

"Since my daughter's initial diagnosis, I have been spending my free time trying to educate and inform

people about congenital heart defects." That's what this bill is all about, trying to raise awareness of this problem. "There is quite a strong Internet presence offering their support to parents who have children with CHDs, but off-line there seems to be little media attention given to CHDs and even less education. Most of the attention for heart disease seems to be focused on acquired heart disease and while I agree that this too is an important area to focus on, CHDs are also important and further education about them needs to be done.

"I am respectfully requesting that you support our bill and set aside Valentine's Day as CHD Awareness Day. A day of remembrance and celebration of the great medical advances, which keep children alive, would honour the unseen battle that children and adults with CHD fight daily. Creating a day of this kind would also help to lift the barrier of ignorance that is in the public about CHDs. This would make a significant impact on the families who currently are coping with these diseases as well as families who will have this disease touch their lives at a future point. The cardiac floor at Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital is always full of these little innocent patients."

That's from Mrs Carol Ferry, mom of Justine, aged seven, Michael, aged four, and Natalie, aged three, and husband Michael. Thank you very much for that letter.

I'd like to add my support to this bill and hope that it accomplishes its goal of raising awareness of congenital heart defects with the goal of bringing about more research and eventually a cure for many heart defects.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Spina: Thank you to the members of the government and, as well, particularly the members of the opposition for expressing their support for this bill.

The guests in the gallery are wearing a red-and-blue ribbon which signifies the red and blue blood that flows through a normal heart, and it's important that we remember that.

Parents are fortunate that today we have the technology and the practitioners in health care and the support groups internationally with the government-funded program. In 1957, the bypass surgery I had the first time cost my father a year's salary. We are fortunate today. My second operation, which was open-heart surgery in 1972, was fully funded by our health care system.

Funding for cardiac care continues to exist and has not been reduced. But London has other issues beyond funding. We appreciate what the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London says. I think it's important that we remember what is happening and try to rectify the situation there. But they do provide excellent care, as does of course the Hospital for Sick Children.

In the gallery, as I said, are Matthew, Michael and Krista. For them I want to say, with all the other children across Ontario, we hope they will survive as successfully as I have. Darlene, who is with us, is another adult survivor. These families come from Hornby, Brampton, Woodstock, Mississauga and Toronto.

The important thing is that awareness means knowledge, and knowledge means appreciation for the health

care needs of these children. At noon, after the vote, if we are successful, I'll be asking for the bill to go to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs so that it can get due process in time so that we can declare February 14, 2002.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated to ballot item number 31. I will place the questions related to its disposition at 12 o'clock noon.

ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK
ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE SENSIBILISATION AUX ARCHIVES

Mr Johnson moved second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Last month, I attended the annual Italian Canadian Conference put on by the University of Toronto's Frank Iacobucci Centre for Italian Canadian Studies. I was there to present to the university a copy of the book *Bravi, Italians in the Town of St Marys, Ontario*, a book written about the Italian heritage of that town in my riding. I know my colleague Mr Guzzo will appreciate that book of heritage.

I tell you this because I feel it's very important that we protect and document our heritage for future generations. For the same reason, I have tabled this bill, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week, 2001.

Archives are one of this province's hidden treasures. Many people have never visited their local archives or really thought about the service they provide. Archives store, maintain and catalogue documents, photographs, audio and visual recordings, maps and other materials which make up our history. Archives collect and maintain original, unpublished and published, often irreplaceable material, which, if not handled properly, can be permanently damaged or destroyed. I understand, for instance, that one of the preservation methods for documents after floods is to immediately, or as soon as you can, freeze it, and it will become almost freeze-dried, and that will preserve most papers as well as we possibly can.

Archives are the place people can turn to find out more about their ancestors and their heritage, but many people are unaware of the resources available to them.

Two weeks ago, I took some time to visit the Stratford-Perth Archives, and you know what? I learned things about the history of the city of Stratford and the county of Perth that I didn't know, despite having lived in the region most of my life and representing that area for the last six last years.

During my visit, I did some research into my own history. The archivists, Lutzen Riedstra and Carolyn Bart-Riedstra, who are in attendance in the gallery today,

found for me a picture of the house I lived in in 1959 when I attended teachers' college in Stratford. The house was on Trinity Street, and I remember my landlady, Mrs Costello, with a great deal of affection. It was a project of the archives in Stratford to take photographs of every house on every street in the city.

I was fascinated to see the catalogue of photographs the archives has and would like to see other residents made aware of these valuable resources. An increased awareness is exactly what the Archives Awareness Week bill will accomplish.

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Lutzen and Carolyn also made me aware of an interesting archival project they undertook for the millennium. The Stratford-Perth Archives worked with grade 11 students from Stratford Central Secondary School and interviewed women in the community who can be described as war brides—women, mostly from Britain, who were married during World War II to Canadian soldiers stationed overseas and after the war came to Canada with their new husbands.

This was an excellent opportunity for students to interact with people in their community and develop an understanding of the challenges and experiences faced by those war brides. It also gave students the opportunity to see first-hand the importance and usefulness of having archival records, not only about personal experiences from World War II—sometimes those of their grandparents—but the importance of having archives in their community. Our community and future generations will benefit from having this information available.

Lutzen and Carolyn have worked with the Grade 11 students from Stratford Central Secondary School on other projects and work closely with their teacher, Susan Stock.

In my hometown of Listowel, the local archives have been in their new home in the Listowel public library building for just over a year now. I was pleased to be able to attend the official opening last year and to meet Sonja Robbin and Cathy Wideman, who are clerks in the Listowel Archives.

Currently, the Listowel Archives has a joint display with the Listowel Public Library this week to recognize Remembrance Day and the activities of our veterans.

I wanted to mention examples from the Stratford-Perth Archives and the Listowel Archives, because they illustrate the important work that archivists are doing in our communities. This is why I've introduced this bill to help raise awareness of archives, so that people can develop a better understanding and appreciation about our past.

Many of my legislative colleagues here this morning will be familiar with the annual Ontario Agriculture Week celebrations. Several years ago I introduced a bill in this Legislature to designate the week before Thanksgiving as Ontario Agriculture Week. For the past four years, archivists from the Archives of Ontario have put together an archival display of photos that have helped highlight the accomplishments and historical significance

of the agri-food sector in Ontario. This year I was pleased that Carolyn Gray, Kate O'Rourke and James Allan from the Archives of Ontario were able to provide an exhibit that was displayed outside the legislative dining room during Ontario Agriculture Week. This is an example of how archives make Ontario aware of its archival treasures.

Another example that helps demonstrate the importance of archives and archives awareness is the CBC mini-series entitled *Canada: A People's History*. It's interesting to note that for this 30-hour mini-series, the CBC collaborated with the National Archives of Canada and made use of 2,600 maps, paintings and photographs, as well as more than 200 moving images.

It's easy to appreciate the importance of archives, not only at a national level but also for our province, our communities and our families. If we are to understand the people, events, emotions and struggles that produced the present and will shape our future, it's important that all the pieces from our past are preserved intact.

By having an Archives Awareness Week, the public will hopefully think more about their local documentary heritage and endeavour to preserve their own documents, whether they are family photographs, journals, letters or community or corporate records. We all have an interest in heritage, because our heritage is our personal connection with our community and with our past.

The Archives Association of Ontario is endeavouring to make the resources its members hold more accessible to all Ontarians through modern technology. The archives association has developed ARCHEION, Ontario's archival information network, an on-line searchable database of documents available in the province's archives.

While this database is far from complete, it serves as a reference tool to provide information about archival holdings and services. The database links together and provides a central gateway to province-wide information about the records of schools, colleges and universities, municipal and provincial governments, hospitals, religious organizations, First Nations band councils, social and local community groups, business institutions and corporations.

I have brought forward this bill at the request of the Archives Association of Ontario, which represents 250 archives in this province as well as 300 other members. This association lists increased outreach activities and increased awareness as one of its goals. By creating an Archives Awareness Week, this Legislature would support that goal and help archives continue the important work they do.

Before I finish, I would like to recognize three other people, who are in the members' gallery to witness today's debate. They are Heather McMillan, executive director, Archives Association of Ontario; Michael Moir, president of the Archives Association of Ontario; and Peggy Mooney, director of the archival operations branch of the Archives of Ontario.

I want to point out that it was Carolynn Bart-Riedstra's year as president of the Archives Association

of Ontario a few years ago that brought about this idea of an awareness week to cast more light on the good work they do.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the Legislature for being here this morning and to thank those of you who have agreed to speak on my private member's bill.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I want to commend the honourable member for this initiative that he's put forward and also his work in recognition of Agriculture Week. These are two weeks that Mr Johnson and I think are of extreme importance.

A lot of us don't realize how important is the onus on each of us to preserve the past for future generations. The Ontario archives have been serving the citizens of Ontario for 98 years. It was established in 1903. It does a very important job of preserving the heritage of this province. I think it's incumbent on the government, and I certainly urge the government, to do everything it can to continue to provide not only stable funding but increased funding of the Ontario archives, because once these records are gone, they're gone. We can't allow that to happen. In this day and age when we're seeing a massive number of municipalities disappear, we have to ensure that as these municipalities disappear the archival records do not disappear. But it's happened.

I've heard countless cases of municipal amalgamations where somebody didn't have the foresight to preserve records, or they thought, "We'll just keep the assessment rolls; that will be sufficient." But there are a lot of other documents generated in a municipality that need to be preserved for future generations. So we can't allow that to happen, and we need to give the resources to the Ontario archives to make sure we know what is out there and that it's not going to be lost.

We can't allow things to happen like a few weeks ago when I was out on a tour through my riding and visited a local women's institute. The women's institute owns an old school, and they've done a wonderful job preserving the school. I asked them, "Where's your Tweedsmuir history?" Well, a number of years before, somebody had decided to houseclean, and the Tweedsmuir history went into the burn pile. You hear about that a lot. A lot of families clear out the house when somebody passes away. The furniture and the china are the important stuff, but the family photos and documents and letters end up in the burn pile. We need to do everything we can to increase awareness of our archives.

From a genealogical standpoint—genealogy is one of the fastest growing hobbies out there right now—every one of us should try to do what we can to learn where we've come from. That's another reason we need to have archives to preserve these records.

I look at my own county of Elgin. The county of Elgin had the foresight years ago to save its records. They didn't have a proper repository for those records, but they found storage space and squirreled them away. They had individuals over the years who recognized that some day this stuff was going to be important. I commend the

county of Elgin, because what they've done is hire an archivist and committed the capital dollars to establish an archives, and they've made the long-term operating commitment to keep that archives alive. So I commend the county of Elgin for the foresight they've had to keep the heritage alive for future generations.

1110

But I think too, as we see the Ontario archives down here at 77 Grenville with their storage repositories, they're cramped for space. I know Management Board is looking at initiatives to try and help the Ontario archives, and I think that's good, but I don't think we need to have everything centralized in Toronto. You have the Perth archives. We have the Elgin archives now. But why don't we look as a government at establishing regional archives? I can look at my own county of Elgin as an example.

The St Thomas Psychiatric Hospital is soon going to be vacant. The place is built like a bomb shelter. It's never going to burn down, it's dry and it has the ability to be turned into a formal archive. Why don't we look at regional archives, use some of these institutions that are being taken out of use right now? Let's establish a regional archive for southwestern Ontario as an example. It's very interesting: there are six wings, so you could have the Essex wing, the Kent wing, the Lambton wing, the Elgin wing, the Middlesex wing and the Oxford wing—six wings, six counties—preserve those records. I think we need to do everything we can to support the archives and not allow our heritage to be destroyed.

I commend Mr Johnson for bringing this forward. I know a number of people chuckled. My first statement in this Legislature was about archives, but I'm passionate about it. I think it's important that we do preserve our past for future generations, because if you don't know where you've been, you certainly don't know where you're going.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I like the bill. I'm going to support it. Other New Democrats are going to support it. I like archivists. I like archives. There really are several different worlds we're talking about. We're talking about the Ontario archives, and I've been down there. My greatest interest has been in the photographic collections. The photographic history that has been accumulated there of every part of Ontario—small town and big city alike. I uncovered, and as a matter of fact we got them distributed out through the community by way of printing them up, incredible, great archival photos from Thorold South, for instance, from Crowland, from Fenwick and Ridgeville and Fonthill, from old Welland, the old Welland court house during its construction in the middle of the 19th century—an incredible collection of resources. And my only personal exposure so far has been to the photographic collection.

That's big-city province of Ontario. Reference has been made to the need for smaller towns, places like Welland, with its museum facility. You've got to understand that small-town museums have changed dramatically over the course of, I'd say, the last 15 to 20 years,

because they are now no longer just display places for antiquities; they are becoming increasingly, and increasingly importantly so, archival repositories. These small-town museums need resources to do their job properly. Even here at the Ontario archives I read that 25%—if I'm wrong, folks, tell me—of the paper collection is regarded as brittle and beyond use. Do you know what that means? It means if you pick it up, it's going to crumble like dust. And that number is undoubtedly growing, notwithstanding the best efforts and the best application of the most current technology.

The faith we have in old videotape and now CDs may not be quite warranted, because the evidence isn't in yet. It's going to require the passage of time to determine how effective these media are for actually preserving their content, because there's some speculation, notwithstanding the claims of the industry manufacturing this stuff, that in fact the lifespan in terms of it being utilizable as a recording medium is far shorter than anybody anticipated, even as short as 20 and 25 years.

Just the other day at the National Archives—it's incredible, the stuff. I ran across the deposit, if that's not an inappropriate word, of Jerry Gray. Jerry Gray was one of the founding members, along with Jerry Goodis and Simone Johnston, of the Travellers. They were a Canadian group, very progressive politically. They identified themselves with the good cause, with the good fight, with trade unionists and the progressive movement. They emulated the Weavers from the United States. In fact, they were at the front of the Canadian cultural movement fighting McCarthyism from Canada. They were mentored by Pete Seeger, who encouraged them to carry on performing. They were at picket lines across this province, across this country. They became incredibly popular. They penned the Canadian version of *This Land is Your Land*, which, as you may know, is Woody Guthrie's socialist anthem in response to *God Bless America*. As a kid, I was proud to sing that socialist anthem penned by Woody Guthrie. How many of us didn't sing *This Land is Your Land* in elementary school songbooks?

But the Travellers: it was Jerry Gray's deposit in the National Archives. The Travellers travelled—they did travel. Having penned—I just wanted to let you know, because I learned this from the Archives, right?—the Canadian version of *This Land is Your Land* with the permission of Guthrie, who was still alive at the time—he died in 1967—they gave all of the royalties, because it was a huge-selling song and it made a fortune, to the Woody Guthrie trust fund to raise his children, because Guthrie of course was very sick with Huntington's chorea and died in 1967.

I just wanted to illustrate. I mean, you stumble across these incredible gems, and I was concerned about the modest quantity of items in the Jerry Gray deposit with the National Archives. There's some CBC television film footage—or kinescope I suspect it is, because it goes back to the very first and second years of CBC television broadcasting here in the country—some audiotape. This stuff is very, very fragile. If this stuff isn't attended to—

and the volume of stuff even at the national level, in the National Archives, is so huge because there's a paucity of resources there too to enable archivists to do their craft, to do the things that they do best and (1) preserve it, (2) duplicate it so you've got backup and (3) catalogue it so people can access it. One of the problems with underfunded archival services is you can have room after room of material—am I right or wrong?—and if the archivists and the people running that archival facility don't have the resources to catalogue, well, it might as well be in the burn pile because it's going to disappear, and disappear incrementally, increasingly so over the course of the years as more and more stuff is piled up on it.

Rosario Marchese has been persistent in this House in terms of advocating tougher heritage legislation, in terms of protecting heritage sites and heritage buildings. We need that kind of legislation. None of us is as young as we used to be, but in my lifetime we've seen the disappearance of some incredibly valuable buildings and places. We just witnessed the opportunity for this government to preserve the site and the foundation of a former Parliament building down in the south end of Toronto, closer to the lakeshore. Surely it's in the scope of the intent and the spirit of this legislation for this government to want to embrace the opportunity that Rosario Marchese, the member for Trinity-Spadina, has presented to them, saying, "Here's our chance to preserve a site and, yes, some concrete, real hard-rock evidence of a very significant historical site." Do you remember the Mercer Reformatory, the women's reformatory south of here in what was then downtown? Do you folks remember Mercer Reformatory, the incredible Gothic building that was? Do you know the building I'm talking about? Too young? Mercer Reformatory, the women's reformatory, was an incredibly frightening building, as prisons are inclined to be, but the loss of that building and what it represents in terms of understanding the history of this city, this province, this country, is just incredible and it's incredibly acute.

Here we get down to where the rubber hits the road. It's not good enough to pat our archivists on the head and say, "Good job, archivists." They know they're doing a good job. They're doing it with broken tools and with inadequate resources. They're doing it with insufficient space in which to put the stuff that has to be put. They're doing it, working as hard as any professional could ever work, and working well beyond the call of duty, knowing that notwithstanding their best efforts, stuff is still going to be lost. That's not right; that's wrong. It's not enough to pass Archives Awareness Week. What good does it do to be aware of archives if we don't support the archives, if we don't invest in them, if we don't put resources into them, if we don't build the facilities? We have the capacity. Just think of the capacity we have in this province, using the Ontario archives as an anchor, as the provincial base, as the source of support and expertise to develop archival facilities across this province, big city and small.

1120

I think of the Ukrainian Labour Temple in Welland, down on Ontario Road. I've seen their archives, not pre-

served in an archival manner, but preserved out of love of the history of that great institution, that workers' centre, the place where people rallied, one of the rallying points for the Crowland relief workers' strike, back when the government of the day forced these workers to work at gunpoint for their social assistance. It sounds familiar, doesn't it? These workers in Crowland had the audacity to say, "No, if you're going to force us to work, we're going to organize into a union and you're at least going to pay us wages that permit us to feed our kids." The response of the government of the day was to bring down Hepburn's hussars and force them to work at gunpoint. Some things just never change at all.

In any event, the Ukrainian Labour Temple has this incredible collection of material, and it struggles along, quite frankly, with Varenyky's Perogies sales on Friday mornings to maintain that building, to maintain the facility and to maintain a place to keep so many of these photographs, records, newspaper clippings, documents and letters and stuff that is memorabilia in one sense, but incredible and significant historical reference material in another.

In places like Welland, places like Pelham, if communities don't have museums, the libraries are more than eager to help participate in this archival function. Libraries would love to see their capacity expanded so they can perform not only the active, hands-on daily research, reading, computer work, Interneting sort of stuff, but so they can also have the place, which is a secure place and a place where archival material is documented.

Sometimes it's the most innocuous and seemingly irrelevant thing, but you look at the passport of an immigrant from Europe or any number of other places from the 1920s or 1930s, you look at the boat card, the shipping card that accompanied them, stamped, showing which ship these folks came over on, and you know what? A lot of those folks were illegal immigrants in their own right; they were.

I've talked to many an old Ukrainian, Hungarian, Pole, Italian. With the comfort now of Canadian citizenship well secured, they will acknowledge that, yes, given their desperation as economic or political or religious refugees, their situation was so oppressive that, yes, they broke the law, they lied. They sometimes misled the authorities, just like refuseniks out of the Soviet Union who were seeking entry to Israel. It's acknowledged. I've just read Chaim Potok's book, his history of one family in the refusenik movement. He chronicles the deceit that Jews in the Soviet Union had to resort to, to get out of the Soviet Union.

These are and were, I suppose, illegal immigrants, but I applaud them. I applaud the courage of these immigrants. I applaud their willingness to do what they had to do to save their families, to make life better for their kids and their grandkids. At the end of the day, I'm the kid of one of those kinds of immigrants.

This sort of material is disappearing daily as people get older, as people pass away and families move on and get rid of the clutter and the boxes of material and the shipping steamer containers of material. This stuff is

disappearing rapidly and we have a limited time frame in which to preserve it.

The author and sponsor of this bill has got to move on beyond this bill. We've got to support this bill today, but we've got to use this as a jump-off point for a major campaign to generate a mobilization by libraries, museums, archivists across Ontario to launch a major campaign to get resources out there, because this is SOS. It really is that level of emergency. This stuff is disappearing. It's disappearing into the blue boxes, into the garbage bins, into the ashbins, into the fire bins of any number of backyards on a daily basis. It is far too valuable to see slip away.

I refuse to let our history, as preserved and recorded, reflect only the history of the very wealthy and the very elite, the ones who have the money and the resources: the Eaton family and the what-have-yous. I refuse to let them monopolize the recorded and preserved history of our province and our country, because the real history of this province and this country is the small immigrants, the little people. I have no hesitation calling them "the little people." Those are the kind of people who came from the little villages like where my family came from, peasants who came here and who possessed these huge collections of everything from photographs to marriage certificates that constitute the real history of this province and our greatness.

We've got to fight and we've got to treat it as an emergency scenario to get resources out there into communities, big and small, to give them the tools to develop archival facilities, to run them properly, to staff them, to properly catalogue and preserve and collect this type of information.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate with respect to the bill brought forth by the member from Perth-Middlesex, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week. The act reads, "The week beginning on the first Monday in April in each year is proclaimed as Archives Awareness Week." I want to indicate my support of the member for the work he's done in this area, and I certainly hope the House would support this bill today.

Archives are an important part of any community, but I have to say that I believe the area I represent is served by the best regional archives in the province. The Simcoe County Archives, founded in 1966, was the first county archives established in Ontario.

The Simcoe County Archives lists on its Web site two principal roles, and I quote from the Web site:

"The first of these is the preservation and promotion of Simcoe county's cultural and visible heritage. The archives collects, preserves, and makes accessible to the public, the documentary history of Simcoe county. The archives' extensive and important collection of maps, photographs, original manuscripts, magnetic and digital recordings, newspapers and other records make it one of the most highly regarded 'regional' archives in the country. The archival collection documents the political, social and economic history of Simcoe county. In addition to private manuscript collections, the archives

houses the records and documentary histories of schools, churches, businesses and all manner of institutions, and its earliest record, an original map, dates from 1540.

"The archives' second role is to provide efficient permanent records management services to the executive, management and administrative departments of the county of Simcoe, and also to serve the same needs of the municipalities which comprise the county. The archives provides storage, organization and public access for the permanent retention, non-active public records of the various levels of Simcoe county government."

The Simcoe County Archives serves Ontarians and others who are researching their own personal heritage and ancestors. This archives has census records available dating back to 1861, farm and business directories dating as far back as 1866 and information collected from headstones and monument inscriptions from many area cemeteries.

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As the member for Perth-Middlesex has said, these services are very important to maintaining the history of our citizens, our communities and our province as a whole.

With greater public awareness and interest in our archives, those archives could be further improved. Individuals might be encouraged to turn over any documents or photographs they have stored in their attics or basements to the archives, where those materials can be properly stored, maintained and catalogued for future use.

Greater public interest could also encourage greater corporate involvement in archives, both as contributors of documents and as sponsors of projects. Archives are facing one of the largest projects they've ever faced: creating an on-line catalogue of archival material. The AAO's program, ARCHEION, will someday make archives easily accessible from people's home computers anywhere in the world.

For these reasons the Archives Association of Ontario has made raising public awareness part of its mandate. By supporting this bill, I support that goal and our archives.

The National Archives of Canada contributed extensively to the CBC miniseries Canada: A People's History. Those are just some of the good works that can contribute to our society. Archives can also contribute to cultural tourism.

I also believe that the Simcoe County Archives, in terms of the type of work it's performing and its representation here today at this debate on this public bill, certainly is significant. I welcome the participation and the attendance of members of the archives authority.

I'm pleased to speak on this bill and I'm confident that it will receive the support that it deserves.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I want to commend, first of all, the member for Perth-Middlesex for his bill, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week. Although I want to commend him for that part of the support, if you want, to the archives association, I want to reiterate what my colleague from Elgin-

Middlesex-London has stated, and I also heard the member for Niagara Centre and others speak about the fact that the support to the archives association means more than that. It has to mean more than that.

One of the roles of government is not only to provide this kind of support, which is an integral part of supporting the archives, but there's also a role of government in ensuring that the professionals who preserve, interpret and process these documents have the resources that they need to continue their work. That's all part and parcel of this, because we can have the best archives in the world, but if we don't maintain the numbers of the professionals required and if we don't have the facilities and consistently upgrade them, improve them and add to them, if we don't move forward in those areas, we're only going to move backwards.

Today, as you know, we have very little protection when it comes to our heritage buildings. One of the unfortunate aspects in this Legislature is the fact that when it comes to government policy, since my time here, there's been an indifference to heritage. That's the best way I can describe it.

I toured the Archives of Ontario a couple of times and I found them absolutely fascinating. One of the most interesting aspects of it is the actual technology they have in preserving some of these rare documents so that they'll be there for posterity, but also making them available because of the technology they have to put them on the Web site and to have people leaf through without damaging the original pieces. That's a great deal of technical and professional work. I have a sense that when it comes to actually supporting it with a fiscal backup, I believe the Ontario Conservatives this day have, I'll use the word "indifference," to this aspect of our cultural heritage.

I was speaking with my colleague from Toronto Centre-Rosedale, and he spoke to me about the lesbian and gay archives, for instance, that he has a personal interest in. It helps us to understand what our identity is.

One of the things I have done in my search, if you want, of identity is that I co-authored and did some research on the history of Italian-Canadians in my area, as a way to be a part of this Canadian diversity that we have, this Ontario diversity. That's what the archives do: they preserve the history of Ontario's peoples and all of these wonderful stories and anecdotes.

I find that when we sit around at caucus that the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is a wealth of information when it comes to historical information about this political setting. Again, turning back to the archives—I'm not trying to say that you're an archivist or that you're a museum of sorts—I want to say that it's really important that we maintain and support the archives association, and I thank the member for Perth-Middlesex.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's really nice to stand here this morning and support Bill 116, the Archives Awareness Week Act, 2001, by our colleague Mr Johnson from Perth. We've talked a little bit about archives awareness in the past and I'm really pleased to see that Mr Johnson has taken the initiative.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome all these fine young students here this morning. It's great to see them here. We're talking about the archives of the province of Ontario. I don't know if you know what they are yet, but you will know over the next few minutes when we vote for this bill.

I would like to take a moment and speak as well to something my colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford spoke on, and that's the Simcoe County Archives. It's too bad I couldn't have gone ahead of him because he stole some of my thunder with some of his comments. But as a person who spent 18½ years in the county of Simcoe as reeve of a community, I'm very pleased that the county of Simcoe was the first county-based archives in Ontario, dating back to 1966. If you've ever had an opportunity to visit an archives at the county level in the province, I commend you for it. If you haven't, I would ask, if you ever have an opportunity to visit Simcoe county, that you come to Midhurst and have a look at the archives there. You'll find what they've done with the archives in Simcoe over the last almost 40 years now absolutely amazing.

I would like to give a little bit of history on the Simcoe County Archives. As I said, the original archives were founded in 1996 as part of Simcoe county's Canadian centennial project. That was an amazing project. Everybody remembers Expo '67 and all that type of thing. Norbert Moran commenced his duties as Simcoe county's first archivist on May 2, 1966, and the transfer of the county's corporate records to its new archives took place later that month. The archives opened to the public on November 22, 1966, as the 2,200-square-foot addition to the Simcoe County Museum was unveiled for the first time. That's where the archives are today.

In January 1975, Peter Moran followed his father as the second Simcoe county archivist, a winner of the J.J. Talman award for pioneering efforts in the field of local archives.

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Peter oversaw the evolution of Simcoe County Archives into one of the finest regional archives in the province of Ontario, as well as in Canada. A specialized, 4,000-square-foot controlled environmental structure was opened in February 1980 as the archives continued to grow. As I said earlier, the addition in 1992 effectively doubled the size of the archives to 8,000 square feet. The person I actually got this information from, Bruce Beacock, was named archivist in 1994 and a year later, in 1995, was given the permanent position as the Simcoe county archivist.

I know when we talk about archives—and the member from Elgin-Middlesex mentioned it—about how many records have been destroyed over the years in some of the smaller municipalities, I was really pleased to see that when Simcoe county restructured in 1993 and 1994, all of the records from the 33 municipalities were taken to the archives and preserved. I know it was a big project because you had literally roomfuls of material that had to be documented and set aside so that the staff at the archives could work with it.

The archives around the province are not very vocal. That's for sure. We don't get a lot of resolutions or lobbying days here at Queen's Park from the archives. But I compliment the member from Perth for his foresight. It brings some attention to the archives here in the provincial Legislature. A lot of people don't even know what they are across our province. That's why I did mention it to the young people in the audience. It is important that we preserve our past. I know, as Mr Tascona mentioned, we have records at the Simcoe County Archives dating back to 1540. That's the original maps they have.

With that, I compliment the member for bringing forth this bill. I think everyone in the House will support it. I would hope that you'll continue with these fine thoughts that you've come forward within your private member's bill and your agriculture week etc. Thank you very much.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I'm pleased to rise and support the motion standing in the name of our friend the member from Perth, the Laird of Listowel, in drawing our attention to the importance of archives. I want to happily endorse the bill and use this opportunity this morning to say a couple of things to the provincial Legislature here in Ontario about our provincial archives. I do so in a very ecumenical spirit because I want to observe that the province of Ontario has, without a doubt, one of the truly great archival collections at 77 Grenville Street and elsewhere. And we have, without a doubt, the worst physical space in which that material is located of any of the provinces or the federal government across the Dominion. That should be of concern to this Legislature.

It is not a fault of the Harris government. Quite frankly, the blame can be shared by provincial governments over the last 25 years. How many of you here have been over to that eight- or nine-storey office building about two blocks from here? Again, a great collection in a perfectly awful place. Because archival material is, as we all know, so very important for both social and economic reasons, we owe it to the people of Ontario, these young people in the galleries behind, among others, to better display the materials that we have not very far from this place. We have hundreds of thousands of photographs and maps and other very valuable materials. We have no exhibition hall here in this great metropolitan centre of Toronto. Why is that? Why are we not taking advantage of that great resource at a time when we know that things like genealogy are booming? Archives on-line are bringing tens of thousands of new people into contact with this information, as the member from Niagara was rightly pointing out: all kinds of new Canadians very interested in knowing something about their roots and their connection now to this new land of theirs.

A famous Canadian academic and the second Dominion archivist, a remarkable character, Sir Arthur George Doughty, who ran the National Archives from about 1904 to 1936, said, in a public remark in 1924, the following: "Of all national assets, archives are the most precious. They are the gift of one generation to another, and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our

civilization." Powerful words. Strong medicine. Boy, by Doughty's standard, we here in the province of Ontario don't measure up very well.

I want to make the point as well: previous speakers have done an excellent job of saying that in their communities there are wonderful local archives. In the Ottawa Valley, which I am proud to represent, I have several. Two come to mind this morning. Heritage Renfrew: people like Marge Lindsay and Dave Lorente and Jim MacGregor and many others—some of them well-known and related to the Minister of Corrections—have done a fabulous job with the Renfrew archives. Down the road in Arnprior, we have the Arnprior and District Archives: a great collection exceptionally well organized and presented by Laurie Dougherty and others like Peter Hessel, who was instrumental in bringing about that Arnprior and District Archives collection, which among other things highlights the great lumber heritage of the Ottawa Valley—great stories.

I'm finding, as I'm sure all members are, that something seems to be happening. I think the member from Barrie just pointed out that we have this series running on national television, Canada: A People's History. There's a tremendous audience for that. I don't know whether it's this increasingly rootless suburban world that we now all seem to occupy that is making people wonder about their roots and their past. I simply want to support the member, congratulate him for bringing this forward; and I want to say in a very bi-partisan way to this Legislature that not only should we support our friend from Listowel, but we should know this: we have a fabulous collection in an absolutely appalling location. We have done precious little to highlight that collection for its social or its economic value. I think in supporting our friend from Listowel we should collectively try to do something about that.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I rise today to join the debate on Bill 116, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week, which was put forward by the member for Perth-Middlesex. I'd like to also take note of the fact that there's a school here from Burlington today—the John T. Tuck Public School—here in the gallery and welcome them to the Legislature.

Certainly, I know the Archives Association of Ontario has been instrumental in bringing forward this bill and supporting it. There has been an Archives Awareness Day the first Monday of each year, and this bill would extend that to a complete week. The day has been very successful in the past, and this would extend it to a week to raise awareness further of archives.

I rise today in support of this bill because I see an ever-increasing interest in our history. Over the past few years, countless books in Parry Sound-Muskoka have been written by authors such as John Macfie from the Parry Sound area. I have one of his books, *Logging Days* in Parry Sound. He's written several books. In fact, I ran into him at a Legion event about a month or so ago and he made me aware of his latest book, which I've got a copy of. Robert J. Boyer in Bracebridge, a well-known historian and former member of provincial parliament for

Muskoka, has written several books on the history of Bracebridge and the Muskoka area.

This interest has also brought about the refurbishing of some major pieces of our history; in particular in our area the Segwun steamship was relaunched in 1980 and continues to take thousands of people around the Muskoka lakes every year, running from the spring right through into the fall. More recently in Huntsville, a group of steam train and history enthusiasts brought back the Portage Flyer. The Portage Flyer is a narrow-gauge steam train that transported vacationers to Bigwin Inn of Lake of Bays, a whole mile-and-an-eighth-long run from Penn Lake to Lake of Bays from 1904 to 1958. The Flyer, which now runs out of Huntsville's Muskoka Heritage Place and was just recently brought back into service in the last couple of years, was the smallest commercial train in the world. I had a chance to ride it this summer when the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario visited Bracebridge and Huntsville and in fact went for a ride on the Flyer herself.

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In the west side of my riding, the Parry Sound fire hall, built in 1893, has been refurbished and attracts locals and tourists interested in the area's history.

Such projects cannot be accomplished without historically accurate information, information that is usually and sometimes only found in archives.

As much as such organizations turn to archives to help them re-create aspects of our history, individuals also turn to archives for their own heritage or the history of their possessions. At the annual Muskoka antique boat show, many of the launch owners love to show off their spectacular wooden launches. Without archives, much of the information having to do with those beautiful launches and boats would be lost, and that extra added dimension would be lost.

Right now in the West Parry Sound District Museum, which is a very active museum in the town of Parry Sound, you'll find an interesting exhibit about temperance and prohibition, something maybe some of the members of this House could learn something from. This exhibit has been researched and developed by the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives.

As the member for Perth-Middlesex has said, the Archives Association of Ontario is trying to raise awareness of archives and their role in our society. Passing this bill is one way we can offer our support to that endeavour.

I might add that in my area there seems to be certainly a lot of recent awareness to do with history and archives. In fact, tomorrow I have a meeting with Barbara Patterson, chair of the Muskoka Heritage Foundation archives task force, and also another meeting to do with history.

My time is running out, so I'd like to offer support to this bill. I'm sure it's going to be successful in raising awareness that can help generate support for archives.

The Acting Speaker: I would remind members of the gallery that we love to have you here with us, but you cannot participate in any way in the proceedings.

Response, the member for Perth-Middlesex.

Mr Johnson: I just wanted to express my appreciation for all those who have taken the time to express their opinion and enter the debate, and we should take those suggestions and ideas into consideration as this bill goes forward.

I did want to sum up my own feelings about the participation and the support for the bill. Yes, there is always need for more money in government programs to support such worthy projects as archives. I think the member from Renfrew makes a very good point when he points out that—here, for instance, we have students visiting us from different areas, including Burlington. They may take in a trip to the Royal Ontario Museum, which has a very good presence up on Queen's Park, up Avenue Road, so close that it can be taken into consideration for a school trip to this place. Our archives aren't in the type of facility that lends itself to that sort of trip, and maybe that's something that we, as legislators, should be looking at so that students, in the years to come, could visit the Archives of Ontario, in particular, when they come and visit places in Toronto like the CN Tower, the Science Centre and those other provincial landmarks in our midst.

I did want to thank all those who participated in the debate this morning.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for dealing with ballot item number 32. At 12 o'clock noon I will place the questions related to these two ballot items.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Mr Speaker, I wonder if I could ask unanimous consent that the questions be put forward now?

The Acting Speaker: The standing orders are quite clear. Because this is private members' business, this obviously is not a whip situation. The vote cannot take place before 12 o'clock noon.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to engage the House and advise that the grade 5 students from John T. Tuck Public School are present in the House today from the great riding of Burlington.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. As you know, that is not a point of order. They've been introduced now twice, and that's terrific. It was great fun to have them with us.

CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS
AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2001

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 31. Mr Spina has moved second reading of Bill 117, An Act to proclaim Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I thank all of the members of the House for supporting this. I would ask if the bill could be referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Spina has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX ARCHIVES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 32. Mr Johnson has moved second reading of Bill 116, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I request that the bill be referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Johnson has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PAYMENTS FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): This government has been working on the backs of working-class people and the poor. The government continued to make a mockery of working-class people this week when they proposed to give \$100 back for each child in households making under \$35,000 a year. Tell me, now much money has this government taken from the people of the province?

Let me just quickly reflect. When they came into power, 22% was cut from the income of the poorest people in our province, rent control was completely dismantled and the squeegee kids were sent off the roads. The fact is that now the deathbed repentance comes. They're giving \$100 to poor people, hoping they can buy these votes.

Speaking to the poor outside, they said to me, "I can see through this government. They gave away all this money before to their richest and best friends and now are giving this token \$100 hoping it is going to kick-start the economy." Can you imagine, \$100 for a poor family will kick-start this economy? The people are seeing through this. This deathbed repentance will come home

to roost one of these days when we have the election and we have Dalton McGuinty and a good team of Liberals running this government.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Several weeks ago I had the privilege of attending the Scarborough support services volunteer recognition night. Scarborough Support Services for the Elderly Inc is a non-profit agency whose mission is to initiate and implement programs and services that improve the quality of life for the elderly, disabled and/or chronically ill adults in their efforts to remain independent in their own homes in Scarborough. Their goals are to encourage and support the ethnic provider agencies; to work together to allow for easy access to programs and services that will benefit their community; to work with service providers and funders to ensure that policy changes are sensitive to their client and staff needs; and to continue to encourage corporations, schools, service clubs and religious organizations to work with agencies to maintain the volunteer spirit in the community.

The work and commitment that the volunteers have shown to this organization is simply outstanding. They help with Meals on Wheels, snow removal, grass cutting and homemaking, just as a few of the things they do.

It's important to take the time to say thank you to these outstanding people and the outstanding service all of them have provided to my community which has made Scarborough a better place to live, work and play.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): This weekend, I know all members will be participating on Sunday in the laying of wreaths at cenotaphs throughout Ontario as we commemorate Remembrance Day, and later today we will have an opportunity to reflect more on that.

I wanted to report to you that on Sunday I will be attending at the cenotaph in Windsor. I will be attending Branch 12, the Paul Martin branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. I'll be laying a wreath at the Riverside branch in the great town of Riverside as well as the Colonel Poisson branch in Tecumseth. I will join with our entire community in not only remembering those who gave their lives in World War II, but I wanted to take an opportunity today to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Legion and all they do not only in our province but right across the country—a remarkable contribution in so many spheres of activity.

In our community, the list of their contributions and good works goes on and on and on, whether it be for poor kids or capital infrastructure projects. I really think all of us should reflect on the Legion and what it does for our home communities and for the people in them.

Today I wanted to pay special tribute to the ladies' auxiliary in zone A1, the zone of the Royal Canadian Legion in the Windsor area. Ina Whitson, Esther Robin-

son, Marion Kawala and a number of other ladies do just a terrific job on behalf of the ladies' auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion in our area. As always, I look forward to joining with them as we remember those who gave their lives for us. I want to pay special tribute to all of them for what they do every day in our community.

DIWALI

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Next Wednesday, November 14, Ontario's South Asian community will celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights. Over 1 billion people throughout the world celebrate Diwali. India, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia and Fiji will also join in the festivities.

We celebrate the end of the harvest season and the Hindu New Year. In preparation for Diwali, prayers are offered to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, and to Lord Ganesh. Lamps called deeyas are lit in every home. Sweets are prepared and shared among family and friends.

The festival marks the return of Lord Rama to his kingdom of Ayodhya after 14 years in exile. Diwali also commemorates the many triumphs of the gurus in the proud history of the Sikh faith. As well, it marks the return of guru Hargobind Ji to the city of Amritsar after his release from captivity of the Mughal ruler Jahangir.

Diwali is a central event in the calendar of the South Asian community and a vital part of our heritage. I hope all members of this House will join in supporting my Bill 98, proclaiming South Asian Heritage Month for the hundreds of thousands of members of my proud community.

Namaste. Happy Diwali to all.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): As Remembrance Day approaches, it is appropriate that we pause and reflect on the profound selflessness and courage that many Canadians have demonstrated through the years in the course of their duty to preserve the rights and freedoms we enjoy. To put oneself in danger to protect our society, our laws and our values as Canadian citizens is an act we can never repay, but we can always remember and honour those special men and women. It is with this in mind, and in keeping with my new private member's bill entitled the Highway Memorials for Fallen Police Officers Act, that I honour the lives of another group of heroes: our protectors, our law enforcement officials.

It is shocking that since 1903, over 200 Ontario police officers have been killed in the line of duty while working to preserve our rights, our freedoms and our safety, police officers like Constable Joe MacDonald and Sergeant Rick McDonald, both from Sudbury, Sergeant Margaret Eve and Constable James McFadden from Chatham-Kent, Detective Constable Bill Hancox from Toronto, Senior Police Constable Thomas Coffin from

Midland, and Constable Michael Gula from Niagara Falls.

It is to honour these people and all police officers who have died while on duty that I introduced my private member's bill. I urge the Ontario government to pass it quickly. As citizens of this great country and this wonderful province, we must never forget those police officers who have given their lives while attempting to safeguard ours. We must never forget.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): It is a privilege to speak today about one of my constituents, Sutton resident Mr Ed O'Connor, a veteran of World War II and an author. He has written a book called *The Corvette Years*. This is Mr O'Connor's first attempt at writing a book. He was surprised and flattered when his book was mentioned in Pierre Berton's new book, *Marching as to War*.

O'Connor recalls in his book that the corvette was one of the toughest ships ever built and a difficult ship to sail in. He served aboard the HMCS Morden. O'Connor's ship was involved in an incredible rescue effort. The liner SS Winnipeg II was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. The small corvette picked up 194 survivors along with the 70 crew members. The ship was bulging at the seams. Some survivors were injured in the blast. A doctor, also a survivor, worked with those other survivors for three days without sleep. It took four days to reach Newfoundland in a wicked gale.

The surviving shipmates still stay in touch. The last surviving corvette, the HMCS Sackville, is now a memorial in Halifax.

Sunday is Remembrance Day. I want to thank you, Ed O'Connor, a veteran who has left a legacy so that we will always remember those who served and particularly remember those who gave their lives for their country and for our freedom.

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GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): This is useful lesson number three for the 50 or so leadership candidates across the aisle. I would ask that you pass my comments on to Mr Eves because he's not here.

I continue to read with fascination the Blueprint, Mike Harris's plan to keep Ontario on the right track. I do notice the tracks have been diverging a little bit over the past couple of weeks, but nevertheless I realize that you have done a substantial number of initiatives that are great stuff that aren't in the book and I want to give you credit for them.

You people increased the northern travel allowance. Oh, just a minute, that was Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals who caused that to happen. You only did it because we were right.

You passed legislation about the Oak Ridges moraine. Great stuff, except that it was Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals who caused that to happen. You only did it because you knew we were right.

You want to protect children from prostitution. Great effort, but it was Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals who initiated that bill. You did it, again, only because we were right.

The families of the victims of OC Transpo: That happened only because Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals made you do it, because we were right. It wasn't in the book. It wasn't your idea.

Replica guns: you laughed when a private member's bill was introduced on replica guns. You subsequently passed it because you knew we were right.

Now do the next thing: approve funding for macular degeneration, because you know we are right.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): For almost five months now, 20 weeks, workers at Kennedy House Youth Services in Uxbridge have been locked out by the employer, the largest maximum security jail for young offenders in this province. Today I join these workers, members of OPSEU local 361. They're here with us in the Legislature today at a rally where they demanded that this government start to take action to bring about a fair settlement and end this lockout by the employer.

This is just one more example of what a sham this government's propaganda campaign around young offenders really is. When it comes to actually taking responsibility for locking up dangerous young offenders, the government has privatized the operation, given away the farms and given away the store to private sector operators and then stood aside while Kennedy House demands mind-boggling concessions and then locks out these workers.

In fact, you should know that communities across southern Ontario have been put at great risk because young offenders from this maximum security facility have been transferred to, among other things, open security facilities.

Kennedy is still receiving its money from the province, the taxpayers are being gouged and these workers are left out to dry. All these women and men want is a fair settlement. It's time today for the government to face up to its responsibilities. Intervene, take action and do the right thing for once.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I believe that this year Remembrance Day will have a different impact on many more millions of people around this world. It is because every Remembrance Day we talk about the great World Wars I and II, the wars since and

the wars that are always continuing, particularly in the Middle East. Now we have added to the wars the most heinous enemy ever, that being the enemy of terrorism and the terrorists who take part in that.

I will be at the service of the Royal Canadian Legion's Branch 82 at the cenotaph in Port Credit on Sunday the 11th. It will be with great pride that I stand there thinking about all the brave men and women who continue to sacrifice their lives in the protection of freedom and democracy. I will also be thinking about my own father, who died on February 4, 1945, just three months before the end of the war. He served in the Royal Navy out of Britain.

Then, when I come home from that service on Sunday, I will be returning to my own husband, who served for five years overseas. He was born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, joined at the age of 18 and returned to Canada when he was 23. He landed in Europe on D-Day plus nine and is one of those modest veterans typical of so many with whom we uphold our love, our pride and our gratitude.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we continue, I'd like to bring to the members' attention in the members' west gallery Mr Walt Elliot, the member for Halton North in the 34th Parliament. Please join me in welcoming our former colleague.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'd like to draw the members of the Legislative Assembly's attention to two special guests from the great riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot who are here today: Mr Don Johnson and Mr Erin Kersten. They're here on a study tour of Ontario democracy.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I beg leave to present the report from the standing committee on estimates.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Mr Curling from the standing committee on estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved, that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries and offices be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Dispense. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

INTERJURISDICTIONAL SUPPORT ORDERS ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LES ORDONNANCES ALIMENTAIRES D'EXÉCUTION RÉCIPROQUE

Mr Young moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 131, An Act to facilitate the making, recognition and variation of interjurisdictional support orders / Projet de loi 131, Loi visant à faciliter le prononcé, la reconnaissance et la modification des ordonnances alimentaires d'exécution réciproque.

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

The Attorney General for a short statement?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Mr Speaker, with your permission, I'd prefer to make a statement during ministers' statements period.

PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO THE FACTS ACT, 2001 LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ACCÈS DU PUBLIC AUX FAITS

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend the Public Inquiries Act / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes publiques.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Bob Wood (London West): The short title of this bill is People's Access to the Facts Act. It amends the Public Inquiries Act to allow any member of the Legislative Assembly to propose a resolution to set up an inquiry into any matter that the act allows. The resolution either designates one or more persons who are to conduct the inquiry or requires the Speaker of the Assembly or the Lieutenant Governor in council to appoint them. The assembly is required to vote on the resolution within 60 sessional days after it's proposed.

This in effect gives the Legislature itself the same power to call inquiries as the cabinet now has. Surely this power should rest in the hands of all the elected representatives of the people. Democracy and transparency do work.

1350

OPTOMETRY AMENDMENT ACT, 2001 LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES OPTOMÉTRISTES

Mr Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to amend the Optometry Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les optométristes.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This bill amends the Optometry Act, 1991, to allow optometrists to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm very interested in the member for London West's bill. I seek unanimous consent of the House that upon printing of the bill, it immediately be given second and third reading consideration some time when the House next meets.

The Speaker: Unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

VISITORS

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I'd like to recognize in the gallery representatives of Nikkei Heritage Day, Japanese Canadians of this province, who are here today: Grace Omoto, Betty Moritsugu and Frank Moritsugu.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I ask members of the House to recognize my son Erin and his lovely wife Rebecca, who are visiting from Halifax.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous agreement among the House leaders to have the order for third reading of Bill 14, An Act to encourage awareness of the need for the early detection and treatment of brain tumours, immediately called and decided upon without further debate.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2001 LOI DE 2001 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TUMEURS CÉRÉBRALES

Mr Wood moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to encourage awareness of the need for the early detection and treatment of brain tumours / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à favoriser la sensibilisation à la nécessité du dépistage et du traitement précoces des tumeurs cérébrales.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all members of the House for their co-operation in passing this bill. This bill is going to save lives both here in Ontario and, I think, throughout Canada. Thank you to all.

The Speaker: I thank the member for that kind gesture.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for about five minutes on Remembrance Day and then have a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Jackson: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and honourable members.

More than 80 years ago, from 1914 to 1918, our nation sent 425,000 soldiers overseas to fight in the First World War. Those Canadians—students, brothers, husbands and sons—went overseas to fight for a just cause and for democratic freedoms. These young men fought in a series of costly and bloody battles, and by the end of the First World War more than 69,000 Canadian troops had died and 172,000 were wounded. They died fighting at Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Bourlon Wood, Mons, Passchendaele and Ypres. In that final battle, our Canadian soldiers were exposed to German gas attacks, yet continued to fight. They showed amazing tenacity and undaunted courage in the face of this terrible peril.

Today, there are fewer than 500 Canadian veterans of the First World War still alive. This Sunday, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, marking the moment in 1918 when fighting in the First World War stopped, we as Canadians are asked to pause and remember the sacrifices of those thousands of men who left their homes, their families and their friends and died fighting for the cause of freedom.

On Sunday, let us also be extremely grateful to the more than one million men and women from Canada and Newfoundland who served in the Army, the Air Force and the Navy in combat during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. Let us also remember the more than 47,000 Canadian men and women who died and did not return from their battle for freedom. Canadians lost their lives fighting in Dieppe, in Normandy, the north Atlantic, defending Hong Kong, during the liberation of Italy and many other important campaigns in the air, on the sea and on land. This Sunday let us remember those fallen soldiers.

Let us never forget the 516 Canadian soldiers who died in the Korean War almost 50 years ago. The battles of Hill 355 and Hill 187, among others, saw Canadians fighting through swamps and rice fields, through torrential rains and snow.

I have a deep and personal awareness of the sacrifices made by Canadian veterans. In my family, my father and four uncles signed up to serve their country in wartime. Five went overseas and four returned. Growing up, I took immense interest in trying to understand what happened to my father and to my uncles as I listened to their stories of that war. I remember how hard it was for me to listen to my father, knowing that he enlisted at age 17, barely half way through high school, and exposed himself to such peril at such a young age. These were very young men and women.

For many of today's generation of young men and women, hearing first-hand accounts about the great sacrifices made by great Canadians is all too rare an occurrence. For that reason, and thanks to the efforts of the Dominion Institute of Canada and this government's Ministry of Citizenship, over 50,000 students across Ontario over the next three years will get the rare privilege of hearing a veteran recall in detail the hardships encountered while serving our nation overseas. Through our Memory Project these students will hear about the battles that were fought across the oceans, about the friendships that were built in times of war and about the bittersweet joy of being able to return home when many friends and comrades did not. It is fitting too that students should be the ones who hear these inspiring stories, as the soldiers were quite literally the same age as they are when they journeyed overseas to war.

Ultimately, many of these veterans will not be physically able to tell their stories in schools. The average age of our Second World War veterans today is 79, and our Korean War veterans average 72 years of age.

The government realizes that many of our veterans need special care. That is why our government was pleased to improve the accessibility of long-term-care services for veterans in Ontario. We were fortunate to work co-operatively with Veterans Affairs Canada. Our province has earmarked a total of 250 long-term-care beds as veterans' priority access beds. This was a first for Canada and started here in Ontario. We started in northern Ontario and, because of the success of our pilot project, we expanded across Ontario. Now a total of 81 facilities have priority access beds, including 29 facilities with 100 priority access beds in northern Ontario.

Our government continues to work in partnership with Veterans Affairs Canada on behalf of Ontario veterans. Our one-stop-shopping pilot project for veterans in London, Middlesex and Grey has resulted in better, more streamlined service for veterans, who would otherwise have to deal with a number of different departments and a number of different governments. It's been very well received, and we want to thank Veterans Affairs Canada, which continues to work closely with the province of Ontario.

When any of us pause beside a war memorial, the names we read are representative of a silent library of lost lifetimes. Each name is a young Canadian whose hopes and dreams were cut short by the ultimate sacrifice made on our nation's behalf.

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This Sunday, once again our veterans who came home will shine their shoes, put on their medal-emblazoned blazers and go on parade in tribute to their fallen comrades. Those who can still march do, and those who are now too frail will watch and wish they could join the ranks. Whenever the veterans march, we are filled with admiration. As a member of Branch 60, Royal Canadian Legion, in Burlington, I will join our veterans with pride, with admiration and reverence.

We must honour our veterans' memory, we must protect the freedoms they fought and died for, and we must remember them. As a new generation, as legislators, as protectors of our democratic heritage, we must remember the immortal words of Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae:

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): In a legislative body which, by its very nature, is partisan and often confrontational, there is an occasion when partisanship is set aside and consensus is easily reached. That occasion is the last sessional day before Remembrance Day, when members of the Legislative Assembly pause together to remember those Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice: the sacrifice of their lives in a war fought to defend freedom and democracy.

Over the years, there have been moving tributes paid to those whose memory we honour as a nation on November 11, tributes delivered with eloquence, passion and emotion by those who served in our armed forces in times of war.

Far better than we, who did not experience military service on a personal basis, some members of the Legislative Assembly, themselves veterans of conflicts around the world, shared with us and with those who have access to the deliberations of this House the horrors of war and the immense sacrifices made by those who fought in defence of our way of life.

What is often forgotten, as we march alongside veterans of the wars, is that so many of these men and women were very young when they entered the service of their country in the war effort overseas, and far too many did not return home to their loved ones or have the opportunity to live lives filled with all the experiences that are available to those of us who are beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

One of the most moving moments at the cenotaphs across our country is the laying of the wreath by the Silver Cross Mother who has seen her loved one or loved ones depart for wars in foreign lands and not return. One wonders what memories pass through their minds as they move, often haltingly and almost always with assistance, toward the war memorial in their community to lay this wreath which carries so much significance.

War is all too often glorified and indeed mischaracterized in popular movies. The depiction of events bears little resemblance to the realities of the battlefield, for in reality our veterans will tell us the days were grim, the conflict so very often hard and the damage inflicted, both on the body and the mind, often irreparable.

While it is the dead we honour in Remembrance Day services, our thoughts are also with those who returned from action, sometimes scarred both physically and psychologically by the ravages of war. The tears that appear in the eyes of veterans whose memories recall all too vividly the loss of friends, the destruction of homes and the ugly wounds of conflict are understood by all of us.

As the lines of marching veterans thin from age, infirmity and death, we who remain must assume a special obligation to remember. In his poem, *In Flanders Fields*, John McCrae refers to the passing of the torch to those who succeed our fallen comrades, and most assuredly we must all, young and old, take up the challenge of those who made the supreme sacrifice on our behalf.

While the focus on remembrance and reflection is, as it should be, on November 11, it is essential that we who enjoy the benefits of democracy for which our veterans fought and died honour them throughout the year.

The Royal Canadian Legion and other veterans' organizations across our land need our support more than ever to maintain their efforts to preserve Remembrance Day as an occasion for all Canadians to remember the sacrifices made in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and other conflicts in which our armed forces have been involved.

They need our support as well to ensure our veterans are treated with dignity, respect, generosity and compassion in their senior years as battle scars on the body and mind begin to take their toll on their lives.

It is said that in communities in the Netherlands, France and other countries where Canadians liberated people from their oppressors, to this very day the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who had the yoke of occupation lifted by our Canadian forces remember and pay tribute to our fellow Canadians for the sacrifice made so very long ago.

When we see members of the Royal Canadian Legion, when we see those who served so that we might enjoy the democratic freedoms that are ours today, when we see these individuals often shivering in the cold winds of November, poppy box in hand, let us stop to say thank you and let us join in two minutes of silent remembrance on November 11. Those who are no longer with us and those who returned from war should expect no less from all of us.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I'm honoured to rise today on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute to the millions of Canadian men and women who sacrificed so much during the most difficult years of war in Europe and in the Far East to restore peace and democracy to the western world, during the war, and yes, it was a war, in Korea—to call it anything

else is to deny the incredible harshness of it and the incredible toll it took on so many—and yes, Canadians during the course of the war in Vietnam, and subsequent to that Canadians as peacekeeping forces in so many parts of the world through to the present day.

My colleagues and I, like every one of you, attend Remembrance Day ceremonies in our communities. Last weekend I was in Pelham and attended that ceremony. I was in Welland. This weekend I'll be Thorold and in Merritton. My colleagues from the north similarly, over the course of two weekends, will be visiting as many communities as they can in their huge ridings.

I believe I speak for all of us when I say that we feel honoured to be able to stand silently in the presence of so many of our distinguished veterans—veterans of our Canadian air forces, naval forces, military forces and merchant marine.

We look into these aging faces, calm and reflective, and we wonder what horrors the eyes of these women and men have witnessed. Sadly, with each passing year, there are fewer and fewer of these brave men and women remaining to tell their stories. We know there are many stories to tell, stories that have been passed on through children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren so that we might never forget the incredible and terrible reality of war.

I was reminded only recently right here in this building that some of the faces belonging to our war heroes are less visible. Take a look, friends, if you will, just outside the door to this chamber and read the plaque on the wall. It reads, "In honour and memory of the coloured men of number two Construction Battalion CEF who volunteered their services and lost their lives in the Great War 1914-19." It makes one stop and reflect and realize that Canadians of every colour, every ethnicity, place of national origin and religion have been a part of the Canadian war effort. In fact, one of the members of that very same number two Construction Battalion, Rev William White, is the grandfather of a valued member of our caucus staff.

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Rev White kept a diary of his experience as a chaplain. The recent CBC documentary Honour Before Glory recounted the discrimination White and his fellow black soldiers suffered and were forced to overcome in order to serve their own country.

There were others like Rev White: First Nations soldiers like the Albertan Cree code transmitter Charles "Checker" Tomkins, who sent out radio messages containing vital information on Allied aircraft movements using his native language, his native tongue—a code, so it seemed to the Germans, that the German High Command was never able to crack.

Canada's diversity, its incredibly rich and strong diversity, was proudly represented among the ranks of soldiers who fought fascism and overcame it in the name of democracy and who engaged in other military efforts as Canadian military and merchant mariners.

But the war involved far more than just the military, far more than just service people. Men, women and children at home were called upon to work, and they did, in the factories and on farms, to donate blood and to nurse the wounded back to health, to provide needed supplies like tin and animal bones for making glycerine and glue. They did all of these things selflessly and energetically, praying for the day that their loved ones would return safely home from battle. Many of those loved ones never did.

So Remembrance Day, November 11, is an opportunity, one opportunity every year, to pay tribute to the sacrifices of these incredibly brave, selfless and committed men and women—inevitably young men and women. Don't forget, it's old women and men who declare wars; it's young women and men who fight them. These incredibly brave, courageous young women and men committed themselves to preserving the principles of democracy and freedom that we cherish today.

Remembrance is something that we ought to do every day, not just one day a year, because if we ever let that past escape us, if we ever leave it permanently behind us, if history slips from our view, from our sight, we run the terrible risk of repeating it.

And just as on Remembrance Day we're called upon, rightly so, to remember those who made the supreme sacrifice, to remember the fallen, let's reflect on the fact that as we remember the fallen, we have too often forgotten those who have returned: the wounded, the scarred, the maimed. If we are to truly pay tribute to the fallen, then we must commit ourselves to ensuring that those veterans who return, and who continue to return to this very day, are treated with decency and dignity, especially in their senior years as they become increasingly vulnerable. We had better be prepared as Canadians and as taxpayers to make the necessary investments so that those veterans of the First and Second World Wars and those veterans of every war and every Canadian military action since then, are cared for adequately after their return to their own country.

And just as we remember the fallen, let's remember those who serve today. Again, if we're to pay tribute to the fallen, to those who have made the supreme sacrifice, let's commit ourselves as Canadians, yes, and as taxpayers to ensuring that members of our armed forces of the year 2001 receive adequate salaries so that their families can live in some modest level of decency, so that the children needn't be reared in poverty as is the current case with most of the membership of our armed forces. Let's ensure that our armed forces, if they're to be called upon to perform dangerous and challenging tasks—and they have been—have the tools and the resources to do that job effectively, efficiently and as safely as possible.

What an insult it is to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, those fallen soldiers, what an insult it is to them to send their grandchildren and great-grandchildren into contexts and into venues of great danger without the equipment to do the job they're called upon to do.

I believe Remembrance Day has special meaning this year. Most of us in this chamber haven't lived through war as some do. There are only vague memories of struggles very far removed. We need this day to remind ourselves that our hold on freedom and democracy is very tenuous and that the attack on that freedom and democracy can be external or indeed it can be internal.

In the spirit of honouring those who have died, those young women and men who over the course of decades and centuries have made the supreme sacrifice, let's call upon ourselves as Canadians to ensure that the freedoms, the fundamental rights and liberties that service people have fought for over the course of generations and decades are not surrendered up by ourselves in our zeal to somehow want to hunt down a foe from within when the very assessment of the presence of that foe is motivated and part of the purpose of the attack upon us.

Let us be very careful when we as proud Canadians wave our flag that we do not wave it in such a way that we surrender any of the liberties, fundamental rights and freedoms that Canadians have and that every person who sets foot on Canadian soil has by virtue of setting foot on Canadian soil.

I say now is not the time to create new enemies, hence new victims, among ethnic minorities—it never has been and never should be—or among people who seek to start new lives in this country, recognizing the incredible risk and the incredible hazards and the incredible courage that people muster to bring their families as refugees and other forms of immigrants to this country.

Let's understand that so many of those same people, with their families, who seek residency in this country, who want to become a part of the Canadian community and Canadian society and who want to bring their uniqueness and their rich cultural and ethnic backgrounds to this country, are the same sort of new Canadians who fought in World War I, who fought in World War II, who fought in Korea and who have fought and struggled and participated in peacekeeping efforts since the war in Vietnam.

These are trying times for so many people. We have not learned yet how to live peacefully with one another, but that is our task, isn't it? That's our never-ending task, to remember and to work together to realize peace in our world. I refer to the Hebrew prophet Isaiah and his prediction that one day the nations "shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks." None shall lift up their sword against another and they shall learn war no more.

I know I speak for all New Democrats and I hope and I believe that I speak for all Canadians when I say that we all share this dream. Let us commit ourselves to realizing it in our world today.

The Speaker: I would ask all members and our friends in the gallery to please join with us in a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERJURISDICTIONAL SUPPORT ORDERS

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Protecting Ontario's children is a priority for the Mike Harris government. We have taken a number of steps to keep our children safe and to make sure they receive the support they are entitled to. Earlier this year, Christopher's Law was proclaimed, creating Canada's only sex offender registry. This law protects children and vulnerable adults by requiring sex offenders to register with their local police service.

It is disappointing that the federal government has not followed our lead. It is disappointing that they have not established a national sex offender registry. The federal government's lack of appropriate action on this issue is preventing the police from coast to coast from using the most technologically advanced weapon to combat sex offenders. We have also urged the federal government to quickly pass legislation to make the luring of children through the Internet an offence. Swift action is required. It's essential to shut down child pornography Web sites and to stop cyber predators who use the Internet to lure children.

In the spring, our government introduced legislation that would rescue children from prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. If passed, it will allow the province to sue pimps and others who sexually exploit children to recover the costs of treating their victims.

The legislation I introduced a few minutes ago will take further steps to protect Ontario's children. The Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act will make it easier and less costly for families to register, establish and vary support orders when parents live in different jurisdictions across Canada. These changes will also affect spousal support. We want to ensure that children and families get the money to which they are entitled. We believe that no child should ever go without simply because one parent has left the province.

This legislation, if passed, would streamline the process for obtaining and varying an interjurisdictional support order. For example, the complex two-stage hearing process that exists under the current legislation would be replaced by a single hearing process. Under a single hearing process, persons seeking to establish or vary a support order would complete the application package, which would be sent to the reciprocating jurisdiction for a support determination. What this means is that a hearing would only need to be held in the receiving jurisdiction. If the legislation passes, it would no longer be necessary for a further hearing or court proceeding to be held in the originating jurisdiction. We believe that simplifying the process makes sense for the families involved.

The proposed act would recognize the challenges presented by an increasingly mobile population by allowing for greater coordination among provinces and territories. The proposed legislation would replace the Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Orders Act, which governs support cases when one party lives outside of Ontario. Under the current legislation, Ontario has agreements with all Canadian provinces and most states in the US. We also have agreements with many other countries to register, establish and vary support orders when the parties are living in different jurisdictions. I want to emphasize that those agreements will continue under the proposed legislation.

As of August 2001, there were 7,203 support orders being enforced in other jurisdictions where the recipient resides in Ontario. Ontario enforces 5,404 support orders where the payer resides in Ontario and the recipient resides in another jurisdiction.

At the recent annual Premiers' conference, Premier Harris and other provincial leaders committed to introducing uniform inter-jurisdictional support order legislation by next summer. Premier Harris and his colleagues recognize the importance of governments working together to ensure healthy and prosperous futures for our children. That's why we are calling on the federal government to enact parallel legislation by amending the federal Divorce Act by next summer. This measure would streamline the process for establishing or changing support orders issued under federal rather than provincial law.

Ontario is doing its part to help families and children obtain or vary support orders in the most streamlined and least costly manner possible. The legislation I've introduced today is further proof of our commitment to children. We are committed to ensuring the well-being of every child in Ontario. We are committed to ensuring that all of our children have a chance for a better and brighter future.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Certainly our initial reaction over here is to applaud this move. It is overdue. We decry the fact that deadbeat parents can escape Ontario. However, we need to see the actual details in the bill before we can fully support it, because experience has shown that sometimes the problem is in the details.

I hope, though, that when the Premier was discussing this issue with the other Premiers he made them aware that the difficulty in this entire thing is that this province is a weak link when it comes to support orders. I quote the auditor, a neutral individual. The auditor has indicated that for the Family Responsibility Office here in Ontario, approximately 128,000 of 170,000 registered cases were in arrears as of March 21, 1999; 75% of the cases in Ontario are in arrears. Absolutely shocking. Arrears that are owing amount to \$1.2 billion dollars. The auditor noted "that when the payers went into arrears, the office did not have a satisfactory system of initiating contact and taking the appropriate enforcement action."

Now that's intriguing to me, because when the Toronto Star wishes to track down someone who's in

arrears and do a story on him, as they have, it takes them an hour or two to locate the individual somewhere in the US and actually have an interview with them. Yet our government has been unable to track them down, not because we have incompetent staff but because we have insufficient staff to truly go and make the difference. When we've done the massive cutting of civil servants, all too often it has been women and children who have paid the price for those cuts.

It says that when the account goes into arrears, "more aggressive enforcement measures, such as driver's licence or passport suspension, bank account garnishment or a default hearing were seldom pursued." Your own FRO in fact fails to calculate interest on the money owing to the families. In five years, the caseload increased by 35% while staff levels, after having been reduced in 1997, have remained at the 1994 level.

Now, I know each and every one of you on a regular basis receive phone calls from single mothers who do not have the money owing to them by the court support order. On this side, we return the calls. If you were to return your calls, what you would find out is that from the time the court order is issued it can take up to 14 months before that order gets put into the computer system and they start to collect the money. In the meantime, in those 14 months, we have the vast majority of the single parents, being women, and their children forced to go to welfare to fund buying groceries and paying rent while they wait for your red tape to chew through the court order.

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That may be OK with you because the municipalities are stuck paying part of that cost and so it's not a total problem for you. But these families who are on welfare only because of your failure and inability to collect on support orders are not even going to get the \$100 for Christmas that you promised. You promised it to low-income children, but to your government the children of families on welfare are not real Ontarians. I can tell you that they eat real food, they need real shelter, they have real dreams and they are entitled to a real future. But they do not list anywhere in your concerns.

So when you tell me you're worried about children, I can only look at your actions and say you carefully select to whom you will pay the \$100. Some children don't exist in this province. We have a province that has gone from almost no breakfast clubs in schools in 1995 to boards having over half their schools providing basic food in the morning. Eating is not a privilege in this province; eating is a right. You are failing to deliver on that right for the children.

You continue to attack parents. The average single female parent in Ontario has an income of about \$16,000 a year—disgraceful. They soldier on with no support, no care and no concern from this government.

If this will help to collect from deadbeat dads, that's great. But warn the other provinces that to this stage you don't have a system that works. You've had six years and you've messed up a system that worked before. You should be ashamed.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): First I should indicate to the Attorney General that staff from the AG's bureaucracy met with me a couple of days ago and briefed me on the proposed legislation, and I'm grateful for that. We had a candid exchange, and I appreciated the opportunity to discuss this legislation, not in its literal context but in terms of what was intended, before it was introduced.

I understand the motivation behind the legislation, and we respect the fact that this is an effort to harmonize reciprocal enforcement across the country from one province to the next and into the territories. Of course its success is very much contingent on other provinces following suit. We take some heart from the fact that the province of Manitoba has already dealt with similar legislation. So Manitoba would be a partner, should this legislation pass.

We also understood very clearly that the goal to be achieved was acceleration of the judgment. Prior to this legislation, the status quo was that a provisional order is obtained in the originating province and submitted to the responding province, where yet another hearing takes place. The delay, as we were told by staff from the Ministry of the Attorney General, is the time it takes for a matter to proceed through the family court system, even for a provisional order.

While the legislation may well be something of a remedy in that regard, it also speaks clearly to the fact that our family courts—the court most people seeking child custody, seeking support orders for themselves or for their kids, dealing with issues of access and visitation, the courts that most people have to access for those purposes—are incredibly backlogged, which means that justice is increasingly delayed to all litigants participating in that court.

The bill regrettably does not, will not—I suppose the Attorney General will have an opportunity to address this during second reading debate, committee and third reading debate. The bill is one that should be put out to committee so that people in family law practice can comment on the status quo and on what is necessary to improve the speed with which a support order can be obtained. But the bill doesn't deal with the fact that the current access to family law practitioners, family lawyers, for people of low and modest incomes, or no income, is virtually non-existent. The unavailability of and inaccessibility to family law clinics or private practitioners by most family litigants puts them in a position where they have to litigate themselves, which increases or aggravates the amount of delay those people encounter and does nothing to improve the quality of orders that are rendered or administered by provincial court family division judges.

I was shocked—and again I can't chastise the Attorney General for the inefficiency and complete lack of any meaningful improvement in the Family Responsibility Office, because of course the Ministry of the Attorney General has dumped that dog on to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In fact, FRO complaints

remain the number one complaint for most of our constituency offices. Almost six years later, this government still hasn't got it right: files lost; files not attended to; delinquent payers running around highly visible, their identity and location being disclosed to the FRO, their employer being identified to the FRO, and the FRO either unwilling or incapable of utilizing the actual enforcement techniques by way of accessing the pay, which is a relatively simple process, or the punitive techniques including suspension of drivers' licences.

I recall that announcement by that Attorney General, now long gone, and the promise that that was going to make meaningful impact. It has had zero impact.

The effort of the Attorney General to clothe this as somehow part of a program to protect children is naive. Indeed, one doubts that it can be said with any candour by the Attorney General when in fact this government's record with respect to kids is pretty pathetic and pitiful: the abandonment of children when it comes to safe, healthy and decent daycare facilities—childcare facilities for those children—which results in thousands of children being denied childcare and thousands of others being put into unregulated and potentially unsafe, indeed dangerous, childcare contexts.

The record of this government with respect to victims and children of victims remains equally pathetic. Neither of those things permits the Attorney General to make the claims he makes today.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Mr Speaker, I rise today on a point of order related to standing orders 1(b) and 69(a).

Late yesterday evening the NDP caucus staff were informed of the government's plan to call second reading debate of Bill 125, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, under orders of the day this afternoon. While there is no obligation on the part of the government to advise the opposition parties of House business in advance, it is a courtesy they have regularly extended to us in order to facilitate the democratic functioning of this House. I believe there are two strong procedural reasons why you should not allow the government to call Bill 125 this afternoon.

I would like to point out that their decision to call Bill 125 today contravenes standing order 69(a), which clearly states that "a bill shall not be called until the bill has been printed and distributed and marked PRINTED on the Orders and Notices paper." This requirement has not been met, and so I respectfully ask that you not allow debate to proceed on Bill 125 this afternoon.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to draw your attention to standing order 1(b) as it relates to my greater concern about how quickly the government has moved to debate Bill 125. I refer specifically to the provision in the standing order that respects the democratic rights of members as they relate to motions, resolutions and bills for the consideration of the assembly.

For years this government has been promising people with disabilities in Ontario that they would be consulted—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Let me interrupt the member right there on the point of order.

I have had an opportunity to look at the point of order. The rest of what he is doing is debate.

Let me say very clearly I take points of order very seriously; I have since the beginning. But unfortunately on some occasions members have used points of order to debate in this House. I have copies of what he's going to say, and clearly pages 2 and 3 are debate. If I allow that, what happens is other members begin to take it up.

By bending over backwards and allowing points of order in the past—in fact, what you're doing here today on pages 2 and 3 is nothing more than debate. You have opportunities at question period and you have opportunities in ministerial statements as well as during the debate on the bill.

I must say very clearly to all members that I have been lenient in that regard, and some members—and unfortunately it's the member who is up right now—have abused that, and I cannot tolerate any more. I'm going to be quick to stand up on points of order when they relate to debate on all sides and stop members from proceeding when in fact it turns into debate.

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On the two points that you have made, let me say very clearly it is not a point of order. I would refer to Speaker Warner's ruling on July 7, 1993. The bill has been printed and distributed. With regard to having been reprinted on the Orders and Notices paper, Speaker Warner's ruling of July 7 said that it's not a point of order that the House has proceeded with a bill that has not been marked "reprinted" as long as the bill has been in fact printed and distributed, which it has in this case.

The second point that the member was making in terms of democratic rights and so on was plain and simply nothing more than debate; it is not a point of order. I must say, as the bill did relate to the Legislative Assembly, and the staff have had an opportunity to read it because it does relate to the Legislative Assembly, the bill is in fact in order.

Again I would say to all members, if you're going to make a point of order, I would appreciate it if it would be relative to some of the proceedings in here and not start to slide a little bit into debate. There are plenty of opportunities for all members to debate in here. By being lenient, I have allowed some members extra debate, and I will no longer allow that.

With that, it is not a point of order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): To the Deputy Premier, it goes without saying that Ontario

faces an extremely uncertain condition today and is looking for very steady leadership. On October 16, the government acted quite decisively. The Premier decided that day to step down, and since then we've been into a leadership race in the Conservative Party and will be for the next three or four months.

The problem is that we are getting confusing signals from the government about policy direction. Yesterday, Deputy, you indicated, I think, that no one can run deficits in the province of Ontario these days, but the Minister of Health, at the Ontario Hospital Association convention, told the hospitals they can run deficits. Recognizing that the hospitals are in a very challenging position right now, trying to figure their budgets out, whom should they listen to: you or the Minister of Health?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The policy of the government is clear: that we expect all of our public sector partners to be accountable. It's absolutely essential, particularly in a time of economic slowdown. As I made clear to the House the other day in the fall economic statement, we are in a time of significant economic slowdown, compounded by the unanticipated tragedies of September 11.

The Minister of Health was making clear, of course, to the Ontario Hospital Association, which shares our concern about the failure of the federal government to be full partners in health care funding, that in the absence of a multi-year funding commitment, we're going to have to work together through the fall, through the pre-budget consultations, and I anticipate that the Minister of Health will be coming forth with recommendations, as other ministers do, with respect to hospital budgeting, as well as budgeting in the other areas of health care.

Mr Phillips: Listen, the hospitals have to have an answer from the government. They are right now trying to figure out their budgets. Right now they're making decisions on whether to cut services or not. The Deputy Premier said yesterday, "No, you can't run a deficit." What the Minister of Health said to them was, "It would be patently absurd and unjust to demand of the hospitals that they live within a hard cap"—patently absurd; your position.

So I simply say to you, clarify for the hospitals, because right now they are running deficits. They want to know, can they run a deficit this year or not? Should they agree with Mr Flaherty or Mr Clement? Who's right on this one?

Hon Mr Flaherty: Certainly the member opposite is wrong. What we're talking about here are deficits in the current fiscal year. Many hospitals are doing fine this current fiscal year. We had additional funding for hospitals, if the member was paying attention, during the summer of \$300 million. We have capital projects going on at hospitals all around the province of Ontario, pursuant to the directions of the restructuring commission.

The concern of course is that over the years the culture has grown up among some of the hospitals of creating deficits in-year and of the provincial government coming

up with funds toward the end of every fiscal year to assist them.

During the current fiscal year, there will be a balanced budget. We will be able to deal with the needs of the hospitals as we move forward, but we have to watch the budgeting for next year, not only with the hospitals but with all of our broader public sector partners. It's essential that we have accountability among all of our broader public sector partners. I would have thought the member opposite would understand that.

Mr Phillips: What I understand is that the Minister of Health said they can run deficits and you said they couldn't. That was crystal clear. I still haven't been given an answer.

I'll go on. Yesterday the Minister of Health said he took a proposal to cabinet but cabinet deferred a decision. So the Minister of Health went to cabinet with the proposal for hospital funding, and you, or you and your cabinet colleagues, decided you would not approve that.

I say this to you, Minister: we are getting conflicting signals from your government. One minister says one thing, another minister says another thing. We are in a very difficult period of time. The Premier has decided for his own reasons that he is going to step down. We have at least another four months of the leadership race, with at least several of you involved in it. What assurances can you give the people of Ontario, and what do you plan to do to ensure that these leadership squabbles do not get in the way of good policy development for the people of Ontario?

Hon Mr Flaherty: Hospitals know they must be accountable. Indeed, the Ontario Hospital Association has indicated its willingness to be accountable repeatedly this year. They had additional financing needs earlier this year. We came up with another \$300 million for our hospitals. There's record funding for hospitals in the province of Ontario this year.

What we all agree on, though, the Ontario Hospital Association and all of the members on this side of the House—I know you don't agree with this—is that insufficient funding by your friends in Ottawa has resulted in shortages in health funding. The president of the Ontario Hospital Association told that to Senator Kirby and his committee. You should read Senator Kirby's report. You'll learn something about health care and about the view of the Ontario Hospital Association, which is shared, quite frankly, by health ministers, by finance ministers, by the Premiers of our provinces.

It's sad that the only group in Canada that doesn't seem to understand the importance of this shortfall to the people of Ontario are you—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question?

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Minister, you delivered a loud, clear and devastating message to community boards across this province yesterday. You said, "Don't speak out for the people you serve. Don't

challenge this government. Just keep quiet. Do what we tell you or else we'll get rid of you." That's exactly the message that you sent yesterday to the community boards that have been struggling to provide home care under your government's restricted budget. You just wiped them out.

You are replacing community representatives elected in their home communities with people whom you appoint, people guaranteed to keep quiet if they want to keep their jobs. You're getting rid of them, Minister. There's no other way to describe this. Their only sin was to tell their communities about the cutbacks in home care that you had forced on them.

Minister, your press release from yesterday says that you are strengthening the community care access centres. Can you tell us today, how does taking over these community boards help to strengthen them?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): To the associate minister of health.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): As we all know in this House, as we improved accountability in the CCACs in Ontario, we've focused on ensuring that there were standards and benchmarks that the association and the CCACs had asked us for. We made plans so that CCACs would be able to service the people they serve for years into the future. We ensured that there was a viable community network in health care. We have a council that now speaks between the hospitals, the community care access centres, the community support services and the long-term-care facilities, linkages that we've been working on for a number of years. This is good news for community services in the province of Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, all you have done here is silence the community advocates who dared to tell you that they needed \$175 million to meet the most basic needs of the people who need home care.

You are going to make sure—that's what this bill does—that no one gets on a board who isn't prepared to do your bidding. In fact, you've written their orders into your law. You've said, "Each corporation shall comply with all directions issued by the minister." You are going to appoint the executive directors. They will have to keep quiet and do as you tell them to do because you have the power to fire them at any point. You've put that into this law too.

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We have waited five years for legislation that would set standards for home care. There are no standards here. There's absolutely nothing here that gives people any more care. You didn't need to take over these boards in order to provide better care to patients. If you seriously wanted to improve care, you would have brought in standards for care; you would have provided funding to meet these standards. Tell us, Minister, how does this hostile takeover solve the problem of the \$175 million in deficits that home care agencies are facing today?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say first that the goal of yesterday was to ensure that service is strengthened for the people of Ontario, ensure that we have stronger

community services for the people of Ontario. We did a lot of work in the review to ensure that we knew the weaknesses in the system. When the review was done by PricewaterhouseCoopers and then the operational review was done in Hamilton, it told us that many of the CCACs didn't have expertise in the financial area. By making OIC appointments, we can ensure that boards have the quality of services they need, the people with the expertise to ensure that we have CEOs who have the expertise to be able to provide a multi-million-dollar budget—in fact, in Ontario a \$1-billion budget.

The speaker opposite seems to imply that none of the people on the board now will be on the board later, and that's just false.

Mrs McLeod: My supplementary is redirected to the Minister of Health because this minister's doing to home care agencies exactly what he is planning to do to Cancer Care Ontario. Minister, you are silencing your critics. You are taking away the ability of community representatives to tell you and to tell the public the truth about health care in Ontario. You are doing exactly what you did when you were unable to solve the crisis in emergency rooms. You buried the issue to take the public pressure off your government, you hid the reality of emergency room backlogs, you're going to hide the reality of waiting lists for cancer care treatment, and now you're going to take control of the people who dared to say that your inadequate funding of home care is leaving the sick, the vulnerable and mostly the elderly without the care they need.

Minister, you aren't bringing in standards for home care. You aren't providing more funding for more care. Now that you have taken complete control, will you tell us exactly what you are going to do to actually improve care for patients: the elderly, the sick and the vulnerable?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me first say that the members opposite would have us believe that somehow the budgets of both of these organizations, CCO and the CCACs, haven't increased. The CCAC budgets across the province have increased 72% over the last five years. The CCO budget has increased by some 50%. Let's put all of that aside and talk about the reality that happened yesterday.

Yesterday, the Mike Harris government decided that we had to have standards and benchmarks to protect a very important part of community services. Yesterday we decided that there were 43 organizations across the province that were providing a couple of million dollars in services and there wasn't enough accountability; there wasn't enough financial expertise. We're going to take board members who can provide those services, move them into this new organization, and we're going to strengthen community services because that's what good, quality health care is all about.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. Yesterday,

Minister, you boasted that your bill is good legislation. Now that they've had time to read the fine print, this is what the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee says: "Is your bill consistent with the 11 principles unanimously agreed to in this Legislature?" Their answer: "No." "Does the bill achieve the barrier-free society you set out in your own vision statement?" Their answer: "No." "Is this the 'strong and effective' law this Legislature unanimously called for by resolution on November 23, 1999?" Their answer: "No." So the question is this: how can you boast about a bill that the disabilities act committee now describes as "most inadequate"?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I believe the member opposite is reading comments from David Lepofsky, a lawyer for the Attorney General's office for the province of Ontario, who is the chair of ODAC. I have significant numbers of comments from ODAC committee members who have indicated their full support for this legislation.

Just this morning I received a notice from the Variety Village children's charity where they said, "This is great news for our disabled children and youth who will now have a better chance of being fuller participants in Ontario's society as they grow up." This is "a big step forward in the right direction." They had great compliments for the province and have confidence that the disability agenda in this province will be secured in this legislation which, incidentally, you'll have a great opportunity to help pass, hopefully before the end of this year.

Mr Hampton: I have no doubt that you can get some testament from somewhere, from someone who hasn't read the legislation. I'm talking about a committee that has now had the time to sit down and read your legislation and they describe it as "most inadequate." In fact, they say you're trying to take them for a ride. As they point out, this bill lets the private sector off the hook completely. This bill does not take down any of the existing barriers. This bill, in terms of the broader public sector, only calls for plans, and without any money and without any resources they know that those plans will be completely meaningless. To add insult to injury, you're not even making the debate about this bill fully accessible to those people who make the point to you that it's all about accessibility.

So, Minister, why do you show such respect for those people who have been leading the disability community and who have tried to work with you?

Hon Mr Jackson: The record of this government's consultation with the disabilities community is well documented. In fact, earlier this week we issued a policy paper that contains a significant number of endorsements from the disabilities community. They understand fully that what previous governments have failed to do in this province is to acknowledge that it's not the able-bodied people who should be deciding and determining what the standards are; it should be the disabled individuals themselves. For the first time in Canadian history, this legislation empowers them to assist in making the regulations and the guidelines, guidelines that didn't exist in this

province for the five years of the Liberals, guidelines and standards that didn't exist in the five and a half years that you were the government, but guidelines and standards that will exist in Ontario thanks to the government of Mike Harris.

Mr Hampton: Minister, it's your government that promised this legislation. It's your government that said you were going to live by the 11 principles. It's your vision statement that said you were actually going to do these things, not just bring in a plan, not just create another process. What is really infuriating for those people who have worked so long and so hard on this is that they now have asked you to commit to province-wide public hearings so that this bill that you boast about can in fact be examined in community after community. If they find it inadequate, which they do, they can then put forward amendments.

Let us test your willingness to work with this community. Will you commit to province-wide extended public hearings so that all those people out there who need to be able to read the fine print and respond will be able to do so?

Hon Mr Jackson: I've indicated on behalf of the government on several occasions in the House our willingness and our commitment to put this bill out as soon as possible. It would appear that your own member for Sault Ste Marie wanted to interfere with that process earlier today when he was trying to stop the debate on second reading which would facilitate more public hearings, which would facilitate more access for the disabled community to participate in the discussions on this bill and to offer their suggestions and amendments, which this government is willing to look at. Your own member sought to short-circuit that process, to delay and stall it.

I say to the member from the third party that quite frankly we haven't seen anything from when you were in power, in government. We haven't seen one recommendation from your side of the House as to how you would change things. The disabilities community knows that for the first time in Ontario's history they will be able to set guidelines, set time frames for compliance and look at the issue of what penalties will be imposed for non-compliance. This is a first for the disabled community and it's a first that this government is very proud of.

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COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the associate minister of health. Your CCAC legislation, which you introduced yesterday, is really designed to shut down criticism of your government's current underfunding of home care in this province. Your government is now going to appoint all the board members of all CCACs, where currently one third of them come from the community, are consumers of home care or are caregivers of those who use home care. Your government is also going to appoint all the executive directors, a

move that is unprecedented in terms of health care delivery organizations. You certainly can control what an executive director says when you control their hiring or firing.

Minister, why don't you just admit that your move to appoint all the board members and all the executive directors of the CCACs is really designed to gain control over these organizations so that no one else will criticize your underfunding of home care services?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): I'd like to suggest to the member opposite that every member who sits on the board after we make OIC appointments will come from the community they represent. Let me say that right now I'm not going to put anybody from Toronto on the Huron CCAC board and I'm not going to put anyone from Ottawa on the Huron CCAC board; I guarantee you that every member of an OIC-appointed board in Huron will be from Huron.

Ms Martel: Minister, one third of the board members now are consumers of home care or are caregivers of those consumers who use home care, and there is no requirement under your legislation to provide for the same. Not only are you trying to gain control over all the appointments, but you're also gaining control over every bit of information that will now be released by community care access centres.

Under section 18 ministers will continue to provide annual reports to the public, which are now provided by CCACs, but the minister also has discretion and "may make available any such other information ... as he or she considers to be necessary in the public interest." I bet it won't be in the public interest according to you, Minister, to release the waiting list for services or to release the in-year deficits of CCACs and how many services and people will have to be cut. Isn't it true that your attempt to control all the information that will now be released by CCACs is really your attempt to make sure that no negative information about your current underfunding of home care will ever get to the public?

Hon Mrs Johns: I've never heard such a ridiculous statement. Let me say that the government has made a commitment to community services and CCACs across the province. We've increased funding. The Association of Community Care Access Centres asked the government to provide a number of things—standards, benchmarks—for the association to be able to ensure they had a better way of communicating with each other, and we have done that.

In fact, the association thanked me for that in a press release this morning by saying that they commit to work closely with the ministry and that they were encouraged by the government's proposal to recognize community care access centres formally in a statute. I want to reconfirm for all the CCACs out there that we intend to improve the standards across the province, that we intend to continue to strengthen community services. Many of the board members who are on the board now will be on the board afterwards. Many of the CEOs who are there will—

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

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): My question is for the Minister of Health. I finally have a copy of the scoping document of the London Health Sciences Centre. Contrary to what Minister Cunningham claimed in the House this week, "This is confidential to the members, including Mr Peters," this document had never been provided to me as a representative of London, and after reading it, I can understand why. This describes in detail your mandated scoping exercise: 14 cluster planning teams and 217 medical experts were asked to make recommendations on cutbacks because you told them to decrease their budgets. More importantly, it details which services were not recommended by the experts and were further scoped out by this so-called steering committee.

These are the very programs that surgeons, patients, families and those on this side of the Legislature have begged you not to cut—nine additional programs. Minister, why, with total disregard for the medical experts, are you continuing to jeopardize the health care of patients and families in southwestern Ontario?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Let me assure this House that it is quite the opposite. We are not jeopardizing, we are protecting. We want the best clinical outcomes. We want people to emerge from London hospital alive rather than the alternative. I'm saying that because I'm hoping that is his motive as well, because quite frankly we've had this situation in this House and outside this House where the member opposite and his leader are taking to politics on an issue that should be about life and death and better-quality outcomes for our patients.

That is what we're focused on. We have funded the hospital with that in mind. That's why their base funding increased since 1998-99 by 25%, why it was up 29% in terms of total funding, why they've received more than \$2.2 million of new medical equipment and why they continue to be a priority because of the priority programs they deliver. That will continue. But we want to have the best results. We want our public, and especially our children, to have the best quality care possible.

Mr Peters: I guess doctors are wrong, you're right and politics has nothing to do with your telling the London Health Sciences Centre to find \$17 million in cuts. That's politics, Mr Minister.

Your experts haven't listened to the real experts in the hospital because this is what you're cutting: cardiac transplant, cardiac arrhythmia, pediatric cardiac surgery, pediatric cranio-facial and endovascular aneurysm. But worse yet, do you know what this document shows? That these cuts were decided on September 4, 2001, a full month before the public was made aware of these cuts. You knew back then. You all sat back. You knew it was wrong and you did nothing.

I want all the people in southwestern Ontario to listen to some of the things said in this scoping document and what you're allowing to happen: "...the cascading effect may result in other issues ... the ability to recruit to support remaining services," and "a key interdependency with the scope ... is the viability of the pediatric critical care unit and ... neonatology," and "Further diminish our reputation as a comprehensive, pioneering academic centre."

Minister, you've been found out. You know exactly what you're doing to the people of southwestern Ontario with this silly scope. The time has come for you to come clean. Again, why are you abandoning the families and the patients of southwestern Ontario in allowing these cuts to take place, and putting the lives of children and families at risk because you're forcing these cuts and you're cutting the budget of this hospital?

Hon Mr Clement: I am quite shocked and surprised at the member's allegations. He knows as well as I do that the deputy chief coroner of the province of Ontario, who does not report to me and does not answer to me, has done an investigation that calls into question the clinical outcomes in the hospital. He seems determined to protect programs that have killed people in a way in which the deputy coroner is concerned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member has asked the question and I've yelled for order. Sorry, Minister, for the interruption.

Hon Mr Clement: If anyone in this House is doing something politically motivated that could have an impact on the future health and safety of the people of Ontario, it is you and your leader, and you should be ashamed of yourself. You should apologize to the people in London and to the people of Ontario or get out of this House because you are not being responsible. You are not doing your job.

DURHAM REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): My question is to the Minister of Health. Before I get to that, I'd like to compliment the staff and students of R.S. McLaughlin Collegiate for the really emotional Remembrance Day service they had this morning.

Minister, I have a question with regard to how we've heard for quite some time regarding the plans for the construction of the cancer centre at the Lakeridge Health Corp Oshawa site. Although the public doesn't really know it, the current hospital operation and the cancer centre are essentially two separate issues. We're hearing about work stoppages, the papers are involved and council's involved. Minister, could you please share with the constituents of Oshawa updated information from your ministry on what's taking place at the new cancer centre?

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Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd be happy to do that—and I thank the

honourable member for the question—because our government is committed to overseeing the implementation of the directions by the Health Services Restructuring Commission, specifically at the Oshawa site of the Lakeridge Health Corp. One of these is the completion of the Durham Regional Cancer Centre.

I'm pleased to confirm and announce that this government has committed a maximum grant of \$34.2 million to the building of the regional cancer centre in Durham; and \$11.5 of this commitment has already flowed to the hospital. Although cancer centres generally take four years to construct, we have provided in this particular case \$3.5 million in one-time funding to facilitate an early start-up for the people of Durham and for the Durham Regional Cancer Centre. This will allow us to have the early hiring of staff and advance the development of the program quite significantly. I want the honourable member to know I'm working with both Cancer Care Ontario and Lakeridge to ensure the centre is completed on time and within the approved projected costs.

Mr Ouellette: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. We're still getting a lot of questions—I get a lot of calls—from the foundation's president, Chuck Powers, as well as a lot of other members, and they deal a lot with the timelines regarding the cancer centre coming on-line. Can you tell us, is the cancer centre on-line for the 2003 opening?

Hon Mr Clement: I thank the honourable member for the supplementary. We are on time. The centre has a scheduled opening date of the fall of 2003. In fact, this cancer centre will operate up to 10 hours a day Monday to Friday and will provide radiation treatment to more than 1,300 cancer patients annually. It will also provide chemotherapy on an outpatient basis and is designed to manage up to 65,000 outpatient visits per year. Once the cancer centre is open, the residents in Durham will receive cancer treatment within their community. This is a great example, yet again, of how the Mike Harris government is doing more and more to meet the health care needs of both Durham residents and Ontarians generally.

PAYMENTS FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Your plan to provide \$100 grants to low-income parents maliciously excludes the poorest children in our province. Like your clawback of the family tax credit, you deprive our poorest kids of their fair and just share of Ontario's wealth.

A media advisory today notes that you will visit Sears later today to hear about an enhancement to the \$100 cheques, but the real enhancement that we await, Minister, is the extension of these funds to where the greatest need is. Will you enhance your \$100 cheque program to include Ontario's most vulnerable children whom you've left behind?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The statement the member opposite just made is wrong. As you know, or should know, under the disabilities plan and under the social assistance plan, every November \$105 per child is advanced, usually for winter clothing. That \$105 is there every year.

What this addresses is something else. This is something that I heard about during the consultations for the fall economic statement, and that is, given the events of September 11 in particular in the tourism sector, in the hospitality sector, in the restaurant sector, mainly non-union jobs, hard-working people, many of them with children, are suffering reduced working hours; some of them are in danger of being laid off. This is the group that we targeted. I think you'd agree with me that it's important to be sensitive to the needs of those who are working but who are challenged because of the events of September 11. We're trying to address that.

Mr Smitherman: Minister, it's your suggestion that the status quo for the poorest kids in our province is all right that is perhaps the most sickening thing I've been forced to hear in this House. The member from Thornhill talks about country club welfare. The labour minister talks about Ontario's most generous welfare rates. But the fact of the matter is that you made a deliberate and conscious decision. When you had some money to give out to try and influence consumer spending and address those people with the greatest needs, you left the poorest children in our province behind. This suggestion that that \$105 a month is going to buy some kind of fur-lined coat is a ridiculous one.

Mr Minister, I give you one more chance to do the right and just thing on behalf of the poorest children in the province of Ontario, whom you have snubbed twice in a malicious and deliberate way so far. Will you extend and enhance the \$100 tax credit to the poorest children in our province?

Hon Mr Flaherty: The benefit already goes at the rate of \$105 to all children on welfare and disability, so I've already answered that.

The other part of it—I'm not surprised, I suppose, that the member for Rosedale is so out of touch. If he thinks that \$100 doesn't matter when you go to buy children's shoes, for example, it does matter; it makes a big difference for families in the province. You ought to go to one of our stores and see what things cost. You ought to go look and see what parents are faced with.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Hon Mr Flaherty: These are expensive items. You ought to go see. You ought to get in touch with the cost of clothing for children in Ontario. I'm certainly familiar with it.

I want to tell you, Mr Speaker, I'm thrilled that some of our private companies in the province of Ontario are coming forward and saying not only is this a good idea, through the Retail Council of Canada, to have this \$100 benefit, to have this \$37-million stimulus, but also they're going to do even better than that and make it

worth more to parents with children in the province of Ontario.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, earlier today the government announced its intention to transfer responsibility for all young offenders to the Ministry of Correctional Services. Currently young offenders between 12 and 15 are served by the Ministry of Community and Social Services—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order; stop the clock. The Minister of Labour and the member for Parkdale-High Park, please come to order.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Withdraw it, Gerard; withdraw it.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): You're not the Speaker any more.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): You're not the Speaker, Stockwell.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You don't even know what he said.

The Speaker: Order. I didn't hear what was said. I was actually listening to the member who was asking the question, probably the only one in the House who was. Any member can withdraw. If anything was said on either side, I'm sure the members will want to withdraw it. Everybody in here would have heard what is said. If an honourable member wants to withdraw it and the members have heard it, I'm sure the honourable member will do that, but it is not the Speaker's place if he did not hear it.

Sorry for the interruption; I believe it was the member for Brampton Centre.

Mr Spina: Thank you, Speaker. May I start over?

The Speaker: The minister heard part. If you could just continue where you were.

Mr Spina: Thank you. The question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Earlier today, Minister, you announced the intention to transfer responsibility for young offenders to the Ministry of Correctional Services. Now, currently young offenders between 12 and 15 are served by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, while 16- and 17-year-olds are the responsibility of corrections. What's the reasoning behind this transfer and what will this mean for young offenders?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): What was announced was a change in reporting relationships. In fact, the announcement brings Ontario in line with provinces from coast to coast. Every other province in Canada does have a combined system for all young offenders aged 12 to 17.

What we hope to accomplish is a seamless system for young offenders and better integration of programs

geared to help these young individuals get their lives back on track. Consolidating services within one ministry we hope will allow us to achieve the best parts of both. Of course, children's mental health services and other child protection services would not be affected by such a change.

What we want to do is ensure that we spend every taxpayer's dollar wisely and well and do the very best job we can for young offenders in the province.

Mr Spina: Minister, I'm happy to hear that such a common sense decision has taken place. I guess what I'd like to know now is, what is the time frame that you're looking at to implement this transfer? More importantly, what are the processes to follow to make sure that it happens without the disruption of services?

Hon Mr Baird: I'd like to refer that to the Minister of Correctional Services.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): Let me start off by saying that both ministries have established a transition team to help with the transition of phase one, the under-16-year-old young offenders, from Community and Social Services to corrections. So both ministries will be working through this transition and it's likely going to be phased in over the next year or so. It will take some time, because of course we want to make sure that as we do the transition, the services that are being delivered by both ministries stay as much intact as possible and as practical.

Having said that, of course, one of the advantages of the consolidation is it will be able to make sure that best practices are applied from both of the previous ministries into the combined service now being delivered by correctional services

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We will be watching that closely. The transition teams will be charged with that responsibility. We are hoping that in the end we will be able to take administrative dollars that are currently being spent by both ministries and provide that for front-line services to help these young offenders deal with their challenges.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance should know that Ontario's forest industry is in trouble. Layoffs are being announced almost daily: Tembec sawmill in Kirkland Lake, 88 layoffs; the Longlac hardwood mill, over 400 layoffs; and the Abitibi paper mill in Kenora, now looking at another over 400 layoffs. The 1,000 layoffs just this week are just the start of a very big problem. These communities are facing tough economic times. Your government needs to respond to these communities. What are you prepared to do to help the community after community that's facing these tough economic times and the thousands of potential layoffs that are waiting around the corner?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member opposite both for the question and for the concern. There obviously are some difficulties. The member opposite will know that there tend to be cycles inside of the industries he has mentioned. We are making every effort to ensure that our industry in Ontario is as competitive as anyone who services that industry in Canada. We've taken several strides forward in that regard. The recent forest accord, as you will know, helps us to help our companies in the forest industries in Ontario be more competitive. We have done several things that will help them market their products throughout North America.

Mr Hampton: I'm sure the communities can take that to the bank and do something with it.

Let me just give you an illustration. Yesterday, in Ottawa, the federal Minister of Foreign Trade, the Prime Minister and British Columbia's Minister of Forests all met with the United States envoy on the softwood lumber issue. They were all there to press the point that what the United States is doing is unfair to Canada's softwood lumber industry and unfair to Canada's forest industry generally. Can you tell us, Minister of Finance, were you there? Was the Minister of Natural Resources there? Are you setting up a meeting with the US envoy to point out how unfair their duties are? Are you going to Kirkland Lake to meet with laid-off workers? Are you going to cancel the \$2.5 billion in corporate tax cuts so you've actually got some money to address some of these real world problems in real communities with real workers who are being laid off? Are you doing anything like those kinds of initiatives?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Again, I thank the member opposite for the question. These are serious issues for this government and for the forest industry as a whole in Ontario and across Canada. Yes, we are monitoring the conversations that are taking place right now. Yes, I think it is very regrettable that the United States has chosen to once again use a very blunt instrument of trade which hurts people in the communities that the member opposite has mentioned. We are very active on that file and so obviously is the federal government, as this is a trade issue.

I can tell the member also, and he will be aware, that we have an economic diversification assistance program which will help communities across northern Ontario diversify and get into other industries. But first and foremost, we want to make sure that our forest industry in Ontario is second to none in the world and that we have the marketing opportunities that we need to keep those jobs.

ADULT LITERACY

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the finance minister. Last week the government announced this year's funding levels for Ontario's adult literacy and basic skills clients. What the government neglected to mention is that there was a cut-

back of half a million dollars since last year. I'm astounded that the Tory government has chosen literacy and basic skills programs as yet another target of their cost-cutting agenda, especially since this government itself acknowledged that such skills are an essential foundation for finding and keeping employment, for contributing to the economy and for contributing to the community. When nearly half of the students in grades 3 and 6 do not meet provincial standards for reading and writing, this government now chooses to shortchange the adults who need adult literacy training.

The bleak state of our economy has created an urgent need for Ontarians to improve their basic skills and therefore respond to economic pressures. I'd like to know from the finance minister why, at a time when Ontarians need them the most, is this government choosing to decrease funding for adult literacy programs when they are so obviously essential?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I'll refer this to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Obviously literacy is an important skill for all people in the province of Ontario. We've made additional investments in education; we're bringing in a grade 10 literacy test. We're also undertaking a lot of initiatives to try to help people on social assistance and help others who need literacy training. I can tell the member opposite that Ontario Works offices will work closely with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to do more to help address this challenge. We believe that we can do more.

Certainly we've spent a considerable amount of money within the social assistance realm. We'll bring additional resources to the table to try to do more to ensure that people can be able to read a job application, can be able to read the want ads section so they can make that important transition from welfare to work.

Obviously these new initiatives, whether it's a grade 10 test, whether it's additional education forums, whether it's the testing we're doing throughout the elementary school system and the work we'll do for people who need any help finding a job, demonstrate the commitment that we're bringing to the issue.

Mrs Bountrogianni: That's really poor. That is so poor. I have your sources, your numbers from 2000, from 2001, and to be exact, it's \$585,000 less spent this year on adult literacy programs. That sounded nice, Minister, but it didn't answer my question. The finance minister actually has the responsibility to answer this question. Not only is the funding to adult literacy cut—

Interjection.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I'm not speaking to you, Minister of Labour. Not only is funding to adult literacy and basic skills cut, but the number of clients requiring help has increased by 13,000. This means that the money is being spread more thinly across additional programs

under the deceptive pretext of being streamlined and more cost-efficient. We all know what this means: over-worked instructors and inadequately supported programs. You have no problems over there increasing partisan advertising and inflating cabinet costs. Why can't you restore the half million dollars that you cut—

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

Hon Mr Baird: I heard a number of statements, and I know she didn't like my previous answer so I'm going to try to do better with this one.

In fact, since 1995-96 funding has been increased by more than \$5 million to support literacy programs in the province. We don't think that's enough. That's why this year we'll bring additional resources to the table through the employment supports budget of Ontario Works. We think we can do more to help people realize the dignity that comes with a job and the pride that comes with being independent. We know that lack of literacy and poor literacy skills can be a real barrier to someone being able to realize the benefits of moving from welfare to work. That's why we're bringing additional resources to the table. That's why we're continuing to expand our literacy testing program if people can't pass the basic literacy test already in the province of Ontario. Our first municipality, Peterborough, is up and running and doing literacy testing and referring people to literacy training programs so that they can get a job.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Labour. There's concern in the agricultural community in my riding of Northumberland—I might add, that concern has been there for some time—that your ministry might raise the minimum wage. They're concerned that they will be unable to hire the required labour because of such a possible increase. Even if they did hire at those increases, they feel that their crops would be uncompetitive with the neighbouring American states. Minister, are you or your ministry planning on raising the minimum wage in the province of Ontario?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): The short answer is no, we're not planning to raise the minimum wage in the province of Ontario at this point in time, considering the tax cuts and also the situation with respect to the minimum wage in comparison to other jurisdictions that border on the province of Ontario and considering—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I won't say what your member says when people heckle—and considering what the other jurisdictions pay in the way of minimum wage.

We have to be competitive and fair. We're ranked fourth right now in the country with respect to the minimum wage. We consider that to be a reasonable amount of money. It's \$6.85 an hour. So I would tell the member for Northumberland to go back and tell his farmers that no, we have no plans to raise the minimum wage.

1530

Mr Galt: Thank you, Minister. On October 25, the United Church of Canada held a session here at Queen's Park to meet with MPPs. One of those representatives suggested the minimum wage should be pegged at \$12 an hour. He suggested that this would solve all of Ontario's social issues.

Minister, it's my understanding that the Ontario minimum wage will not increase until other jurisdictions have indeed caught up. Could you tell me whether other provinces and other adjoining states have in fact caught up to Ontario's level, and what would happen if we increased the minimum wage here in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, quickly, British Columbia did just recently raise their minimum wage to \$8 an hour, but there was a caveat included that the first 500 hours of work would be at \$6 an hour. So they did raise it on one hand, but it wasn't raised to any appreciable amount when you combine the two levels with respect to minimum wage.

No, most jurisdictions have not raised their minimum wage appreciably to the point that they surpass the province of Ontario. We are still ranked fourth as far as minimum wage in the country is concerned. It's a very generous program at \$6.85 compared to the other provinces.

What you also have to remember is there have been significant tax reductions for those people earning the minimum wage since 1995. A tax reduction to a person earning the minimum wage is like a raise. It's a significant amount of money that they get to spend on their own and that they didn't have earlier.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm sorry. The Liberals are heckling again. I thought they didn't do that. I apologize.

At \$6.85 an hour with the tax cuts and so on, they've had reasonable increases over time, so at this point we don't have any plans to raise the minimum wage.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'd like to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for continuing the heckling.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): A question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Mr Minister, in your Bill 122, I think it is, presenting the Oak Ridges moraine protection and conservation plan, which people have fought for, the one concern they've had is that this protection plan would be permanent and enduring and not changed at somebody's whim. What's really confusing to a lot of people I've talked to is that repeatedly in your legislation you allow for the plan to be revoked—that is, ripped up, torn apart—at any time by yourself, without public notice or input. In fact, if you look at page 3 of your plan and page 17, you again say, "The minister may, by regulation"—that means behind closed doors—"revoke the plan."

How can people have confidence the plan is permanent and enduring when you can rip this plan up at any time you want?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I want to thank the member from the opposition for the question.

I think he would agree that the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan in the act that is before the Legislature is a great achievement. Their government knew about the problem when they were in power. They just studied it; they did nothing. The NDP knew about the problem but did nothing. We've come forward with a consensus. Now, there are a lot of details that will go to clause-by-clause in the committee, but I can tell you just in the general, the reason for the need to be able to change the plan from time to time isn't to affect any of the natural areas. Those can never be diminished in size upon review. But if, for example, new policies come out across the province around water, you would want that incorporated into the plan. If new technology comes on stream to enhance environmental protection, you'd want to incorporate that in the plan. So that's what's envisioned by that.

Mr Colle: I don't know if the minister understood. I ask the minister again. Look at page 3 and page 17 of your act. It doesn't talk about changes. It talks about the fact you have unilateral power at any time to basically rip up this plan; in other words, you can do this to the plan any time you want.

How can people have any faith that this is going to be enduring when you can throw this plan out behind closed doors, without consultation? It says here you have the power to revoke, which means get rid of, rip up. How can people think they're going to have this protection permanently? You can get rid of it at any time.

Hon Mr Hodgson: This bill will go through the House. The Liberals are against the Oak Ridges moraine protection plan. That's totally consistent with their environmental record. They'd rather just talk about it, stand up and do cheap photo stunts, rip up paper. When it comes to actual action to protect the environment, your party is nowhere to be seen.

TOURISM

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Many businesses in my riding depend on tourism traffic for their livelihood. As you know, many of them have suffered a loss of business since September 11 as tourists, most notably Americans, cancelled or delayed their travel plans. I was very pleased to hear in Tuesday's economic statement that our government is investing \$10 million to boost Ontario's tourism industry. This will build on the \$4 million in reallocated funds you announced earlier this month, much to the pleasure of many people in my riding. Minister, can you explain how this new funding will help to bolster the tourism industry in Ontario?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): I appreciate the member from Niagara

Falls's question. He's obviously a very keen supporter of the tourism industry, knowing first-hand the importance this brings to the economy of Niagara and the province of Ontario. He has obviously been a strong supporter, pressuring myself, the finance minister and cabinet for more funds for marketing. The member from Niagara Falls and the rest of the caucus were very pleased to receive the news on Tuesday that indeed there would be an increase in the tourism marketing budget of 10 million new dollars on top of the \$4 million we brought forward. In fact, this represents a doubling of the tourism marketing budget for Ontario. The goal here is certainly to get the message out to our friends across the border in the States and to Ontario consumers themselves that in Ontario there's more to discover. There are great things to see and do, and we're asking them to come out and explore the province and discover once again the great things to do in Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr Maves: The member from Windsor-St Clair is complaining about your new marketing dollars. If he doesn't want them spent in his area of the province, I'd be happy to have his dollars spent additionally in Niagara.

We appreciate this new funding. We believe that it will go a long way to attracting visitors to Ontario. But as we all know, many travellers are hesitant about flying in the wake of September 11. We have seen the impacts this terrorist attack has had on Canada's airline industry. What impact will these new realities have on the development of your new marketing strategy?

Hon Mr Hudak: A very insightful question by the member from Niagara Falls. There's no doubt it's important for us to monitor the trends, the travel patterns and travel intentions, not only in Ontario but in potential jurisdictions from which travellers will come.

What we have found is that people still want to travel. They still want to have a weekend getaway, a break or a vacation this winter or this spring. What we have determined, though, is that they're moving away from long-haul air transportation and more toward short-haul car and bus traffic, also known as the rubber tire market. That's why our marketing goal is to target domestic consumers with a pride-in-Ontario campaign to encourage Ontarians to discover this great province, or re-discover it; and our friends across the border in New York, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania to come and stay with friends, visit a winery in Niagara, go snowmobiling in northern Ontario or buy a ticket to see the Haida and experience—

Interjections.

The Speaker: New question.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): In the absence of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, all of

whom should be able to answer this question, I'll have to ask the government House leader. Earlier this summer the Premier said that provincial funding for the Northlander train will stay in the north "if a more efficient way could be found to deliver the service." The chair of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission received a plan last week, developed by northern residents, municipal representatives, unions and businesses, that set out just that.

Imagine how shocked they were on Tuesday to find that your government introduced a bill that would basically allow for the cutting off of those very services or the privatization of them. In other words, the bill does completely what the Premier said wasn't going to happen. Will you withdraw that bill or was the Premier's—

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

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I think, as the honourable member knows, the government's priority is very much to try and create a climate for economic growth and prosperity in northern Ontario. We recognize that efficient transportation has to be very much part of that, and that is what this government is moving forward with.

Mr Hampton: The contradiction couldn't be more complete. I quote the Premier that the provincial funding for the Northlander will stay in the north "if a more efficient way could be found to deliver the service." Then you introduce a bill that doesn't make any provision for that. It's simply a bill that allows for shutting down the service or selling the service—nothing to work with those residents, nothing to work with those communities that want to find a more efficient service.

You all seem to have a new concept of leadership which seems to be knifing the Premier's constituents before he's even gone. If you're going to honour the Premier's commitment, you must withdraw this bill. It's completely contrary to the commitment he made. Will you do that?

Hon Mrs Ecker: There certainly is understanding in the community that this is a good step toward providing the services that northern Ontario needs. For example, we have one of the union leaders up there who described this simply as enabling legislation, that this would assist us and allow the commission to make the business decisions they need to make, to carry them through, to make sure those decisions are made, not here in the inner cabinet at Queen's Park but where they need to be made.

So the goal here is to improve services for northern Ontario. It's an important infrastructure support to make sure they have the economic support they need in the north, and that remains the goal of this government.

1540

ACADEMIC TESTING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): To the Minister of Education: yesterday you tried to allege that you were getting some progress. Under your specific

time as minister, you've actually gotten almost no progress in terms of test results for elementary students in this province. I've heard from parents who heard about your answers yesterday and they want to know if you will be changing your program. It's not working.

Three years ago, there was a 5% average increase. Since then, it has gone down to 2%—two years in a row of only 2% average achievement. In the French students' sector it's down by 1% this year. We're going backwards under your watch.

Will you adopt the McGuinty plan for smaller class sizes, for better resources for teachers and our master teachers, for training and providing best programs under lighthouse schools? Will you start to do the things that the parents of this province want to be done and make those test scores something we can all be proud of and that you've made the best effort to support?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): The honourable member asked this question yesterday and we said to him, "Yes, we believe there need to be more resources targeted to our early reading initiatives." That's why we invested over \$70 million last year. Yet again the honourable member's research is faulty, to say the least. We specifically targeted \$70 million for kindergarten to grade 3. On top of that was another \$24 million for the Ontario early reading strategy, which supports the schools that are having the most difficulty raising the results, and over \$100 million for smaller class sizes in earlier grades.

He keeps on dumping on the teachers who are out there trying so hard to do a better job for our students. He thinks that increases from 43% to 61% aren't significant. On this side of the House, that is a tangible improvement. It needs to be recognized. We need to continue to put supports in place, and that's what this government is doing.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin petitions, if we could, I believe this is the last day for the pages. All members would like to wish them well in their endeavours.

Applause.

PETITIONS

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

"That the province of Ontario pass legislation" as proposed by MPP Mike Colle for Eglinton-Lawrence "that outlaws puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding activities and that strengthens the powers of the Ontario SPCA to establish a provincial registry of kennels and breeders subject to SPCA inspection, and to allow the SPCA to impose fines and jail terms on those found guilty of perpetrating cruelty to animals for the purpose of selling these animals to an unsuspecting public."

I agree with this petition that supports Mike Colle's bill, and I sign my signature to it.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): If we could stop the clock for the government House leader for the order next week.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Speaker, my apologies. The business of the House for, I guess not next week, the week after. Pursuant to standing order 55, I have a statement of business of the House for the week of November 19.

Monday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 110; Monday evening we will continue debate on Bill 125.

Tuesday afternoon will be a Liberal opposition day; Tuesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 125.

Wednesday afternoon's business is still to be determined; Wednesday evening we will begin debate on Bill 127.

Thursday morning, during private members' business, we will discuss ballot item number 33, standing in the name of Mrs Munro, and ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Mr Gill; and Thursday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 127.

PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition from my home town of Hamilton. It reads as follows:

"Whereas individuals who are tenants or residents in facilities such as care homes, nursing homes or domiciliary hostels under certain acts are provided with a personal needs allowance to meet incidental costs other than those provided by the facility; and

"Whereas the personal needs allowance has been fixed by the Ontario government at a rate of \$112 for nearly a decade and has not kept pace with cost-of-living increases, and furthermore is inadequate to meet incidental

costs such as clothing, hygiene products and other essentials;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately review and amend provincial legislation to increase the personal needs allowance from \$112 a month to \$160 a month for individuals living in care homes, nursing homes or other domiciliary hostels."

Speaker, I'm proud to give this petition to Emily Baker from my riding of Hamilton West. Her grandparents are here today, Helen and Irving Baker. Let me tell you that Emily has done an excellent job on behalf of all the members.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario 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'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

"Immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in

Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents.”

Mr Speaker, as you’ll appreciate, this is a substantial petition, signed by many residents of Lindsay, Omemee, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls and other areas of the county.
1550

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I’m reading petitions on my adoption Bill 77. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in Ontario adopted adults are denied a right available to all non-adoptees, that is, the unrestricted right to identifying information concerning their family of origin;

“Whereas Canada has ratified standards of civil and human rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

“Whereas these rights are denied to persons affected by the secrecy provisions in the adoption sections of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas research in other jurisdictions has demonstrated that disclosure does not cause harm, that access to such information is beneficial to adult adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents, and that birth parents rarely requested or were promised anonymity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact revision of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts to permit adult adoptees unrestricted access to full personal identifying birth information; permit birth parents, grandparents and siblings access to the adopted person’s amended birth certificate when the adopted person reaches age 18; permit adoptive parents unrestricted access to identifying birth information of their minor children; allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a contact veto restricting contact by the searching party; and replace mandatory reunion counselling with optional counselling.”

I will affix my signature to this petition.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“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 that they inflict 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 affix my signature to this petition.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I have thousands of petitions from people from Cambridge, Thornhill, Woodbridge, Pickering, Omemee, Oshawa and Grimsby, all asking the provincial government to shut down puppy mills.

“To the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I certainly support these thousands of people from Ontario who want to ban puppy mills, and I’ll affix my name to the petition.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): In the interest of keeping our party involved in the petition process, I’ve always got constituents who write to me.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has proposed the extension of Highway 407 into the Durham region and the proposed routing, designated as the technically preferred route, will dissect the property of 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 golf course,

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change this routing”—of the 407—“to one of the other identified alternate routes thus preserving this highly regarded, public facility patronized annually by thousands of”—my constituents and—“residents of Durham region and the GTA.”

I’ve got thousands of signatures, and I am pleased to support my constituents by signing this petition.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Mike Harris government promised to institute patient-based budgeting for health care services in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution; and

“Whereas community care access centres now face a collective shortfall of up to \$175 million due to a funding rollback by the provincial government; and

“Whereas due to this funding rollback, community care access centres have cut back on home care services affecting many sick and elderly Ontarians; and

“Whereas these cuts in services are forcing Ontarians into more expensive long-term-care facilities or back into hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately lift the funding freeze for home care services, so as to ensure that community care access centres can provide the services that Ontario’s working families need.”

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES
ACT, 2001LOI DE 2001 SUR LES PERSONNES
HANDICAPÉES DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Jackson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 125, An Act to improve the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 125, Loi visant à améliorer le repérage, l'élimination et la prévention des obstacles auxquels font face les personnes handicapées et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga East and the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

I am pleased to commence second reading debate on Bill 125, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. With this bill, the government is proposing the most far-reaching and comprehensive legislation to date in our country for persons with disabilities. This bill reflects the desire and determination of the people of Ontario to support the rights of every person with a disability to live as independently as possible, to enjoy equal opportunities and to participate fully in every aspect of life in our province. If passed by this Legislature, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act will create more inclusive communities and improve accessibility for the 1.6 million persons with disabilities who live in our province.

The government can demonstrate leadership, and it can inspire change. When the Premier appointed me as Minister of Citizenship just nine months ago, my first goal was to find out specifically from individuals from within the disability community across our province and from the leaders and advocates in their own communities who had inspired some of the most profound changes in their own communities and changed the lives of the disabled in a very meaningful way. Meeting these individuals and seeing first-hand the kinds of things they had done in their communities helped us formulate the framework that exists in this legislation. It is unique, but if you understand what we are witnessing across Ontario, the way the disability community in some municipalities has done such a profound job of change, we saw in that an instrument to create permanent, lasting change in our province and to elevate that standard to every community in our province.

It was from these individuals that I understood for the first time the concept of full citizenship, something the disability community has only aspired to but been unable to achieve in our province because of the existence of barriers. Unfortunately we as a society continue to construct these barriers in the way of disabled persons. But we needed to engage the disability community and ask them how we would make that change and create a vision and a path from which we could develop the all-important legislation they have patiently been waiting for for many years.

When I talked to these individuals and listened to what they wanted to see happen in our province, it occurred to me that we really share the same vision and the same goals, and we know we can get to the same outcomes. Simply put, they wanted legislation that would do two things: create no new barriers in our province and have a plan whereby we would be able to systematically go back and remove all the existing barriers in our province. Those very simply were the two things they said we needed to have in this legislation.

1600

If we were to listen only to the opposition parties in this debate, they would have us believe we are starting from scratch and that nothing really good has been going on in this province. I would disagree. We have a very strong foundation on which to build. We have tremendous examples of leadership in every sector and in every corner of this province. What we need to do is ensure they become the new standard, not the one we've been coping with for all these years.

In 1995 our government made a very firm commitment to increase opportunities for persons with disabilities by investing over \$6 billion annually in services and programs for the disabled community: respite support service, technology assists, assistive devices, education, transportation, accommodation, income support, attendant services—a whole range of support services. This was a significant investment in the quality of life in our province and, quite frankly, in the course of the last five years while this government has had the responsi-

bility of governing, we've increased that amount by \$1 billion, a significant increase and a commitment.

We also have an outstanding framework in which to work in this province, something our American friends to the south do not have. We, as Canadians, are fortunate to have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We, as Ontarians, are fortunate to be the first jurisdiction in North America to have human rights legislation. These are powerful instruments if they are used effectively, and do the job they're supposed to do for citizens who feel they've been discriminated against. Make no mistake, one of the challenges the Americans are facing with their disabilities legislation is that they do not have the kinds of rights and privileges we enjoy as Canadians.

There are a number of municipalities and private sector organizations that have already been developing proactive approaches to ensuring that their communities are more inclusive and more accessible. I want to take a few moments to tell my colleagues about the things I learned about these very progressive communities and what I learned from the disabilities community during my province-wide consultations.

The city I started with—and I've told this story in the House a couple of times—was the city of Windsor, because I was led to believe, and rightly so, that they are doing some of the most progressive things in Canada, let alone in Ontario.

I went to meetings with Mayor Mike Hurst and the Windsor Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, which is this year celebrating its 20th anniversary. It's 20 years that they have been linked in partnership with their municipality and their councillors, making decisions about making Windsor a more inclusive community. Today they are so far ahead of most communities in our province that they're actually beyond auditing public buildings. They're now auditing private buildings and publishing information to their citizens about which businesses are accessible and which ones are not, helping them and working with them to remove barriers and setting up a system of identification for the disabled community, because they will take their business and their needs to those businesses and services that are accessible. It was a very powerful experience for me to see it working in the province of Ontario.

Each year the committee, in partnership with councillor Joyce Zuk and the rest of city council, sets priorities and implements the removal of barriers, and they develop their annual accessibility plans. If you were to ask Carolyn Williams, the chair of the Windsor Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, she would proudly tell you about the accessibility of the Sheridan Hotel, the Windsor casino or the arena, all of which didn't get their building permits until they had been examined by the committee and given considerable input about ways that barriers could be removed. To the credit of city council, they did not let those projects proceed unless that was done.

It can be done, and it is being done. We want every community to operate in a fashion similar to Windsor.

Even though Windsor may have the highest standards in Ontario, we think that should be the new floor. The rest of the province should come up to that level, and from there we can go further.

Here's what Carolyn Williams says about the approach of working with the private sector, the municipal sector and the disabilities community: "The city of Windsor has demonstrated leadership and a long-term commitment to promoting accessibility. We are thrilled that the proposed legislation," Bill 125, "mandates committee involvement in municipalities of 10,000 or more residents across the province. The Windsor Advisory Committee on Disability Issues is prepared to work with the government to achieve a vision of a more inclusive Ontario and independence and opportunity for all persons with disabilities."

Windsor is proof that accessibility committees are taken seriously by municipal councils. They give sound advice, which is followed, and they do create permanent change and prevent new barriers from being created, one of the primary objectives of this legislation.

We know that the successful model in Windsor, if repeated and mandated across the whole province with even stronger guidelines than the ones that Windsor is operating under, shows that we can achieve the kind of success in co-operation with municipalities never before achieved by any community or any province in our nation.

The story was repeated in several other communities. In our investigations we were only able to find about 18 communities, of all the hundreds of communities across Ontario, that had these accessibility advisory committees. But I tried to meet with each and every one of them during the course of our province-wide consultations, because in each community we were learning about things they were doing municipally, bylaws they were changing, that were leading to a very clear decision by those municipalities that they were not going to create new barriers.

I went to Niagara Falls, where my colleague Bart Maves and I met with members of the disabilities advisory committee. An article in yesterday's Niagara Falls Review highlighted the section of the proposed legislation that requires all new construction built with government funding to be accessible, and praised the accessibility planning that was going into the legislation.

This government, with taxpayers' dollars, has committed about \$1.8 billion in infrastructure, transit, new hospital construction and new university and college construction. This legislation says those projects must be accessible to the higher standard in this province. We believe that's an important element of this bill. We believe it fulfills our promise that we will not create new barriers with taxpayers' money, something that the disability community has said makes no sense—using their own tax dollars to create environments that create barriers for them. We clearly can do a better job, and it should be the law that we cannot create those barriers in public spaces.

Paisley January-Poole, chairperson of the disability advisory committee in Niagara, gave full marks to Casino Niagara. She said, "We're very pleased that the casino is working with us over and above what the building standards are." These are the kinds of outcomes they're achieving when access advisory committees are working in municipalities.

Other communities told me they had not been as progressive but had been awakened to the need for improved accessibility. This was the case in Owen Sound, where I visited with council and with leaders in the disability community. I met with a councillor there who said to me, "We were told by the architects that we could never make this old building of ours accessible." One night at council, this council member had a heart attack. He was a very big man. They found out that they could not get him out of the building with a stretcher. Fortunately the councillor survived and there was no damage. He's back, he's healthy and he's contributing. But guess what? They found a way to get elevators into that older building and now their seat of democracy in Owen Sound is fully accessible. It can be done.

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Ontarians want to do what is right. Municipalities want to do what is right for the disabilities community in this province, but they need to be directed on their journey. That is why this legislation was drafted in the way it was, and it is what this legislation intends to do, to create a framework for continuous change and work with all sectors of our society—all levels of government, municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals and the private sector—to plan for the removal of barriers.

Ottawa was another city that saw the benefits of both an accessibility advisory committee and mandatory accessibility planning. Following a para transit strike in that city last winter, the city recognized the importance of full accessibility. They have actually forwarded to me, as the minister, a profile and a council resolution on how they'd like to see their access committee. It goes further than I've seen any others go. This is a willing effort on the part of the municipality.

It was these best practices and the work of these individuals that helped shape the proposed legislation before the House today. The most valuable lesson I learned was how powerful change could occur if the disabilities community was front and centre, was listened to, was asked for their input and it was acknowledged and acted upon. It sounds simple, but you'd be amazed how many communities don't even consider doing it. But those that do it are doing a tremendous job and getting lasting results that their entire community can be proud of.

Even the disabilities community impressed upon me that they needed a flexible approach with respect to time frames and by mandating the various sectors in our society. It's something they were very clear about. They knew change would not occur overnight. What they were adamant about was that they did not have the tools to force the kinds of changes that were needed in our

province. They wanted flexibility, but on the other hand they wanted the authority, the capacity and the infrastructure to support prescriptive measures. They knew it couldn't be done overnight, but they knew they needed a framework in order to make them change.

This point was made by David Lepofsky, chair of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, when he said this week on Studio 2 on TVO, "We would like to have the barriers that we face identified and eliminated over time. People need to have the time to do it." That's exactly what this legislation does. It gives municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals and the private sector time to identify these barriers and to plan to remove them within the reasonable time frames that will be set out in regulations and which will be enforced by the government, but those time frames will involve the disabilities community sitting down with each of their institutions and their communities.

My colleague Ernie Parsons, the Liberal disabilities critic, agrees with the fundamental approach to this. I'm quoting from an article that appeared in the Picton Gazette on November 7. Mr Parsons said this about this legislation, Bill 125: "It does require municipalities to reduce barriers and there is a time frame for it."

There has been a lot of discussion around the 11 principles put forward by ODAC that have been approved unanimously in this House, in 1998. They were forwarded by the member for Windsor, Mr Dwight Duncan, in support of these 11 principles. We firmly believe these 11 principles have been addressed in this bill. Let me tell the members of this House the challenges we face.

I want to compliment my colleague Steve Peters, who did a wonderful job travelling across the province consulting with disabilities communities—I have read his report; I tend to keep a copy in my desk, as you can see—and very well documenting all the challenges we have in our province.

But not one single recommendation is contained in the work of the opposition party Liberals. In fact, after all that research and work, they came to the conclusion that this would be a great place to start the dialogue and talk to the disabilities community. In fairness, I will be here the balance of the afternoon to hear the debate and the discussions from the Liberal Party as to what they are offering the disabilities community and what promises they are prepared to make, but we have not heard any. We've not heard any commitment, other than the 11 principles that we know are contained in this bill.

The Liberal Party failed, in my view, some of the outstanding work of its own members by not taking their document one step further and saying, "This is what we would do." There was a lot of work. Mr Peters, Mr Levac and Mr Parsons all worked very hard on identifying the problem. But we knew much of this information. What we needed was concrete proposals. We needed recommendations and we needed suggestions on how the legislation would work. Not one word.

There is an issue that really needs to be brought forward in this debate, because the disabilities commu-

ity knows this better than anyone else. We who are not facing disabilities take our daily activities for granted. For us, there are no standards not being met. We can walk out of this building, and we can get into our cars and drive home tonight with not a care and with little difficulty at all. But the disabilities community knows that there are no standards and no guidelines that exist in this province for the accessibility barrier removal. We have a building code that is a minimum standard and it needs to be fixed and upgraded and updated.

We unfairly, in my view, condemn the Human Rights Code because it goes in and it finds that when a movie theatre in Ontario denies a disabled person access, they get the ruling, they know the individual is right, that they've been wronged, and that the company, whatever the theatre company, broke the law, but then when the lawyer for the theatre company says, "Tell me what the standard is we're supposed to meet, Your Honour, and we will then go out and do it," the Human Rights Code says, "Sorry, but not only are there no standards in Ontario, there are no standards in Canada."

In fact the Americans with Disabilities Act has taken 10 years to develop their standards, and they're still not into the first phase of their implementation. I'll put on the record right now that the Americans with Disabilities Act has a 30-year window for compliance and has hundreds of pages of exemptions. We do not want to go down that road. We can achieve a barrier-free Ontario far sooner than the Americans will because we already have those instruments of the Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights. What we're missing is the guidelines such that, when we impose them on a business, they have the right in law in this province to go before a court and say, "Your Honour, I understand that I may have been wrong to bar an individual from my property, but tell me what my guidelines are that I have to follow." His Honour says, "You know, it's not my job," and it isn't.

So we have this work to do and we have to get this work done immediately. The government shouldn't be the instrument to do it alone. We need the disabilities community to come to the table and say, "These are the standards. These are the barriers we face every day." I don't face them. Why would I, as minister, sit there and say, "That sounds reasonable to me. A 36-inch-wide door? I guess that sounds fine." What's the difference between that and a 32-inch door? Don't say four inches. The difference is that you won't be able to manoeuvre a wheelchair or a mobile scooter or whatever. We need to understand that and there's lots of information about this, but we don't have the guidelines in place.

The disability community said, "Minister, we do not have the guidelines; we do not have the standards. You can't put someone in jail for non-compliance with your law when the law doesn't exist. You can't close a business that hasn't done its job of making itself accessible if you don't have the guidelines. You can't fine a business \$100,000 because it barred some individuals from getting inside the door if you don't have the guidelines in place." So we simply must get these in place. We must get them

in place immediately. That's why the disability community has been suggesting to opposition members that they want this legislation, as amended, passed before the end of the year. They want to get on with the business of making Ontario a barrier-free province. That's what they want.

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ODAC, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, talks about principles. Yet they have been unable to tell us exactly what form the legislation should take, nor at any time did they table specific legislation or a framework—and Mr Lepofsky is a very brilliant lawyer. I know; he works for the government of Ontario. He works for the Attorney General's office. He's a civil servant. He does a very good job for the government and the taxpayers of Ontario. He understands the law. He works with the law every day and frames laws every day of his life. Yet I have been unable to get any specific wording from ODAC.

My colleagues, the NDP, have been unable to articulate a plan either. They simply think the solution lies in making a commitment of more money. Well, you ran up a \$50-billion deficit in this province over five and a half short years. But we can't identify how much of that \$50 billion was spent to help remove barriers facing Ontarians when you were the government. Now your leader says he thinks we should spend \$1 billion to help the private sector remove private sector barriers. Well, that's noble. Imagine: we have him wanting us to reduce taxes, and now he wants us to help the private sector remove barriers with \$1 billion of taxpayers' money.

Oddly enough, I spent a lot of time with a former NDP MPP of this House. Several members would remember Gary Malkowski, himself challenged as a deaf person in our province and a member of the NDP caucus. He tabled his own bill, which was never passed by the then government.

We are prepared to proceed, because we are confident in the process and the legislation we have brought forward. It is a framework for change. It deals with the issue of a lack of infrastructure, and it gets the guidelines in place before we impose penalties on people that will never be sustained in any court because we don't have guidelines in place.

Our legislation will work toward a barrier-free Ontario as soon as reasonably possible, which were the exact words in principle number 1—as soon as reasonably possible. That's what this legislation says. And do you know who is going to decide whether it's reasonable? The disabilities community, who sit on the access advisory council of Ontario working on the regulations and meeting with the private sector to say, "You tell us how you're going to become compliant with this legislation." If that isn't reasonable, then what is reasonable in our province?

This legislation will achieve principle number 1 through the creation of mandatory advisory committees at the municipal level; an accessibility council for the province; for the first time in legislation in our province's

history, a disabilities directorate, which will coordinate a whole range of disability issues, including the establishment of the guidelines and the framework. It will mandate government to create accessible Web sites, publications, workplace policies and practices through having accessibility as a requirement for all future capital investments in this province. That's the short list of the changes.

Ontario and Canada have stronger human rights legislation than any other place on this continent. The code must retain primacy over any other laws as it protects the rights of all our citizens, not just the disabled but persons of colour and persons of different faiths. It's a very important piece of legislation, and I thought long and hard about the notion in principle 2 that we would find a way to have primacy over this legislation. I think we've achieved the intention of this principle, because we believed that principle 2 was to ensure that a proposed ODA would set the bar higher than it had ever been before in terms of achieving accessibility. That's why this legislation would amend municipal powers, for example, so that municipalities can make accessibility a consideration when issuing municipal licences. It will be a very powerful instrument for municipalities to be able to deny a business to operate in the community unless it meets certain accessibility standards. That's why the legislation was written to ask the disabilities community, in partnership with government, to work toward universally accessible standards that may exceed the standards set in the Ontario building code.

Principle 3: the proposed legislation must apply to all sectors. Bill 125 applies directly to all provincial government ministries, to all municipalities of 10,000 or more residents, to all hospitals, school boards, colleges and universities, public transit providers and private transit providers who have contractual arrangements with municipalities. It contains regulation-making authority that affects the private sector—the first of its kind in Canada—because we need the flexibility to first set sectoral standards in consultation with the private sector. I know that may not be an issue of concern for the third party, but I know the official opposition understands this issue.

We're not going to be able to make the province of Ontario barrier-free next year. We don't have the standards, and we need to give business time to convert. We need to close the loopholes in the building code when you're doing major renovations. There are many things we can be doing, working co-operatively and within a prescribed time frame. We need the flexibility to set those standards. For the first time, we need to entrench in law that the disability community will be pivotal in creating those new standards and assisting in developing the new regulations.

The proposed legislation, Bill 125, gives the government the authority to set time frames for compliance with this legislation—principles 4 and 5. But we need the flexibility. Even the highly-touted Americans with Disabilities Act has a 30-year period for implementation. We're not asking for 30 years. But each sector will be

different in terms of its ability to convert, and there are some that are essential for the disabilities community to have removed immediately.

I have said all along that the Ontario Human Rights Commission provides an effective means of enforcing the rights of persons with disabilities, which is principle number 6. In addition, the creation of an accessibility directorate and the Access Council of Ontario provide an oversight mechanism to review accessibility plans and ensure that barrier removal is taken seriously in this province. The disabilities community has many members who deserve a voice. There are many people in the disabilities community who deserve a voice on these issues. One person alone cannot represent the entire disabilities community. There are many voices, many needs and many unique challenges facing a broad range of citizens of all ages who are challenged by their disabilities. The council will be composed of their voices to ensure that this province listens, understands and acts in accordance with the regulations we would create together.

Principle number 7: this will be achieved through many deserving individual appointments to local advisory councils and the provincial access council. The proposed legislation, Bill 125, also recognizes the importance of overcoming attitudinal barriers and the need for the public to have a proper education and for promoting existing programs and services that remove barriers. The disability community consistently said, "Will there be public education? The public just doesn't get it. They don't understand the needs of the disabled."

We don't have to try to negotiate through our communities on a daily basis the way they do. That's why, when I presented this to cabinet, I insisted the legislation provide a mechanism for them to tell us how the barriers should be removed, when the barriers should be removed and what the barriers really are. We've had very well intentioned people in planning departments and municipalities and enlightened leadership at the municipal level, but we still make mistakes because we don't see through their eyes, we don't walk their path and we don't have to hear how services are not administered in our province.

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Principles 8 and 9: one of the key functions of the directorate and council will be marketing a new program called "Opening doors is everybody's business." When this legislation becomes law, we'll be pleased to provide more details. The legislation also addresses accessibility compliance as a condition of funding and purchasing goods and services. It's specifically a principle; it's specifically in the bill.

Principle 10 imposes this requirement on the government and the municipalities, and also mandates accessibility as a requirement for all capital funding. It's mandated in the legislation.

Finally, principle 11: the proposed legislation does make meaningful improvements to the lives of all Ontarians living with disabilities. As the March of Dimes publicly stated this week, "Laws unto themselves aren't

enough. People have to embrace the concept, and that means changing or expanding the way we think.” The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Bill 125, is a good first step toward achieving a barrier-free Ontario.

Our government pledges to work in partnership with Ontarians to build on what we have already achieved together. We will move steadily toward a province in which no new barriers to persons with disabilities are created and where existing ones are removed. That’s why we published our documents, Independence and Opportunity, and Framework for Change for Persons with Disabilities, on our government Web site. Persons with disabilities can ask for these and we will send them to them.

The government’s framework for change, as demonstrated by Bill 125, would directly affect the four key sectors of our society: the Ontario public service, municipalities, the broad public sector and the private sector. By working in conjunction with the private sector in establishing standards of accessibility, we can successfully forge lasting and valuable partnerships that will increase opportunities and full citizenship for persons with disabilities. This government believes this is the correct direction. However, make no mistake about this: there is regulation-making authority in this legislation to ensure that existing barriers are identified and removed and that no new ones are created. That is not a threat; it is a part of our action plan to remove private sector barriers. These regulations will be developed and implemented within the prescribed time frame if, in the opinion of the government and the Accessibility Advisory Council, compliance is not happening fast enough in our province.

This comprehensive bill will challenge all people of Ontario to do the right thing and provide the resources with voluntary and mandatory measures. It will also contain the power to increase the mandatory requirements when required. Some of the legislation’s critics have gone out of their way to say that its supporters within the disability community should be put on the back burner. We disagree.

The disabilities community will tell us when our cities will become fully accessible, because they will finally have the tools and the authority to determine the time frame, something ODAC was unable or unwilling to do during the debate in the last nine months. The new inclusiveness of which I speak is set out in this legislation, not as a set of promises; it is clearly, though, a set of challenges. It sums up not what this government or what I as the Minister of Citizenship intended to offer the disabilities community, but what we as a government intended to ask the disabilities community themselves to do to change our province. By working together, I’m confident that we will achieve full citizenship for Ontario’s 1.6 million persons with disabilities.

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): I stand today to voice my support for the proposed Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. It is my pleasure and privilege to be able to speak today about this groundbreaking legislation.

You have heard the Honourable Cam Jackson, Minister of Citizenship, talk about the full scope of this bill.

I’d like to add some comments of my own about the bill because I truly believe, and I am proud to stand here today to tell you, that this proposed legislation would make a difference to Ontarians with disabilities.

The bill is made for Ontario. It is a made-in-Ontario bill. In Ontario we believe in partnership, co-operation and shared responsibility, an inclusive process for becoming a truly inclusive province. Our framework for change is unique in that we are involving the disability community and the private sector in setting the standards rather than imposing and dictating standards.

Since Monday’s introduction of this proposed legislation, we have heard from some opposition members that the legislation does not have teeth and that it would not affect the private sector. This bill affects the private sector. We are raising the bar. We know that the private sector is ready and willing to partner with us to make Ontario accessible, and the bill does have teeth in the regulation-making authority that would be used if necessary and with the input of important stakeholders such as the disability community.

Yes, we could have imposed arbitrary standards on the private sector, but that would lead to one standard for all. A standard that would be applicable to all sectors would soon be outdated. With our approach, innovative solutions would be created for specific circumstances and the standards could continue to evolve and to improve. That’s because the process is bottom-up and driven by the people who are most affected. So we have put forward a bill that seeks the involvement of stakeholders in setting standards before we adopt those standards as regulations.

The private sector wants to remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities. In the future, the most sustainable companies will be those that create environments in which all individuals are able to contribute their skills, energies and experience toward success. They will be companies with the capacity to employ persons with disabilities, serve customers with disabilities and compete in an increasingly diverse market.

Before this legislation, there was no formal way of establishing standards and shared views. The private sector wants to do the right thing but says it needs more access to information and advice on how to do it. With this bill, the private sector will know what to do to get the business of every Ontarian. Through the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, the government would create and administer an incentive program to encourage the participation of all sectors in identifying and removing barriers and setting standards.

One of the first goals would be to encourage businesses to remove obvious barriers such as entranceways to make businesses accessible to persons with disabilities. A number of sectors, like tourism, have already begun to develop their own standards. They are ahead of the government because they realize the importance of getting business from all different walks of life.

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The accessibility council and directorate would help such organizations by targeting sectors, setting strategic

priorities and developing and building consensus on the development of standards. Once such standards are in place, government could use its regulation-making authority to make these standards into law.

The requirement that the provincial and municipal governments would have to consider accessibility when purchasing goods and services would help to provide incentives for the private sector to make those changes.

The province alone spends billions of dollars on procurement each year. Municipalities would have to take accessibility into consideration when approving, for example, subdivision plans and upon issuing licences. All of these things taken together would help to drive the change.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is an important piece of business for this province. I was just wondering if there was quorum here to hear the words of the member across the way.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Would the Clerk check for quorum, please?

Clerk Assistant (Mr Todd Decker): Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Mississauga East may continue.

Mr DeFaria: It's unfortunate that we had to interrupt my line of thought on such an important bill.

The plan, our framework for change, recognizes that real success is never achieved overnight. People and organizations need time to adjust and to respond appropriately. It takes time to develop expertise, develop infrastructure and build a capacity for change, but we will not rest until we have fulfilled our vision.

The regulation-making authority in the bill would also give the government the power to specify a time period in which any organization mentioned in the bill is required to comply with its obligations. This bill does have teeth. The teeth are in the regulation-making process.

But fundamentally the bill is based on a different approach to social change. I'd like to say also that the government is not alone in believing in this approach. We didn't invent this approach. We looked at municipalities, for example, that have made huge progress in accessibility. We looked at industries like the hotel industry that on their own initiative have made huge progress and we have based our approach on what we learned. We looked at trends that show that governments all over the world are beginning to explore a more strategic, comprehensive approach based on shared responsibility as a new solution to many difficult problems such as environmental issues, for example.

We talked to people in all sectors, especially people with disabilities, and we asked them what they think works. We heard a few words over and over again: "involvement," "partnership," "co-operation," "inclusion," "balanced," "reasonable," "comprehensive." Those words describe this bill and our entire framework for

change. That's why I believe we are doing the right thing the right way.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I'm truly pleased to have an opportunity to address this piece of legislation. Minister Jackson this afternoon used the expression "barrier-free Ontario." At first blush I would think, is this possible or is this truly an insurmountable task? I think we all agree that a gap exists between where we are now and where we should be. I don't see this as one gigantic challenge, something we can bite off in one chunk. It will take time. I see it as a series of very small challenges.

I think of the example of the step in front of so many stores and commercial establishments. In the first place, usually, through design a step like that need not be built. By and large, it's fairly simple to take out a concrete step and redesign the doorway. You have an accessible commercial establishment and the proprietors of that store have access to a new cadre of customers.

This legislation and the results to be achieved truly are possible. I would ask the members present to reflect on the motto of the school for the blind, the W. Ross Macdonald School in Brantford. Their motto is, "The impossible is the untried." If I have time, I wish to talk a little bit about that school. I'm a little familiar with that building.

Most of us in Ontario are lucky enough not to face barriers in our everyday life. I look around at members of this House. We are truly blessed. However, there are 1.6 million people in our province for whom barriers are a fact of life. It's a constant frustration, preventing these people from experiencing the same fullness of opportunity, of experience, of participation that we take for granted. Something as simple as going into a store, as I mentioned, or something as simple as crossing the street for someone who is visually impaired, or reading a newspaper, obviously is an arduous task for more than 15% of the people in our province.

Who are these 1.6 million people? They are teachers, lawyers, someone's employer, a secretary, an athlete, a coach, children and parents. They're no different than anybody else in this province. They're no different than the 85% of us who may be more able. They're hard-working, contributing members of our society and they deserve better than to have doors closed to them because no one has had the forethought or the wherewithal to make buildings and services more accessible. This is a challenge not only for the province of Ontario, but for its municipalities.

I'm proud to speak to this proposed Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I'm proud of the inclusive process, of the consultation, which was mentioned this afternoon, that has created this legislation.

This province has had a history of working to remove barriers for the disabled and I'm proud of our government's vision for an Ontario where such barriers cease to exist. I compliment Minister Jackson for his work in bringing this legislation forward.

Persons with disabilities represent a significant and also a growing part of our population. As I mentioned,

1.6 million people in Ontario have disabilities. Of course as people in Ontario age, the proportion with disabilities will increase. Two decades from now it's estimated that nearly 20% of the population will have a disability. That would be one in five persons.

That's just the people with disabilities. Accessibility challenges also affect millions of parents, grandparents, children, friends, neighbours and co-workers who are involved with disabled people on a daily basis. I think we all realize that disabilities affect all of us and affect all aspects of our society.

I think we are cognizant of the challenge before us, but no more difficult a challenge than is being faced by our disabled population as they strive to make their way in a limited access world. But just as persons with disabilities overcome these challenges, so too will this government. This province and its municipalities will succeed in achieving the goals set out in the vision outlined by Minister Jackson. The vision is both simple and ambitious. We want to work steadily toward an Ontario in which no new barriers to persons are being created and the old ones are removed, but we realize this requires the support and participation of people from all sectors within our province.

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Fortunately, we do have a solid foundation on which to build: each year the governments commits billions of dollars to a wide range of programs and services; we have a strong Human Rights Code which provides all Ontarians with protection from discrimination; and we have the will, we have the commitment of our government to make this change happen. There is much to be done. The proposed Ontarians with Disabilities Act is the essential legislative element to achieve this vision. It would instruct the provincial government and municipal governments, as well as the broader public sector, to create plans for greater accessibility: greater accessibility to buildings within that jurisdiction and greater accessibility with respect to services. It would create the basis for a valuable long-term partnership that would include—and more importantly would depend on—the knowledge and input of people with disabilities. I think we all recognize the wisdom is out there, the guidance is out there within that community. It would create a framework for the adoption of codes and standards in all sectors of our society. In fact, it's been the government's goal to ensure the disabled community has a full voice in developing and going forth with this legislation since day one.

To effectively create a barrier-free society in all aspects of our daily living, one must apply "a disability lens". This is a quote from the president of the March of Dimes, Andria Spindel. "A disability lens": it reminds me of an expression that my son uses on occasion, especially when we lose power when the lights go out at our farm and he's running around finding candles and things like this. He explains to me to use my blind skills when there's no light in the evening. My son is very skilful at moving around in the dark, whereas I am not.

This is where I wish to refer to the W. Ross Macdonald School, the school for the blind in Brantford.

This proposed act seeks to build on steps that Ontario has taken in the past. As far back as the 19th century, this province can be seen as introducing measures for the disabled. Just outside of my riding, in the city of Brantford, stands a bricks and mortar testament to the forward thinking of our forefathers. It was on the recommendation of Dr Egerton Ryerson, the chief superintendent of education in Ontario from 1844 to 1876, that the Legislature of Ontario established a residential school for the education of blind students on 65 acres overlooking the city. This important work of Dr Ryerson is of course well known in that area. Dr Ryerson was from my riding. He has an island named after him in Lake Erie. He has a pub named after him in Toronto. I'm sure there's other facilities—I think of the community college by way of example—but it's his contribution to the education of the blind that I wish to talk about today.

Since W. Ross first opened its doors in 1872, thousands of blind and low-vision students have received their elementary and secondary school education at what came to be known as the Ontario School for the Blind. A new school was built in 1973 and renamed W. Ross Macdonald School. This was in honour of Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, who was a lifelong resident of Brant county. This year, there are about 222 blind, deaf-blind and low-vision students at the school. One of them is my son Brett, who can attest to the good work that continues to be done at this important facility after 125 years.

As I mentioned earlier, the school's motto, "The impossible is the untried," is a phrase I think we can all take to heart as we discuss the introduction of this legislation. I feel that our government echoes this sentiment and will continue working, will continue trying to make the possibility of a barrier-free world a reality.

There are other examples of this province's commitment to provide the disabled with educational activities. The Ontario Ministry of Education, for example, operates four anglophone provincial schools, including three schools for the deaf and three anglophone demonstration schools for students with severe learning disabilities located across our province. I'd like to make mention: the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton, Robarts School for the Deaf in London, Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville, the Trillium School, the Sagonaska School, Amethyst School in London.

I can further quote, and I do wish to quote, the March of Dimes president: "If we all work together, particularly governments and the private sector, persons with disabilities will no longer be on the sidelines, but rather full participants." It is essential that those affected by this legislation be directly involved, and our government has attempted, in my view, to apply a disability lens and has made certain that this involvement will occur.

Over the spring and summer the minister has consulted with close to 100 organizations. Further meetings, as we hear, will continue. The goal is to achieve a general consensus both on the vision and also on the plan to achieve it. Our government hopes to further solicit input from the public, stakeholders and disabled people

through public meetings if the leaders of the three parties represented in this Legislature agree. I have suggested that if hearings are held, perhaps we could spend a day at W. Ross Macdonald.

To conclude, a partnership is essential if this proposed legislation is to succeed in realizing the vision. Municipalities and people with disabilities are being asked to team up with the province to work together so that we'll be able to implement the necessary changes to break down these kinds of barriers that people with disabilities confront every single day.

The Deputy Speaker: That concludes the government's leadoff debate. Members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I was listening to some very interesting comments. I know the minister has attempted to bring forth a bill to rectify a gap in the rights and privileges of people with disabilities in this province. As you know, we on this side feel at this point the bill is not strong enough, it's not adequate enough, given what the American legislation has been for the last 11 years. It's really not good enough. We think it should be much stronger. I want to echo the words of our critic from Prince Edward-Hastings, Ernie Parsons, who will continue to advocate for a complete Ontarians with Disabilities Act; this one needs a lot of work, a lot of improvement.

I would also like to mention that in my past days with the TTC we worked very diligently with Torontonians with disabilities, trying to get them proper transit accessibility. We created one of the best paratransit systems in the world, Wheel-Trans. It wasn't easy. It's a very challenging thing to do. It's expensive; it's complex. I know they still haven't put all the elevators in the stations that we advocated or certainly the community was advocating. So there's a lot of work to do.

I also want to comment on the references my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant made about the visually challenged. My wife and I do a lot of work with the Foundation Fighting Blindness, and we know the challenges they have. There are a lot of great volunteers out there who every year raise over \$1 million in the Ride for Sight, where they have a motorcycle ride all the way up to Collingwood. John McBride is one of the leaders; Mike Gorman. So that's another community that can certainly benefit from more support.

1700

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time is concluded.

Mr Martin: This afternoon we heard the minister say to the people of Ontario that he wanted to ram this ODA through by Christmas because he wanted to get started on tearing down barriers.

My challenge to the minister this afternoon here in the House is that he could get that process going immediately. He could direct all of his ministries to create their accessibility plans and have them ready for action by Christmas. All he has to do is snap his fingers, talk to the Premier, talk to the other ministers and that would begin

to happen, if he was really serious about getting this through and getting barriers down before Christmas.

If he's such good friends with the head of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, why doesn't he call her up and ask her to get municipalities to agree to get those accessibility plans in order immediately as well, get the municipalities moving, tell them to get their plans in order and to put them in place? Why doesn't he ask the private sector to do that right away, too? If he's such good friends with the private sector and he's so convinced that they'll jump to it and start moving on this immediately and work with him on their plans, why doesn't he just call them up this afternoon and say, "We want those plans in place by Christmas"? He doesn't need legislation to get ministries and the broader public sector to file accessibility plans by Christmas; all he has to do is ask them.

Why doesn't the minister stand up today and say that Ontario won't spend a penny of SuperBuild money erecting new barriers? He doesn't need legislation to do that. He just has to talk to his colleagues in cabinet. Why doesn't the minister send a memo to his fellow ministers changing procurement policies to be barrier-free? He doesn't need legislation to do that. He could do that right now. He has had six years to tear down barriers, and his government did absolutely nothing. If the minister truly wants to tear down barriers in this province, why doesn't he lead by example and start today?

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I'm very pleased to join in the debate with respect to the wonderful speeches made by the Minister of Citizenship, my good friend Cam Jackson, and also my esteemed colleagues from Mississauga East and Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, who I know are very passionate about the whole issue of disability and ensuring that the dignity and worth of all Ontarians are respected and valued. Indeed, I think it's important that we remind those on the other side of this House of the vision that the minister and indeed our caucus have with respect to our government's commitment to disabled people's rights.

We're introducing an important piece of legislation, and we believe that the people of Ontario support the right of every person with a disability to live as independently as possible, to enjoy equal opportunity and to participate fully in every aspect of life in our province. We believe that the dignity and worth of all Ontarians should be respected and valued. Further to that, this year's annual report of the CNIB is titled It's Respectable to be Blind. That's contained within this document. The government of Ontario is pleased and pledges to work in partnership—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The member's time has concluded.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): First, I'd like to congratulate my colleagues, Mr Parsons and Mr Peters, for their work the last two and a half years in going across the province and consulting with the disabled community on what should be in a bill for the disabled.

According to the ODA committee, on first read of the bill it appears to include all physical, mental and sensory disabilities, including invisible as well as visible disabilities. However, a main thrust of the bill's provisions appears to focus on barriers faced by persons with mobility disabilities. I suppose I have a bias, given that I worked for nearly 20 years with people with mental disabilities, with children with learning disabilities, sensory disabilities, that this act doesn't go far enough to advocate for that population, and I'd like to lobby for that part of the population as well.

Very recently, the Hamilton-Wentworth District Health Council did a study on the need for housing for the mentally ill in Hamilton. Up to 3,000 units are needed in Hamilton alone to address the need.

Research has shown that the mentally ill can live independently, with assistance, given the right supports. I do really wish, if not this government, any future government would look at the needs of the mentally handicapped, look at the needs of the perceptually handicapped, the sensory handicapped, as well as the learning disabled, because at times their disability is not very visible and they don't seem to us as being as needing of support, but they are and sometimes even more than those with physical disabilities.

I look forward to perhaps another time in the next few weeks to discuss this further, because now is the time to bring this to the fore, when there is a bill for second and, in the future, third reading. This is a group that has been ignored by governments, and I'd like to bring their plight to the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: One of the original three speakers now has up to two minutes to respond. The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon Mr Jackson: I want to thank all members of the House for being here today and for participating in the debate. I want to particularly thank my parliamentary assistant, the member for Mississauga East, for his support, and the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

We're about to embark on a very important debate on the future of how we can work together as a Parliament and how we can work together with all sectors on how we will make Ontario the most accessible province in our nation. I believe this legislation is a powerful instrument with which we can do that, because for the first time in Ontario's history, we're putting the disability community into the framework of the legislation and asking them to be our partner in driving it.

I was interested in listening to the Liberals make reference that they will strengthen this and they want the ADA model. I want to ask the Liberal Party to please do their research on this. We've studied what has gone on in the US. I have just one quote from a US justice document.

"Given discrepancies associated with implementing the ADA nationwide, a plethora of suits by private law firms has been filed." They quote a Miami Beach law firm, which worked with a non-profit group called Advocates for the Disabled. It filed approximately 200 lawsuits in 18 months. They won over US\$340,000 in fees,

but not one penny went to members of the disability community. Clay Shaw, one of the people who voted in the Legislature for this in 1990, said, "What these lawyers are doing in the name of the ADA is wrong, and if it continues, I fear that support for this important law will begin to decline."

We do not need a litigious environment which is rife with conflict in the absence of standards. We need the disability community to come forward and work cooperatively with all sectors. It's something this government pledges to do with the disability community and with the opposition to ensure that this law becomes the law for persons with disabilities in our province.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is now open for further debate.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): One of the stressful and disappointing things I find when I knock on doors during an election campaign is people who say, "I don't vote." It struck me today, at Remembrance Day, that I've always explained to them how important it is and what price was paid for our freedom to vote.

But people are cynical. With this bill before us, I can understand why people are cynical and skeptical of politicians. It in some ways requires Hansard to put a little asterisk beside each time we've heard the statement that applies to everyone in Ontario. The asterisk at the bottom could state, "Well, not really," because it doesn't benefit and it doesn't apply to every organization in Ontario by any means.

I feel badly for the disability groups over the past few weeks. They have shared with me that the minister has in fact, to his credit, met with a large number of them and shared with them what the legislation was going to look like or possibly look like. What's disconcerting is that it appears there were different versions, or certainly the groups misunderstood or understood differently what the bill was going to look like. Then, on Monday, the minister holds a media conference; has about 30 disability groups there to support the plan. What I found fascinating was not what the minister said, but following his presentation the media said to these groups, "What specifically about the plan do you like so much? What is so good about the bill?" Their response was, "We don't know. We haven't seen it yet."

1710

I feel bad for these groups, that they were a part of a sham, that in fact they did not know what the bill was going to look like. They very sincerely said, "It would be inappropriate for us to know until it's actually introduced in the House." I would suggest it is inappropriate to ask groups for support until you've told them what it is they're going to support.

Even the March of Dimes has indicated in its press release that this is a good first step—not that it's the answer, not that they have the legislation they want. The group that's been most supportive still puts a little restriction on it, that there's more work needed, that it's just a good first step.

I really feel bad, though, that the groups came here Monday afternoon to support a bill and they didn't know what it was. But imagine the pressure on them to be here. Imagine the pressure on them to participate in the media conference. These are groups that need funding from the provincial government. They need the provincial government as a partner to make services possible for their community. They need the government to pass the bill. They are desperate to see an ODA passed, so desperate they would come and take part in a non-media conference.

They are also very aware that there is a distinct possibility this House will prorogue at the end of December, or through December. So they know only too well—whether they've been told or whether they've assumed it—that if this bill doesn't get through by then, there is no bill. Sometimes it's awfully tempting to grab half a loaf rather than the full loaf. But this government promised six and a half years ago, in writing, to pass a bill. It is a false sense of urgency to come and say it has to be through in the next two or three weeks. There were six and a half years of broken promises to do it. They have now become victims of the charade, "It must be through by Christmas. This is such a high priority, we want to ram it through in the next three weeks." They had six and a half years.

They're feeling a fear that this is a take-it-or-leave-it bill. They either have to take it in this form or not have one at all.

It is somewhat ironic that as Christmas approaches it's almost like Scrooge giving a Christmas present. It is a wonderfully wrapped gift, but when you get inside, it's a piece of coal. There is no real gift. There is no real commitment in delivering on the commitment to Ontarians with disabilities.

In the six and a half years that this government has stretched out and not honoured their commitment, there are children now in grade 2 in our schools who were not born when this commitment was first made. Those Ontario citizens have had a full lifetime with barriers not only remaining in place, but additional barriers constructed against them over the six and a half years. That must bother the members on the other side. They have to be receiving calls.

The entire process on this bill is shameful. Ontarians with disabilities—even the human rights commissioner last year indicated the number one issue in his mind, and I'm not sure we should rank it as number one because every disabled person has a different number one issue, but certainly the human rights commissioner identified the difficulty as transportation. They can't hop in a cab. They can't drive a car. In far too many cases, they have to rely on WheelTrans. They need to rely on interpreters.

They were looking forward to being part of this debate today. When did this government make known to the disabled community that second reading of this bill was going to start today? Well, kind of by accident, at 4:30 yesterday afternoon. No one actually contacted the groups representing those with disabilities and told them.

They were simply not able to be here today on something that tremendously affects their lives.

Was it an oversight? Was it an intentional desire to not consult? We can only speculate. But I and much of Ontario are offended that a barrier was constructed to Ontarians with disabilities even coming and being part of this process today. A process that talks so much about inclusion in fact excluded the disabled from the debate today.

One interesting thing in your bill is that one of the points requires that Web pages be made accessible to citizens with disabilities. Well, I think the minister now knows that it was posted on the Internet but not in a format accessible to those who have disabilities. The minister's own posting of the new ODA was not accessible to the disabled. It wouldn't have taken a rocket scientist to say that if any bill should have made sense and should have been available to Ontarians with disabilities, this was it.

That to me is reminiscent of some years ago when a cabinet minister in this government went around Ontario and actually went to a group of blind individuals to do a presentation with an overhead projector so they could see what her bill would look like at that time. We still don't get it, that we need to include them in every aspect of our life.

Minister, I believe that this government is afraid to really go and talk and listen to the 1.6 million Ontarians who have a disability. You have offered four days of public hearings across Ontario and one day here. Based on what's happening here today, when will you tell them about the hearings? The night before? The morning of? This should have been at your media conference on Monday, that it would be in the House. Surely you're better organized than it appears and you in fact knew the second reading was going to be today. So if you're not going to tell them about the debate, I have to infer that you're not going to tell them when the public hearings will be, because for so many of our citizens—I met with an individual who is deaf-blind and it was described to me how difficult it is for her to simply travel from Huntsville to Toronto, what is required to have the supports in place. That's the type of person we should be listening to. We didn't want them here today, evidently. Are we going to provide the format for them to be at the public hearings? I don't know.

You talk repeatedly about the disabled community being in charge with this, that they're able to guide, they're able to set the direction. I would flip that challenge back. If you really want them in control, will you let Ontarians with disabilities write a bill? They know exactly what should be in it to remove their barrier. They could have produced a bill for you to fine-tune. But no, you ignored the expertise and the advice that exist within. I challenge you to let the disabled community produce a bill that would be meaningful.

Let's compare this bill with another one that's been before this House, and that is the nutrient management bill. With that bill, your government referred it to com-

mittee after first reading. That infers to me that it's a pretty important bill. I've got members here with more experience. I don't think that's a normal process for it to go after first reading. You have scheduled nine days of hearing—

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. Take your seat for a moment, please. Government members, could I remind you that the opposition members were respectfully quiet while your minister did your leadoff speech. I'd ask you to show the same respect to the representative of the official opposition. Sorry for the interruption, member. Please continue.

Mr Parsons: Thank you, Speaker.

For the nutrient management bill, you referred it to committee after first reading. You've allowed nine days of public consultation and you've agreed to public consultation on the regulations. I compare it to this bill, which will not go for public consultation till after second reading. It will have only four days outside of Toronto and there's not even an offer to allow public consultation on the regulations. It's very difficult to not conclude from this that this government values cows ahead of the disabled community. Nine days versus four? There's something fundamentally wrong in that when we have 1.6 million Ontarians who are having their lives adversely affected by this.

1720

And what better example of your lack of commitment than the fact that you've provided zero funding for it to happen. Not one penny has been put into the budget of this province to make sure barriers are in fact taken down or to make changes for it. But you know, you could do it without increasing taxes; you could do it without putting a burden on. This government has put a higher priority on massive corporate tax cuts than it does on the very quality of life of its most disadvantaged citizens.

If they simply cancelled or deferred the corporate tax cuts, they would be in a position to fund the cost of removing the barriers. Cancel the corporate tax cuts for your friends. Make the ODA an effective bill. There are costs associated with it in that the municipalities, whether they be cities or towns, whether they be townships, whether they be school boards, have the potential to have increased costs.

They've already struck their budget. There's not going to be anything happening in November, December, January, February or March, because they won't have their new budget till April. If they're not going to have their new budget till April and there is no funding available to implement anything, then why not defer this and do a real, genuine, open public consultation, so open that you will fund the transportation, that you will fund the interpreter services, that you will advertise it in sufficient time that the people can make arrangements to be there?

I'm afraid that one symptom of your lack of support for the ODA is the Ontario disabilities support program. The maximum that a recipient of the ODSP can receive is \$930 a month. Many receive less. I want each of you to

try to picture living in Toronto, Hamilton or Ottawa—in fact, I can say anywhere—on \$930 a month, paying for a rental apartment or paying taxes on a house—though basically sentenced to poverty, I don't think the house is a big issue—and buying food. There is absolutely no money in that. When was the last time the ODSP was raised? In 1990. That was 11 years ago. Inflation has not been rampant but it has run around 2% a year. That means, for our most vulnerable citizens, that they have had a decrease in spending power of 22%. They've had a fifth of their money taken away by inflation.

We still have money for corporate tax cuts in this province, we still had money for the \$200 cheques last year, we still have money for all kinds of media ads, but we don't have money for the disabled who are among us.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Shame.

Mr Parsons: That is an absolute shame. You're passing the costs on to municipalities because of downloading. You're already being forced to increase taxes. School boards are struggling. A public school board in my riding has got enough funding to run their school buses until about the end of February. Now you want them to assume extra costs that truly are a provincial issue.

This bill focuses primarily on mobility issues. That's an important issue. I don't want to downplay that. There's been lots of publicity over the \$5,000 fine. That was a brilliant strategy to get front page: there'd be a \$5,000 fine for parking in a handicapped parking spot. First of all, what does that mean to someone who's blind, deaf, developmentally handicapped or mentally ill? Absolutely nothing. The whole premise of this bill is focused on that \$5,000 fine.

Will that fine ever be levied on anyone? Many of you have municipal backgrounds. You know when somebody gets a \$10 parking fine how they react to it, and they call their councillor. I'm trying to picture that phone call when the \$5,000 fine is levied. The answer is, it won't be. No one will ever levy that. Even worse, that fine applies at city hall but not at the mall. You'll still see people misusing and abusing the handicapped parking spots. If they're on private property, it means nothing.

If this government wanted to do something about the parking problem, they would deal with the substantial number of counterfeit parking permits that exist right in this very city of Toronto. I have talked to representatives from the Toronto police who say that thanks to colour copiers, there is quite an open market for people buying. I find it abhorrent, but there are people buying counterfeit parking permits. Go and tackle that, because if there's a wrong car parked in that handicapped parking spot and the city got the \$5,000, that does nothing for the handicapped who can't park there. It doesn't solve their problem. It produces revenue for the city. Will that money taken be used to help an Ontarian with a disability? I don't think so. Making it sound like it is going to help an Ontarian—it doesn't. It generates more revenue for a municipality.

The minister refers with some pride to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and rightfully so. We have an Ontario Human Rights Commission that we should be proud of. But they are not the answer to an Ontarian with a disability, because when there is an injustice done, when they are not permitted to take a guide dog into a restaurant, for example, they can appeal to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, which may take a year or two or longer to produce a decision, and it applies only to that individual. It does nothing for anyone else. The Human Rights Commission is intended and mandated to deal with one issue at a time and not to do a blanket decision affecting everyone in the same situation. That's why we need an ODA, something that provides rights to everyone across Ontario, not just the particular individual who has to lodge that complaint.

Some disability groups may have used the expression, "It's a good first step." I don't want to hear that. I don't believe that's a fair way to go at it. What we need is not a good first step; we need a giant leap. If we said "a good first step"—a good first step would be making the Premier's riding office in North Bay accessible to someone in a wheelchair. That's a good first step, but it does nothing for the other 1.6 million Ontarians who need a service. We don't need a small symbolic gesture; we need a massive overhaul of our thinking about how we will treat our fellow citizens with dignity and respect and how we will include them in everything that we do. Small first steps don't make it.

For all of the talk about the planning and the recommendations that will be made in this, we also need to be reminded that there aren't commitments that it will happen in a month or a year or 20 years. It's all pretty open. But the fundamental flaw that needs the asterisk in Hansard to say "not really" about it applying to everyone is it truly applies only to the public sector. For all of the talk that we've heard from this government about wanting to put people back to work, the jobs that the disabled community want to access are private sector jobs. This government talks about taking people off the government roll and putting them into private sector jobs. This doesn't apply to the private sector. It does nothing.

It can be made to apply. The legislation says that the cabinet or the government can at some time have it apply. But is that going to be another six and a half years? Will that be 10 years? Will the current members be around to make it apply? It really is so open that it doesn't drop one single barrier to the private sector.

In fact, thinking of the public versus private issue, this government has introduced and passed a bill that will provide funding to private schools. As I read it, the public schools have to make plans to be accessible; private schools don't. This bill doesn't apply to the private schools. So they're going to get money from the taxpayers of Ontario, but they won't have a commitment to remove a barrier or to provide service to an Ontarian with a disability. We worry about two-tier health care; we're well on the way to two-tier education services.

You can ask any one of your constituents, "Which do you go to more often, city hall or your shopping mall?"

and the answer is pretty clear. There are people who will never, ever have need to enter a civic building but they need to go to restaurants and need to shop. This bill doesn't apply there at all.

I don't think the costs for it to apply to the private sector are terribly onerous. We've had indications of the costs in the US where they have removed the barriers under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and over 70% of the businesses said they spent \$500 or less. I think Sears indicated they spend on average about \$42 per employee to make their workplace accessible and provide the supports. Many owners do it now. I don't think private industry is opposed to treating Ontarians with dignity. Many owners voluntarily do it.

1730

There has been a craziness for a blind individual who wishes to make application to the Ontario disability support plan. The system we have now—because we love computers with this government—is to do it over the telephone, and they need instructions on how to do it. This government doesn't produce a Braille card of instructions on how to access the funding. Yet that person can go to a restaurant chain—I won't name them but they've got golden arches out front—and they can get a Braille menu. They can walk in and they're assured of a Braille menu so that they can order a hamburger. So they can get a hamburger in Ontario if they're blind, but they can't access government services. Hopefully, this bill will deal with that at some time.

Industry says to me, "We want to make the accommodation. We want to be accessible, but we want a level playing field. If we spend the money, we want all of our competitors to spend the same money so that competitively we're in exactly the same position as we were before." Now, I'm not sure about that, in the sense that most, if not all, of these 1.6 million Ontarians with disabilities want to come into the store and spend money. They want to go in the restaurant and spend money. I hear from the Americans with Disabilities Act people that it's good business. Even if we weren't talking about humanity and compassion, it's good business to be accessible.

We have a tremendous market, particularly of Americans, who want to travel north to our wonderful country. I receive calls in my office, often on a Monday, from Americans who have been somewhere in Ontario and realized that we're nowhere near the level of providing services to the disabled that the United States is. They come assuming that they're going to be able to get into hotel rooms.

Last year the Metro Toronto hospitality industry, to their credit, voluntarily initiated a program because, they said, "It's good business; it's good neighbours. We're going to make our rooms accessible." But whether it's an Ontario person travelling somewhere around Ontario or whether it's people coming from outside of the province or country, we need to provide an assurance to them that they will have all of the services available that they need.

Minister, just a piece of very friendly advice: I've had calls from your very community, your constituency,

indicating—and I haven't gone and tried them—that the doors on your office are of such weight that some disabled have trouble opening them to get in.

Hon Mr Jackson: You know that's not right.

Mr Parsons: Well, I can only go with the callers, Minister. I'll make a run out and we can do it.

I know as government members you've been under great, great pressure to get a bill through. You've read the media, you've had calls from constituents, you've seen editorials and you know that there is pressure for you to pass an ODA, and it must bother you that you made the promise in writing in 1995 to pass it. I know you're under pressure, but I know there has been a concerted effort to not pass one. I'm asking you to stand up for your constituents on this and recognize that this bill is not the bill your constituents asked for. This is not the bill that your community truly wants. It has a great title, but it lacks profoundly in terms of substance.

As we travel around Ontario, as we talk to people, I absolutely believe now that every one of us here and everyone in Ontario has a friend, a neighbour or a relative who's disabled. I have heard it said that there are two groups of people in Ontario: those who are disabled and those who are waiting to be. I have glasses that I didn't have five years ago. Each of us will require additional support from our communities and from our province as we age, or because of a car accident or an industrial accident. Every one of us is unfortunately at risk of it and we know someone who would benefit from a meaningful ODA. Every one of us can tell a story about someone.

I spoke with one of the authors of the Americans with Disabilities Act and they said that was a driving force for them when, one day, among the elected people, they started to talk about who they knew and who needed the protection of an Americans with Disabilities Act, and each person in their elected chamber realized that they knew someone who was not being well served at the present time.

This bill simply doesn't do it. It's window dressing. While purporting to apply to everything, it applies to a very, very small segment of where a person with disabilities spends their day. It's not winter yet, but we had our first snow job when this bill was introduced. I can understand that the Premier is afraid of offending his business friends. He doesn't want them to spend money. At least, he doesn't mind them spending it at fundraisers, but he doesn't want them to spend it to serve Ontarians with disabilities. But I really, truly believe that most people want it.

I would like to read some information on that. A report submitted to the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation by the Roeher Institute in 1997 showed that people in Ontario want an Americans with Disabilities Act. In the States, it noted that improvements in participation in post-secondary education and accessibility to public transportation improved with it. The report also observes "that accommodation of the particular requirements of persons with disabilities seems to be good business practice"—those are the words you should

like to hear—"with a significant return on investment, and that the educational and technical assistant services rendered to implement the act has been useful and well-received." This is an act that applies to everyone, covers every minute of every citizen's day. It says that it's good business, useful and well received.

The average cost to US businesses to comply with the ADA has been fairly modest. The US Job Accommodation Network reported that more than 70% of businesses reported accommodation for \$500 or less, as I mentioned. Twenty per cent of US businesses reported there was no cost to implement the ADA. For Sears, I said \$42, but the average cost was \$45 to implement it.

A 1995 Harris poll found that 70% of respondents in a national survey of senior corporate executives—these are your friends—supported the Americans with Disabilities Act and did not favour weakening it any way. Ours is such a diluted version of the Americans with Disabilities Act that it runs against what senior business officials say. The poll also found that 80% of these senior corporate executives felt that the ADA had increased the cost of accommodating people with disabilities only a little or not at all.

A recent Ontario government poll—this is your poll of 801 adults released December 22, 2000—indicated that 61% of Ontarians surveyed believed the government is uncommitted to an ODA. You haven't fooled the people. You truly haven't. That same poll indicated that 77% of people believe that an ODA should also regulated private industry, so the majority of people recognize the role of private industry in this, and 71% said that they believed the legislation should be mandatory—required rather than voluntary.

You're running counter to polls. It goes against everything you do when you ignore your polls. You've got to get back in line and get with the message. The polls say the people in Ontario want you to do the right thing. They're expecting you to do the right thing. Don't disappoint them. Don't continue the hurt.

This whole concept of "voluntary" for private industry—we don't ask the people of Walkerton to count on voluntary testing of their water. You've got regulations saying it's so important to the quality of life and to life itself that it's mandatory. I suggest to you that for an Ontarian with a disability, in many cases it is profoundly important to their quality of life and their very health that they have access. For an Ontarian with a disability, simply getting to a doctor may be such an obstacle now that it doesn't happen when it should. The user fees you have created puts them at risk in other issues.

The approach too that each municipality will have some authority to do their own thing provides no assurance to an Ontarian with a disability who wants to travel from one community to another. Whether they have access to a public building should not depend on what is the tax base for that community. Even where you're making the province of Ontario buildings more accessible, it only happens when there's going to be a major renovation or you're constructing or leasing a new build-

ing. So they cannot travel to another community with any assurance that that building will be accessible, because if it has been operated by the government in the past and continues to be, it's not.

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This building is a pretty fair example of that. A blind individual cannot come and get into the elevators in this Legislature. There's no Braille on the buttons, and as the elevators move up there's no bell to indicate the number of floors they've come up. From time to time, even those who are not blind will get off at the wrong floor. Can you imagine a blind individual on a wrong floor and absolutely lost? This building doesn't provide service to Ontarians with disabilities. How many individuals with wheelchairs can we accommodate in this chamber? Two, and that's all. That's a disgrace for the groups that want to come and hear the debate regarding this bill. We have no quota for any other group, but we have a quota of two if they require a wheelchair. We should all be ashamed of that.

The House unanimously approved, and that means every one on the government side approved, 11 principles that were to be adhered to in the new ODA. The minister has said, "What has the Liberal Party offered? What would they do?" We have committed that we would pass a meaningful Ontarians with Disabilities Act after full public consultation, not just in a few selected cities, and that we would adhere to and follow the 11 principles all three parties agreed to. It's as simple as that. You couldn't even follow the principles you voted for.

There is such pressure to rush it through that I have to think of the saying that says, "There's never time to do it right; there's always time to do it over." You tried once before and you didn't do it right and you had to do it over. We can't play games with the lives of our citizens and have it done over again. This is it. You have the opportunity to do something right. We have the opportunity together, as elected people, to leave a legacy of opening doors to 1.6 million Ontarians. We can positively affect their lives for the better. We should not and absolutely must not abuse the power we have in this chamber.

But there is power here. You know and I know that the majority of the power rides on that side. The government can approve or kill any bill they wish. We need to look at the track record of this government to say, "Should we be optimistic that they will put through a meaningful bill?"

I've shared with this chamber the track record for Ontarians who are deaf at Sir James Whitney School in Belleville, the abuse that took place there, and this government is saying to each of them, "Sue us. We set aside \$8 million. We've given it out. We weren't even really accountable for it. We didn't require any proof that abuse took place. We gave it out and when the \$8 million is gone, well, that's it. For the rest you can sue." These are Ontarians who are blind and vulnerable, and the government is forcing over 125 of them to sue for justice.

For the group that got the money, this government was extremely good in that it even said, "As part of the settle-

ment we agree in writing to provide counselling services," because for deaf individuals counselling services are rare and expensive. Once the agreement was reached, the government said, "We're not going to provide counselling services. We're just not." They didn't say it was money. They didn't say it was lack of services. They just said they're not going to.

An issue that has become extremely close to my heart is age-related macular degeneration. These are seniors who are experiencing the growth of extra blood vessels in their eyes that will burst and they will go blind. There was no cure for that until about two years ago. In February 2000 the federal government approved a process called Visudyne that can cure and prevent these individuals from going blind. This government that purports to care for blind individuals will not fund it. What is it? A money issue? It can't be a money issue. It costs about \$16,000. That may look like a lot of money, and I'll tell you, that's a lot of money to a senior citizen.

Last Saturday I went to a fundraiser a community put on to try to raise enough money for a senior citizen so she would not go blind. She had used every penny of her savings to pay for the first two treatments of \$4,000. She did not have the money for the next three. The first two do nothing; you need all the treatments. We had a community out fundraising to keep an Ontarian from going blind. What kind of province do we live in that will let a senior citizen go blind when there's treatment available?

Now, if you don't fund it—and you're making no move to; since February 2000, you've been procrastinating on funding it—and she goes blind, bless you, you'll give her up to \$930 a month from the ODSP. If you do the math, after 16 months it actually was a very bad financial decision. But members, this isn't a financial decision. We have Ontarians going blind and we don't care.

The \$6 million that was wasted on education ads to try to fool parents would have prevented 400 seniors in this province from going blind. You had your priorities. Do we do partisan ads for \$6 million to try to fool the parents or do we take 400 citizens who have paid taxes all their life, have contributed and built this province, and do we save their sight? No. We went with the \$6 million in glitz. And instead, we've got seniors having bake sales, selling their valued possessions, neighbours holding dances to try to keep people from going blind.

I struggle to accept that this government cares about the disabled when they're actually creating disabled through their unwillingness to fund macular degeneration treatment.

The ministries are absolutely separate entities that don't even want to talk to each other. I mean, we've got the Ministry of Education. And this bill—well, this bill's going to make sure that the doors open and that the wheelchairs can get in. That's great. The fact is that it probably already exists in our schools, because I don't know of a school board that hasn't bent over backwards to accommodate the needs. But once that door's open and the student in a wheelchair gets in, there's no educational

assistant for them any more. There's nobody to help them get around. There's no one to help them lift the books. There's no one to help them open the doors. So I wish this minister would also talk to the Minister of Education and say, "You know, we need to get some funding to you so that not only can we get the students in the building but the students can actually participate in education."

We have a parks system in Ontario that I think we're rightfully pretty proud of. How many camping spots do we have for Ontarians with disabilities? I looked through eastern Ontario and I actually found that within my immediate vicinity one park had one campsite. Here's the interesting thing about that campsite: if no one's rented it by 2:30, they'll rent it to anyone. They won't hold it. So if you don't have a disability, you can still show up at 6 o'clock and, assuming the spots aren't full, you'll get a spot. But if you're an Ontarian with a disability, you'd better be there by 2:30 or you're not going to get a camping spot because why hold it just for someone's disability? Absolutely shameful.

The most fascinating part of my role as critic for the area of Ontarians with disabilities has been meeting with Ontarians who have disabilities, who come into my office—not aggressive, looking for help—and describe to me their life. I had a gentleman come in who is 100% blind, who used to have 5% vision. What fascinated me was he said to me, "You know, Ernie, if I could get that 5% vision back, the world would be mine." Where we would think he'd be terribly handicapped, he thought, "If I get 5% back, I can do anything." He actually operates his own business. He repairs small motors. He says to me it's pretty important that you don't come in his workshop and move his tools, because he has absolutely no vision. But he had 5%. He was told that an operation would restore it. It didn't. He lost it.

He comes in and he says, "I have to live on a routine, as a blind individual. I like to walk downtown and for some reason buy groceries. And that's a pretty good day for me, except when my municipality has a sidewalk sale I can't leave my house." He can't go downtown because the sidewalk has all of the tables and the displays. He said, "I cannot make my way with a cane through the downtown area because of the sidewalk sale." I never thought about that, and I suspect most of the members here never thought about that.

He also humorously pointed out to me that they came up with what he thought was a less-than-brilliant idea, which was to hang flowerpots in the front of stores. He said, "The pots are exactly this level. I know where each of them is now. I didn't feel them with my cane; I felt them with my forehead." But again, what was a wonderful gesture on the part of the community to brighten up their downtown area for the summer was for that blind individual a significant problem. To go out and meet with council or with one of these committees is not an easy job for him to do; very difficult for a person who's blind to do it.

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Another interesting thing I found was about having a guide dog. Some blind individuals use a cane, but it takes

evidently about a year for them to learn how to use a cane. I would challenge any of us to try closing our eyes and walking around this building. I tried and I cheated; I opened my eyes. These are individuals who are truly blind. They can take their dog with them into a store, they can take their guide dog with them, but they can't take their guide dog with them into work. They can go in as a customer, but they can't go in as an employee. This government wants to get people back to work. Well, then, make some legislation that will allow individuals with guide dogs to go to work.

Assistive dogs: something not all of you may be familiar with. Assistive dogs are dogs for people in wheelchairs who perhaps have only very limited use of a wrist. The dogs will open doors, will help push or pull the wheelchair, will do any number of jobs. What legislation do we have in Ontario to allow assistive dogs into stores? Absolutely nothing. They're recognized as if they are a family pet, and they are not. They are an animal that makes quality of life possible for these individuals. I don't see anything in this bill that would mandate the right of people to take an assistive dog into a store or restaurant.

What does this bill do for individuals who are deaf? Not a lot. The government that wants to put people back to work in the private sector needs to know that the unemployment rate among the deaf runs between 85% and 90%, needs to know that 85% to 90% of deaf individuals are unemployed. We have provided education for them either in the regular school system or at one of the three provincial schools. Unfortunately, if they want post-secondary, they've had to go to the US for it at considerable expense, but they can't get a job.

When I talk to them, they say, "The first obstacle is"—I'm going to talk about my community—"we need to take an interpreter with us. So we actually get contacted by a firm that wants to interview us and usually when they want to interview us for a job it's the next day or a couple of days or some time that week." Because there are two interpreters who serve the three counties inside and outside of my riding, they have to book a couple of weeks, maybe three weeks, ahead for the interpreter. So they can't get an interpreter to go to the job interview and they don't get the job.

We also need to educate private industry as to the strengths, the skills and the work ethic that come from the deaf individuals in our communities. I don't see anything in here to help educate the rest of Ontario in order to give these people their opportunity. It has got to be so distressing to be fully competent, to be eager to go to work, and the government will do nothing to remove a barrier to get them in.

A young man came to me who is deaf and conveyed to me, through an interpreter, that when he has to go to see his family doctor he has to take his mother with him. When they go into the examining room his mother has to go in with him, because when he is ill he cannot wait two or three weeks for an interpreter. To say it is embarrassing is an understatement. His mother has to be there

while the doctor examines him and translates for the doctor. We have almost no doctors in Ontario who are able to do American sign language.

Then he said to me, "One time I decided I wouldn't do this any more and I went on my own. I gestured and moved and touched and pointed and did everything I could to convey what was wrong, and the doctor gave me a prescription. I took it to the drug store, I gave them money and they gave me the prescription. I got home and I thought, 'Boy, I hope he understood what was wrong with me. I hope these pills are actually the right ones for that problem,' because there was very little communication between us and I hope he understood the symptoms I was trying to describe," but he wasn't sure. Surely he's entitled to better service than that. Surely he's entitled to the assurance that there will be interpretation available for him at the doctor and at the hospital.

Say a deaf individual is in an automobile accident, heaven forbid, and ends up in an emergency ward. One of the rights that all of us have as citizens is to make an informed decision when the medical community offers advice as to what should happen. Well, there are not many emergency departments in Ontario that have the translation ability available. Certainly they try. It may be on call. They may have to phone someone who is on call who could be 10 minutes or half an hour coming in, but that may be too long. Sometimes no action is itself an action. So we're not seeing the hospitals, much as they want to, able to provide the interpreters, because there has been no impetus from this government to train interpreters, to fund interpreters and make them available to our deaf citizens.

We mentioned transportation and the difficulty that individuals face, particularly in rural areas. Almost all their transportation needs require a special vehicle, booking ahead. They simply can't get in and go for an appointment or job interview quickly.

I had a woman call with what I thought was a very simple request that's not going to be solved for her in this bill. She said, "I'm in a wheelchair. I like to go to restaurants, but I like to sit at a restaurant table with my friends. Because of my wheelchair—it won't fit under what is a standard size table in a restaurant—I have to sit back and eat my food on my lap because there is no requirement for there to be accessibility at maybe just one table in one restaurant so that I could go in and put my chair underneath and sit and enjoy a meal with my friends. Instead, I'm isolated."

This bill won't apply to restaurants. It won't cause them to have to make that table available, though again I think good business would require that they provide that. But she is very clearly identifying a problem. I've started looking around to see if that is a problem that exists. I am impressed to note that downstairs here in the Legislature we do have a table for that. Granted, it's difficult for an Ontarian with disabilities to get here and I'm not sure I'd recommend the food. Nevertheless, we need to encourage people in other industries, in private industry, to provide a service to the people.

What has this government done for the developmentally handicapped? It has not recognized at all the increase, the growth in funding for special services at home. This bill will do virtually nothing for the developmentally handicapped or the mentally ill community. This bill has focused on the very visible challenges of those with wheelchairs while ignoring the others.

Speaker, I realize I have some time left but I'm also conscious of the clock. That looks pretty close to 6 o'clock.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. It is quite close enough to 6 o'clock. Therefore, this House will stand adjourned until Monday, November 19, at 1:30 in the afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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