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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 4 December 2001

Mardi 4 décembre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 December 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 décembre 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today is to the Minister of the Environment. As you're very well aware, Canadian Waste Services is proposing to take a small local dump and convert it into a huge megadump. This is a company with unlimited financial resources, and they are being held accountable by a group of citizens who have to have yard sales to get any funding to put forward their perspective. This is simply not fair or equal. From the get-go, your ministry has taken in and very clearly supported and favoured Canadian Waste Services.

You are the Minister of the Environment for the people of Ontario. This dump has the potential to leak toxic leachate and destroy the water supplies of eastern Ontario for generations to come. I call upon you to fulfill your role as minister of the people. Intervene. Provide the people of the community with the resources and support they need. You have scoped the entire process so much that it has become meaningless and provides no protection for the people. You don't even require that Canadian Waste Services prove there is a need for the dump.

There is something fundamentally flawed when the citizens of Ontario have to fundraise to fight their government. Show some interest. Show some leadership. Our legacy to future generations must be an ample supply of clean water, not a huge mountain of garbage that will destroy the landscape and, even worse, leak into the ground. Minister, do the right thing: fight for clean water; fight for your citizens.

LOYALIST COLLEGE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to recognize a partnership among Loyalist College of Belleville, Frontstep Inc, Progress Software and Dell Computer Corp.

In the rapidly changing world of business, it is important that Ontario students receive the most up-to-date training available. This strategic partnership will allow business school students at Loyalist College to have access to a curriculum based on advanced technology and applied business processes. These skills are necessary for students to excel at roles in materials management,

human resource management, financial management and professional sales.

The partnership will also allow students to gain hands-on experience with leading-edge enterprise management software. Knowledge such as this will be extremely useful when these students graduate and enter the working world.

Ontario's colleges and universities are constantly updating their curricula to provide our students with the best education possible. Through endeavours such as this, we are opening doors for our young people and allowing them to better understand what the business world has to offer.

As always, Loyalist College is demonstrating leadership and innovation by co-operating with the private sector to provide this new educational opportunity. I wish Loyalist and their new partners all the best in this new initiative.

INCINERATION

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'd like to bring to the attention of this House that the extreme policies of the provincial Conservatives are continuing to put people's health at risk and are causing long-term damage to the environment. According to the Environmental Commissioner, air emissions from the burning of toxic liquid waste at the Safety-Kleen incinerator in St Clair township, the largest hazardous incinerator in Canada, are at lower standards than the 1995 provincial standards for non-hazardous incinerators.

So-called improved amendments to the incinerator in 1998 have actually allowed an increase in contaminant emissions. This is dangerous and alarming because this incinerator emits the largest amount of mercury in this province as well as dioxins and other toxic substances into the air.

This extreme neo-conservative government's lack of comprehension, lack of action to raise the standards in this very serious situation, once again shows this government's disregard toward environmental issues as well as a disregard for the impact on people's health and safety in St Clair township.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Last week the housing ministers from across Canada met in Quebec City, and this government sent along, of course, its housing minister, the Honourable Chris Hodgson. At the

end of the session, there was much hullabaloo and a whole bunch of announcements were made, and a new plan came forward.

The bottom line on that new plan says that there is going to be a bilateral agreement with all of the provinces and territories; therefore, it's unnecessary for the provinces to come on board.

Right off the mark Quebec was there with dollars and programs and commitment, and so were Nunavut, British Columbia and most of the other provinces. Unfortunately, that was not the case for Ontario.

The province is going to have to match funds with the federal government or have matching funds available for a third party. This province has given only a paltry \$20-million commitment, and the rest, I suppose, is going to come from third party funding, from cities and from people who can't afford it.

Where are the cities supposed to get these funds? That's what I think the minister has never come clear on. Where are they to get the funds? We see from this province's own auditor's report that the cities have been ripped off, especially the city of Toronto, by hundreds of millions of dollars in downloading, and it's not revenue-neutral. Where are they to get the funds? If we are to build it, this province must come forward with the funds for housing and must come clean with the city of Toronto.

STRATFORD FESTIVAL

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise today to tell fellow members of this House about the 50th season of the Stratford Festival, to be celebrated this coming season.

To help the festival celebrate its 50th season, artistic director Richard Monette will return to the stage to play Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, opposite Cynthia Dale's Eliza.

Other stars who will grace the stage in 2002 include Christopher Plummer, who will play King Lear; and William Hutt, a member of Stratford's inaugural company of actors since 1953, who will play the King of France in *All's Well that Ends Well*.

The festival has something else to celebrate this season. On July 13, the festival's fourth venue, the Studio Theatre, will open in downtown Stratford.

In 1952, Stratford resident Tom Patterson envisaged a theatre festival in his hometown. In 1953, his vision came to life and has since grown from a six-week event held on one tented stage into a six-month extravaganza held in four permanent theatres. The festival now generates about \$340 million in economic activity every year. It supports more than 6,000 jobs and accounts for 12% of the tourism in southwestern Ontario. Last year, 600,000 tickets were sold.

I urge all members of this House to mark April 24 of the year 2002, this season's opening night, on their calendars, and I would be pleased to welcome members

from both sides of this House to my riding to enjoy this summer's festival.

BAY OF QUINTE WALLEYE FISHERY

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I want to commend the good work done by many concerned stakeholders of the Bay of Quinte walleye fishery. For many weeks now, local commercial fishers, anglers, aquaculturists, hospitality and service sector groups have worked very hard to voice their objections to the ministry's plan to hold invitation-only meetings in Dorset on this fishery issue.

This issue, of course, is the fact that the future of the walleye fishery in the Bay of Quinte was to be considered at workshops with ministry-chosen participants in Dorset, some 300 kilometres from the fishery.

1340

Yesterday, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced that the invitation-only workshops scheduled for December in Dorset have been postponed until the new year and will be relocated. Details of when and where the rescheduled meetings will be have yet to be determined.

It is absolutely essential that the Ministry of Natural Resources provide a format for consultation that will be open and accessible for all stakeholders. It must provide an opportunity for participants to be heard by the entire community; hence, an open house format will not be acceptable. The consultations must take place in the Bay of Quinte area, preferably in more than one location. That is what the people involved in the pickerel fishery want, and Ontario Liberals believe that is what they deserve.

FEDERAL ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I call your attention to the extreme pressure on the health budget. This pressure is building and building because of the indifference and neglect of Ontario's 101 dalmations—I mean Liberal MPs. I know these MPs were elected by default, with no national opposition to stop them. We know they take their Ontario seats for granted and that they feel they can go on forever, unopposed. One of my constituents told me unemployment was rising. I asked her how she knew. She said, "Look at the Ontario federal Liberal caucus: another 101 Ontarians not working."

Because the arrogant federal government feels safe neglecting Ontario, we now have a situation where the federal government has a \$17-billion surplus but they can't be bothered to pay their fair share of the health costs for the Ontario voters who elected them. Even Brian Mulroney was a better contributor to health spending than Chrétien is, and Mulroney had to deal with a \$40-billion deficit. Jean Chrétien has no such excuse.

I want to congratulate Premier Harris for bringing all these issues out into the open for honest debate. Liberals in Ottawa and Liberals here at Queen's Park would rather we didn't talk about awkward situations like these, but

then Liberals everywhere have always been better at spending the money than they are at paying the bills.

DANIELLE CAMPO

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Later today I will be joining with Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in paying honour to a constituent of mine named Danielle Campo. Danielle is a 16-year-old woman who last summer won three golds and a silver in the 2000 Paralympics in swimming.

Applause.

Mr Duncan: Yes. This young woman is in grade 11 at St Anne high school in Tecumseh and she works out—I know, like the Chair of Management Board and myself—about four hours a day: two hours in the pool, two hours dry. She has brought great honour not only to the town of Tecumseh and to the riding of Windsor-St Clair, but indeed to the people of Ontario. I know all members join me when I pay tribute to her and tell her what an inspiration she is, not only to us here in this House but to all of her fellow citizens.

I just want to read briefly something that's been said about her. She is "an exceptional athlete who happens to have muscular dystrophy, and she has worked hard to make sure that people see her first as an athlete and not as someone held back by a disorder. She has overcome the irony of having to work at this by maintaining the proviso that people will notice what you can do, not what you can't do."

And this is what Danielle said: "My attitude is that people should see me as 'Danielle the accomplished athlete on the Canadian swim team,' and not as 'Danielle with muscular dystrophy.'"

Danielle, all of us in this province see you as a remarkable young woman and we are all really proud of your enormous achievements.

JOAN FLOOD

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I rise today to pay tribute to Her Worship Joan Flood, mayor of Essex, who died last Wednesday. I have two feelings in my heart today: one of extreme sadness in Mayor Flood's premature passing, and one of joy and gratitude for her life's accomplishments.

Joan was always a role model for all of us as people committed to serving the public in our communities. She was first elected to the Essex county school board in 1981 and served there for 17 years, and then was elected as the first mayor of the newly amalgamated town of Essex in 1998.

She was a very close friend of our Minister of Colleges and Universities, the Honourable Dianne Cunningham, and I want to read Dianne's description in a letter she wrote to Mayor Flood's husband, Chuck.

Dianne said she was always outstanding in her leadership, in "her good advice and honour, her integrity, her enthusiasm and wonderful sense of humour, her vision!

Our country cries out for leadership like Joan's—Essex has been the recipient of her common sense and working in partnership with others."

I wish to extend on behalf of our caucus our deepest sympathy to her family, her beloved husband, Charles, her four children and her grandchildren, and the balance of her family who supported her throughout her political career.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, we have in the public west gallery a former colleague of ours, Mr Richard Johnston, who was the member for Scarborough West for the 32nd, 33rd and 34th Parliaments. Please join with me in welcoming our former colleague.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

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

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee recommends that the following bill be not reported:

Bill 51, An Act to help save the lives of Ontarians who suffer from cardiac arrest by promoting the widespread availability and use of portable heart defibrillators in public places / *Projet de loi 51, Loi visant à contribuer à sauver la vie des Ontariens qui souffrent d'un arrêt cardiaque en promouvant la disponibilité et l'usage généralisés de défibrillateurs cardiaques portatifs dans les lieux publics.*

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1348 to 1353.

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

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic

Arnott, Ted

Baird, John R.

Barrett, Toby

Bartolucci, Rick

Beaubien, Marcel

Bisson, Gilles

Bountrogianni, Marie

Gerretsen, John

Gilchrist, Steve

Gill, Raminder

Gravelle, Michael

Guzzo, Garry J.

Hampton, Howard

Hardeman, Ernie

Hodgson, Chris

Mushinski, Marilyn

Newman, Dan

O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.

Parsons, Ernie

Peters, Steve

Phillips, Gerry

Prue, Michael

Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Johns, Helen	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Brad	Kormos, Peter	Smitherman, George
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Levac, David	Sorbara, Greg
Coburn, Brian	Marchese, Rosario	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Curling, Alvin	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Tilson, David
Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Turnbull, David
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Elliott, Brenda	Murdoch, Bill	

The Speaker: While the Clerk is tabulating the votes, if members could please remember to stay in their seats during the vote. It is confusing for the people counting. If people are moving, they don't know if they voted and inadvertently you could vote twice. I would ask for all members' co-operation, please.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 0; the nays are 86.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek your guidance with respect to this bill. It's a serious matter. This particular piece of legislation was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and referred to committee. My understanding is that the government used its majority in committee, first of all, to defeat the title of the bill, defeat all the amendments that were put to the bill and then vote to not report the bill back to the House. A government member presented that motion, which had been endorsed by all members, as I understand it, of the government sitting on that particular committee. My question is, sir, what happens to this bill now? It's in some sort of—

Interjection.

Mr Duncan: I say to the Minister of Labour, it's a very significant issue. It's about heart defibrillators.

The point of order, Mr Speaker—

The Speaker: Order. Thank you very much. Acting Premier, please. The member is just about finished.

Mr Duncan: I hate to use a grammatically incorrect double negative, but the government voted against receiving a report that said not to receive the bill. I guess the clarification we need from you is, Mr Speaker, what becomes of that bill at this point?

The Speaker: Just very quickly, I have stopped trying to figure out what may happen. The government House leader may give us some clarification on what could potentially happen with the government's—government House leader.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I appreciate that the honourable member across the way is asking you an

information question about what happens to this bill. I would suggest that these matters are usually discussed at the House leaders' table. I'd be quite happy to raise it with the House leader and we can talk about what would happen with that bill. I think that's the appropriate—

The Speaker: Thank you. I'll clarify it.

Please, the member for Niagara Centre, very short, if you could.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is that the faint hope clause?

The Speaker: The report will go back to the committee. Those who are members of that committee can then redecide what to do. It is now in the committee's hands, what they would like to do. I'm sure that with goodwill and co-operation—I understand that this may be one bill that is non-controversial and may have support. If that is the case, then the House leaders hopefully will be able to get together, and for whatever happens, this is a step—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, if we could, please.

We'll just try to be very short and then we can move on to the partisan wrangling.

With goodwill and co-operation, hopefully the committee can then make the decision to proceed. Whatever has gone on has gone on, and hopefully we can move forward and do what's in the best interests of the people of Ontario, which I'm sure everyone would like to do.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As the whip for the committee on justice and social policy, as you will know, government business at any committee takes precedence over any private member's legislation. The only reason there was an opportunity for the justice and social committee to deal, first, with Mr Colle's bill on portable defibrillators and, second, with Mr Dunlop's bill, a government member's bill, this afternoon is because the government's business on a previous bill ended early.

The committee's schedule is now full with government business, and I would ask how this measure can now be referred back to committee.

The Speaker: —the committee needs to be able to decide. My hands unfortunately are tied in this instance. I am not capable of producing any more time, and I'm not sure if anything can be worked out. Hopefully, they can. I understand the circumstances, but unfortunately it's back in the committee's hands and it is their responsibility.

1400

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NIPISSING UNIVERSITY ACT, 2001

Mr Miller moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr25, An Act respecting Nipissing University.

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

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

AJAX PICKERING TRANSIT
 AUTHORITY ACT, 2001

Mr O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act respecting the Ajax Pickering Transit Authority.

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

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

ONTARIO COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS
 AND TECHNOLOGY ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001

SUR LES COLLÈGES D'ARTS APPLIQUÉS
 ET DE TECHNOLOGIE DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs Cunningham moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act respecting the establishment and governance of colleges of applied arts and technology / Projet de loi 147, Loi concernant l'ouverture et la régie de collèges d'arts appliqués et de technologie.

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

The member for a short statement. Oh, she's doing a ministerial statement? Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
 AND RESPONSES

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): The rapid pace of change in our society in the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century has placed significant demands on our post-secondary education and training systems. The rapid transition to a knowledge-based economy means that an ever-increasing level of educational attainment for our students will be critical to ensuring the economic and social success of Ontario and its citizens. Our government is committed to providing access to the lifelong learning opportunities necessary to maintain that success.

I am proud to mention the following milestones:

The capacity at our colleges and universities is being increased to address the expected student enrolment growth over the next 10 years.

Through SuperBuild, we have launched the largest expansion of Ontario's colleges and universities in more than 30 years. The government is spending over \$1 billion to create new spaces for future generations. With our private sector partners, that is about \$1.8 billion.

In addition, to ensure that there will be faculty and resources to support these new students, we are increasing operating grants by up to \$293 million over 2000-01 levels.

We are also working to ensure that our post-secondary programs are meeting the needs of today's students and employers. That is why we provided \$228 million to launch the access to opportunities program to create an additional 23,000 spaces in high-demand programs such as computer science—programs that students want.

To help students and parents plan, we also froze tuition increases at 2% per year for most programs. This means that students will know the cost of their chosen program's tuition for the next four years.

Today, happily, long overdue, we are introducing the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2001, another element in our comprehensive plan to better serve the changing needs of students and our workplaces.

In 1965, then-Education Minister Bill Davis introduced a bill that established a college system for Ontario. It was a revolutionary concept, a new level and type of education. He envisioned a network of colleges across the province offering occupation-oriented programs designed to meet the needs of the local community.

In his statement to the Legislature Mr Davis explained, "In this new age of technological change and invention, it is essential to the continued growth and expansion of the economy of our province, and of our nation, that adequate facilities be made generally available for the education and training of craftsmen, technicians and technologists."

In 1967, 19 colleges opened. Over the years, that number grew to 25 in order to meet community needs. Colleges of applied arts and technology are now present in 200 communities across this great province.

At the introduction of the legislation founding the college system, Mr Davis noted that the new colleges were designed to meet the economic and social demands not only of 1965 but into the future.

Over the years, our colleges have done an excellent job of providing students with skills that lead to employment. Approximately 45,000 full-time students graduated from the system in 1999-2000. Last year, 91% of graduates were employed six months after graduation, and 91% of their employers were satisfied with the training graduates had received.

However, the tomorrow of which Mr Davis spoke is now here. Technological and economic change has far exceeded anything that could have been imagined in the 1960s. It is time to match the original vision of the college system with a vision for the 21st century. Today our colleges need to be more flexible and market-driven. They need to be able to respond quickly to market

demand, to give students and employers programs that will provide the skills needed in today's, and tomorrow's, economy.

The Ontario Jobs and Investment Board recommended a new charter for colleges to support their very important role in providing a well-trained workforce to maintain Ontario's economic strength. Colleges have asked for a new charter as a way to provide some enhancements in the role of colleges as well as enabling colleges to better meet the needs of students and the workforce.

The legislation this government has introduced will, if passed, build on the success of our great college system. It would respond to today's needs by allowing colleges to continue to develop and respond more effectively to the needs of their students and their communities. It is important to note, however, that when we speak of communities today, we are speaking both of geographic communities and of knowledge communities.

The current legislation treats all colleges the same. However, the characteristics of Ontario's 25 colleges vary considerably in size and in the nature of local communities they serve. They vary in the range of programs they offer; they vary in the partnerships they have with local businesses, industry and other education institutions; and they vary in the way in which they deliver programs and courses, whether in classrooms, through apprenticeship, over the Internet, in remote communities by day or by evening.

We want to enable colleges to be better able to respond to the different circumstances of their communities, their student bodies, their local economies or their unique areas of specialization.

One of the strengths of the college system has been its ability to anticipate and adapt to change. New legislation and regulations would modernize the framework for colleges and would support the colleges in adapting to the needs of the 21st century.

1410

Colleges need to have the ability to concentrate on specific areas of learning that meet the needs of the communities they serve. We have many examples of areas of specialization that have developed at colleges throughout Ontario, such as Centennial's expertise in transportation or Sir Sandford Fleming's renowned School of Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences.

We have examples of strong partnerships with industry, such as Georgian's Canadian Automotive Institute, which serves Canada's automotive marketing industry. Colleges need to be able to continue to grow and develop in emerging areas of need, such as Algonquin and Niagara colleges' development in partnership with Photonics Research Ontario, of new, leading-edge programs in photonics technology, and through our \$2-million transportation technology strategic skills initiative as Fanshawe College partners with John Deere in maintaining Ontario's gateway to global markets.

All of our colleges in their own ways are providing significant leadership and are playing increasingly diverse roles in economic development. For example, the

Northern Centre for Advanced Technology—NORCAT—at Cambrian college is involved in developing new technological applications and prototypes for mining and related industries. A number of our colleges are beginning to become involved in applied research in areas of unique expertise.

Clearly, in a province as dynamic and diverse as Ontario, there is no one size that fits all our colleges. What is appropriate and necessary in one part of the province may be inappropriate in another.

It is our intention to give colleges more autonomy, while still holding them accountable for public dollars. If passed, this legislation would modernize the accountability relationship between college boards of governors and students, the public they serve and the government.

Modern accountability relationships focus on public reporting against projected outcomes. College activity would be more focused on outcomes if this legislation is passed, meeting student and employer needs. The role of the government in day-to-day operations of institutions should be limited.

Our goal is to enhance existing opportunities for boards of governors to define the unique role each college will play in its local, regional, national and/or international communities. We want to give college boards increased responsibility for managing autonomously some functions, such as real estate transactions.

We consulted extensively with members of the college system in adopting this present direction. Working together, we will provide opportunities for a new generation to take their place in strengthening our economy and our communities.

Ontario has one of the highest post-secondary participation rates in the world. Our provincial government is working with students to ensure they continue to have access to a high-quality post-secondary education that will prepare them to lead successful, productive lives.

If passed by the Legislature, the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2001, will enable colleges to better provide students with more opportunities and a full range of choices to acquire the skills they need to succeed.

This provides us with an opportunity to thank ACAATO, the colleges themselves, their staff, their students, their boards, OCCSPA, student representatives, the TCU—training, colleges and universities—staff, and everyone who partnered in a very long process to come to today.

We have agreement among all of us, not only for legislation but for regulations, and I think this is a milestone in the working relationship between the government and our colleges. Of course, I give thanks also to my critics. They've worked along with us over a long period of time.

Today I'd like to recognize Harold Rundle, president of Fanshawe College, who is with us; Tim McTiernan, the chair of the committee of presidents and president of Canadore College; Dan Patterson, vice-chair, COP and president, Niagara College; Robert Gordon—that's a new

name for Squee, isn't it?—president of Humber College; Brian Desbiens, president, Sir Sandford Fleming College; Gisèle Chrétien, president, Collège Boréal; Susan Bloomfield, the chair of ACAATO; Jim Drennan, chair of the Georgian College board; Pierre Richard, chair of the La Cité collégiale board; Beverly Townsend, chair of the Loyalist College board; Dianne Miller, chair of Confederation College's board; Tracy Boyer, executive director of OCCSPA; and last but not least, Joan Homer, the executive director of ACAATO; Pam Derks, the research and policy director of ACAATO; and Stuart Watson, communications director of ACAATO.

It is the working relationship of everyone who advises this government in the best interests of students that makes this kind of legislation and regulation possible.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):

I'd be pleased to speak to the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act introduced today by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

First, I would like to relay to our guests from the college sector, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, our condolences for the passing of your colleague Dr Frank Marsh, president of Cambrian College. His commitment to the students in his community and therefore to the rest of the province is an inspiration to all of us and his untimely death a reminder to all of us to keep perspective, to take care of ourselves and to take care of our health. That is the only way we, in turn, can contribute to the students.

The Liberal Party supports any move that contributes to the education of our young people. We have a fine-looking group of young people right above us there. We understand the vital importance of post-secondary education and its direct effect on our economy, our lifestyle, our health and that of our families. Possibly, after we have had the opportunity to review the charter, which I have to say I just received 10 minutes ago, we could have a more substantive discussion. As we are all aware with this government, the devil is in the details. I would have liked to see the first draft of the charter so that I could prepare a more complete response. But that isn't the style of this government—even more evidence that we need to very quickly pass my colleague Caroline Di Cocco's Bill 95, the ethics and transparency act, where public meetings are open to the public.

Openness certainly makes the role of government more difficult. I understand that. I understand that if I ever have the privilege of serving in government, my job would then be more difficult. That is what the public expects of us. It is the right way to govern.

But there are a few facts that are well known. In order for Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology to continue to provide accessible, quality career education and training to the one million learners who enrol each year, the government of Ontario needs to put the vision of quality, accessible and affordable education for every student into action. At this rate, there's a long way to go.

Over the past 10 years, Ontario colleges have seen a 35% increase in enrolment with a 40% decrease in

funding. There is no relief in sight. Without the necessary investment in our post-secondary system, we will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in enrolment of more than 32,000 additional college students by 2006. The Pricewaterhouse study, which has yet to be made public, showed that you have underestimated enrolment and therefore, given that your funding formula is based on enrolment, you have underestimated and underfunded the needs of the system and will continue to do so.

Ontario's colleges and universities are also experiencing a faculty shortage. In 1995 the student-faculty ratio was 19 students per faculty member; in 2000 it is 25. Minister, what will it be in 2006? The government's own report, *Portals and Pathways*, identified \$300 million in deferred maintenance costs for colleges alone. This capital funding is to keep the buildings from falling apart. They talk about SuperBuild, but this government has spent less than any other Ontario government in the last 25 years on infrastructure in this province.

Student debt has never been higher. You have not increased OSAP levels since 1990. This fall, Ontario had the largest tuition increase in Canada. Since 1995, tuition at Ontario colleges went up 67%.

Minister, there are two issues I will be carefully reviewing. In your remarks, you stated that, "The role of government in day-to-day operations of institutions should be limited." It should also be limited in other areas. Will you give yourself more power to make decisions without bringing these decisions forward to the Legislature first? What are the dire circumstances that would require you to step in and take control over a college board? Will we have a repeat of the CCAC takeover, where this government punished those who put patients first and finances second?

Minister, given this government's record on labour relations, we will be scrutinizing any changes that would create a two-tier bargaining system.

My last request of you is to try and influence the future Premier to do away with the \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut and give it to education, give it to health care, give it to the environment. Those areas are in desperate need.

In closing, if our honourable guests support this charter, if the charter contributes to the education of our young people, we on this side of the House will be happy to support it.

1420

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Minister, I was almost going to apologize to the presidents because of what I'm about to say, but I want to tell you, you should be the one apologizing to these presidents, all two rows of them here today, because you have the fortitude to bring this bill on December 4, when there's only one week left of debates and you've got 21 bills in the hopper to debate in this Legislature—21 bills, and with this bill it's 22 bills.

When will you find the time to debate the other 21 bills, including this one that she presented today? What kind of games are you playing with the opposition and

with these presidents who are here today? You tell me and you tell them that you are happy with the fact that the opposition has been working with you. I'm sorry, but you haven't been working with me. You never called me once to say, "Rosario Marchese, I want to debate this issue with you. How can we best do it together?" Not once did you call my office to say, "I want to do it with you"—not once.

And then you bring this bill on December 4, giving them the impression that somehow we may be the problem if this bill doesn't pass? It's not us. It is you who is the culprit on this matter. We want debate on these bills. They cannot pass simply because you bring them at the last moment—urging the presidents to tell us this bill must pass before December 11 or 12. It will not happen.

The minister says that with SuperBuild, they have spent more money than in the history of who knows what. New Democrats spent twice as much as this government, in a recessionary period, on our college and universities, and they come proudly saying, "We spend so much money on colleges and universities." We tell you, the government has cut \$2 billion cumulatively in our colleges and universities system, yet this minister congratulates herself by saying they have returned a mere 15% of that \$2 billion they've already cut.

This government says they have frozen tuition fees and put on a cap of 2%. Since 1995, tuition fees have gone up 60%. So they proudly come today to you, to us and to these students and say, "We've capped it at 2%." Madame, you've increased tuition fees by 60% since 1995. The debt and the burden is on the shoulders of these students, and they can't afford it.

This minister has deregulated professional programs to the extent that they're now inaccessible to so many working men and women out there in Ontario society. Professional programs like medicine cost about 15,000 bucks. I've got to tell you, Minister, your hyperbole connected to the platitudes you've introduced today is only exceeded by your arrogance, and nothing more.

The minister says proudly, "The role of government in day-to-day operations of institutions—"

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Calm down, calm down. The minister says, "The role of government in day-to-day operations of institutions should be limited." Oh? Similar to what the Minister of Education, elementary and secondary, has done? We have never seen a much more interventionist government than the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance as it relates to elementary and secondary schools. We couldn't have a more centralist government than ever in the history of this assembly. Yet today she says, "Oh, we want to get out of the business. We don't want to be so tightly in control of colleges and universities." Please, talk to Flaherty and talk to the minister right beside you, who's not here at the moment, and talk to me about you wanting to get out of the way.

I've got to tell you, Minister, you have a very sad and sorry history. Tuition fees have gone up. Colleges and universities are starving for funds and buildings are

crumbling. Privately, colleges are telling us they are going to go into a deficit this year, next year, and you come proudly saying, "We need to do something novel and interesting."

The two suggestions you make in your statement—very vaguely, I might say—which will give the colleges greater control over the lands may be good for the colleges, but I say you are abdicating your responsibility as a government to fund colleges properly. That's why they're excited for you to give them this bill, but we are not going to give it to you as fast as you want to get it into this place.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is for the Solicitor General. Minister, you have now been—let me take a quick look at the recent record—caught putting public safety at risk. You allowed 400 drunk drivers to get back on the road before they were entitled to do so. You kept 30,000 dangerous drivers on the road. You've been caught refusing to cooperate with the Provincial Auditor, something he said was the first time it's happened to him in nine years, and you've been caught wasting taxpayers' money. On that last count alone, you said this to the NDP housing minister on June 1, 1992, and I quote, "You're wasting the taxpayers' money. You don't know what you're doing. You should resign now because this is money that is inappropriately spent." That was just one strike. You're guilty on three separate counts. Minister, will you do the right thing and the honourable thing and resign here and now?

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): No.

Mr McGuinty: It gets worse, Minister. Here's what the auditor said on page 252 of his report, "We could not determine the propriety of the ministry payments to consultants. For instance, the ministry had altered a consultant's invoice totalling \$234,000 by recording the amount as paid against another contract with the same consultant and indicating the work was done during a different time period."

Let's look at the total so far. First of all, you have threatened public safety. Second, you refused to cooperate with the Provincial Auditor. Third, you have been found guilty of wasting taxpayers' money and now, fourth, the Provincial Auditor tells us that on your watch documents were altered in the ministry, documents that were being presented to the Provincial Auditor. As I count it, that's not just three strikes, it's four strikes. You're out of the game. Will you do the right thing and resign?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Before the Solicitor General gets up, on the first question dealing with drunk driving, I thought it had some relevance to the Solicitor

General. As the leader of the official opposition knows, the Solicitor General is not the Minister of Transportation. That question could be out of order or the Minister of Transportation could decide to answer the question. I will leave it up to the Minister of Transportation, whom I see rising.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): We've already accepted as a government the findings of the auditor and we've already met 70% of the issues the auditor has brought to our attention. We've already achieved compliance with 70% of them.

I should also point out to the House that the previous minister had already hired 10 medical review officers to help us lower the backlog, so we had already accomplished that too. So we've already proceeded down the road.

In reference to some of the other questions the leader of the loyal opposition raised, we have implemented a number of measures in dealing with contracts and consultants within my ministry, mandatory training for staff on best practices for retaining and managing consultants, a monitoring system to ensure guidelines are strictly adhered to, monitoring of consultant performance during the contract period, critical evaluation of the consultant's performance. So 70% of the recommendations that the auditor has, we've already met.

1430

Mr McGuinty: I can sympathize with you. You had one heck of a mess to clean up, and I wish you the very best in terms of cleaning up after your predecessor. But this is not about you. It's not about your activities, it's not about the leadership you're lending to your ministry; it's about your predecessor. I come back to him because all of these matters rest plainly on his shoulders.

The public is entitled to know whether or not you are going to step down in light of the facts that have come to the surface. You have threatened the public safety. You have refused to co-operate with the public auditor. Those, in and of themselves, are very serious issues.

Minister, I ask you again, will you do the right thing, will you do the honourable thing, will you do what you asked of a minister when you stood on this side of the House? Will you resign for all the right reasons?

Hon Mr Clark: Once again, I thank the member opposite for the question. The bottom line for our ministry is that we have acted in a very appropriate way in dealing with the auditor's office. The members opposite who were in government before would know that when the Provincial Auditor is conducting an audit, it is the deputy minister and the ministry staff who deal directly with the auditor.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Clark: It's difficult to hear because of the heckling.

When I came into the ministry, the same thing was happening. The deputy minister was dealing with the Provincial Auditor. It was only after the deputy minister came to me and said, "Here is the draft audit," and raised the concerns of the Provincial Auditor that I requested a

meeting with the Provincial Auditor. I met with him on June 27. On June 27 we met with him, he raised the concerns, and I put in place a plan to satisfy his concerns.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Health. I understand that he may not be here. If that is the case, I will put it to the Acting Premier.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I don't see him. The Acting Premier, then, would probably be best.

Mr McGuinty: Apparently, Minister, you over there are at it again. You're using taxpayer dollars on partisan ads. This is the latest, running throughout the province today in newspapers at a cost of \$1 million. Apparently, a quarter-billion dollars invested in partisan political advertising was insufficient to satisfy your appetite, so you are at it again.

Your message in this particular ad is very clear. This has got to be the most widely distributed blackmail note known to mankind. It says, effectively, that you're going to kill medicare if the feds don't give you more money. Can you tell us, Minister, why it is that you have \$2.2 billion for corporate tax cuts, you have half a billion dollars for private school tax credits, you have a quarter-billion dollars for partisan political ads, you have \$1 million for this ad, but apparently you don't have enough money to make health care a priority in Ontario at this time?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Let me say at the start that the only member of this Legislature, the only person in this province, I can imagine who would suggest that demanding that the federal government pay their fair share for health care is blackmail is the leader of the official opposition. That's the only member of this Legislature who would say that.

They started at 18 cents; they're now down to 14 cents. We on this side of the House think that's scandalous. Only you would be defending the federal government and their abdication of the health care system to protect the citizens of this province and give them good health care service.

We don't see it as blackmail. We see it simply as advertising asking the public for their opinion with respect to the health care system, asking them to direct their thoughts to their federal MPs. I would suggest to the member opposite, if you suggest this is blackmail, sir, you are sadly out of touch.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you may be interested in the Speaker's ruling at one particular time in this House. I'll read it as follows:

"Personally, I would find it offensive if taxpayer dollars were being used to convey a political or partisan message. There is nothing wrong with members debating an issue and influencing public opinion; in fact, it is part of our parliamentary tradition to do so. But I feel that it's wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds."

Guess who said that, Minister? It was said on January 22, 1997, by one Honourable Chris Stockwell, Speaker of the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

Interjections.

Mr McGuinty: So what I'm wondering is, Speaker—or Minister, whichever it is today—do you believe in what you said back then or do you believe in what you're telling us today, and how can you possibly reconcile the two?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Of course I do. I did not realize in this House that the suggestion would be made that asking the federal government to pay their fair share of health care is somehow partisan—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. It's getting too noisy now. I apologize, Acting Premier.

Hon Mr Stockwell: —would somehow be partisan. I would have thought all the members of this Legislature would have expected the federal government to pay—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Windsor West and the member for Hamilton East, come to order, please. Sorry again, Acting Premier.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I would have thought everyone in this Legislature would have expected the federal government to pay their fair share for health care. What is the debate? What is the advertisement about? It is about the provincial government demanding the federal government live up to their commitment. That's not partisan. That's just fair ball. I can't understand why you don't support that.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, it is painful to see you over there hoisted on your own petard. What we're asking over here today is, whatever happened to the man, the Speaker, an individual of integrity who then said, "I feel that it's wrong for a government to attempt to influence public opinion through advertising that is paid for with public funds?"

If you intend to seek the leadership of your party, if you intend to become Premier, it would seem to me that you're going to have to stand by principles that you set out in the past, Mr Minister. I ask you again, how is it that you can reconcile the position you're taking today as a matter of convenience with the position of principle that you took in the past in your capacity of Speaker?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Since we're talking about petards, Mr Speaker, I think Mr McGuinty has one he can hoist himself on. McGuinty on the federal budget: "I was personally disappointed with the budget because it did not assign the priority to health care that ordinary Ontarians have been telling me they assign to it. The silence from the federal government on medicare has been deafening."

Speaking of principles, speaking of positions, it would seem the leader of the official opposition would say one thing one day; when we request the federal government through advertisements to pay their fair share, he has a completely different opinion. May I suggest, no lectures from the member opposite on principles, because you

have some on some days and, according to you, on others they are completely different.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. I want to quote from a November 30 front page article from the Wall Street Journal. It's entitled "Enron Swoon Leaves A Grand Experiment In Disarray," and the disarray it's referring to is the whole scheme of electricity privatization and deregulation in the United States.

The article says that private sector energy investors are pulling out of new electricity projects because of the financial uncertainty created by Enron's bankruptcy, the largest corporate bankruptcy ever in the world. It also says that this will lead to less predictable supplies of electricity and electricity blackouts in the United States.

My question, Minister, for you is, why is your government intent on privatizing our electricity system and repeating the Enron disaster in Ontario?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): The honourable member asked this same question some weeks ago in the estimates committee and the answer remains the same, that much of Enron's problems in terms of its financial woes stem from investments outside the electricity sector. He only has to read the daily Wall Street Journal or the Financial Times to understand what's going on with that company. You will see that Enron Canada is a fully functioning company, that it is involved in the electricity sector in many provinces and doing quite well. The fact that Enron in the United States has made investments outside of the electricity sector, outside of its traditional energy sector, has caused great problems and a bankruptcy for that company. The company itself admits it was not the electricity sector that forced them into bankruptcy, but some bad investments they made outside that sector.

1440

Mr Hampton: I invite the minister to read the same article, because the article is very clear. It points out that Enron was the spiritual guru and corporate driver of electricity deregulation and privatization across the United States. Now it's gone, bankrupt; a \$50-billion bankruptcy. It's led to all kinds of uncertainty in the electricity markets.

My question is, won't you learn a lesson from this? Won't you learn a lesson from the corporation that said it was going to lead North America into electricity privatization and deregulation? A \$50-billion bankruptcy. The report is it's cost California \$100 billion from the failure of privatization of electricity there. Why, when 22 states in the United States are turning away from electricity privatization, do you want to repeat the same disaster in Ontario?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member is an island unto himself with respect to the theory he puts forward. It's very difficult to chase ghosts, which I'm required to do every time he gets on his feet, so go back to your haunted house and scare yourself, but stop scaring the

customers in Ontario, because our deregulation and introduction of competition is going very well. It's on track. It's on time. Investor confidence is at an all-time high in terms of over \$3 billion worth of proposed new plant, including the \$400-million plant that is currently being built in Sarnia, Ontario.

Enron's overextension in the United States in sectors outside of the energy sector is not something I'm staying up at night worrying about, and it's something he should stop chasing in terms of shadows, ghosts and haunted houses.

Mr Hampton: It would only be a Conservative government that would be so wedded to privatization of public services that it would say a \$100-billion disaster in California is a haunted house, that a \$50-billion disaster, bankruptcy, in the middle of electricity deregulation in the United States is nothing to worry about. The people like British Energy and TransAlta are telling you, are being very clear: what they want is complete electricity deregulation to be able to take Ontario-produced electricity and sell it in the United States, into that chaotic market at a higher price. You owe it to the people of Ontario to tell people what that means: that it means joining that market chaos in the United States, that it means much higher prices, that it means unpredictable supply.

Minister, yesterday I attended the opening meeting of the Ontario Electricity Coalition, a coalition that has watched what has happened in the United States and doesn't want to see it repeated here. Won't you listen to them, or are you so wedded to what the corporate sector wants that you're willing to repeat the disasters of California and Enron in Ontario?

Hon Mr Wilson: If the honourable member does an honest assessment of California, one of the reasons California is not in the news these days is that finally the politicians in California, after 13 years of mucking around, introduced competition just in the last few months. Four new plants have been built, and prices have gone down significantly as competition is finally taking hold in California, exactly what should happen when the politicians leave it up to the market to decide demand, supply and price. So finally California is starting to remedy itself by allowing the market to do that.

The Ontario Electricity Coalition that the honourable member speaks about yesterday had a sign up in front of poor Adam Beck down on University Avenue, a statue of Sir Adam Beck, who by the way saw electricity being delivered by the private sector and never by a company called Ontario Hydro, if someone wants to read the history books. But having said that, they're calling for power at cost. Do you know what power at cost brought us with the old Ontario Hydro monopoly? Bad management, bad maintenance at our nuclear plants so we had to close 10 of them, and \$38 billion worth of debt.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier. Your government is

hoping everyone will forget that the Provincial Auditor has found that the former transportation minister, now Solicitor General, is in fact a lawbreaker. It must be a very stinging report from the auditor to point out the level of mismanagement and the fact that your boasting about law and order doesn't apply to one of your own cabinet colleagues. The auditor's report tells us: \$27 million of mismanaged consulting contracts, 30,000 unfit drivers on the highway, 400 convicted drunk drivers still driving because you didn't take their licence away, and then that the minister actually presided over the altering of documents to frustrate the Provincial Auditor.

You know we've asked the OPP to investigate. You must also know that the Deputy Attorney General is now investigating this matter. The only decent thing to do when there is such a clear breach of the law is for the minister to step aside. Will you do that?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Let me respond. Firstly, I think—

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Mr Speaker, are you accepting his saying "lawbreaker"?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The question has been asked. Thank you very much. I've talked to somebody privately. Don't shout out, please, member for Mississauga South, during the answer coming up.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The government obviously takes the auditor's report very seriously. We consider the issues and the recommendations that the auditor gives and we respond to them very quickly. I think earlier today, the Minister of Transportation noted how quickly they have responded to some of the concerns that were brought forward.

Do we share the opinion the member has stated with respect to the assumptions you've made or gathered from the auditor's report? No, we don't. We think it's important that we review the auditor's report, make the recommendations and clearly respond to them. I think what you're suggesting is far beyond what the auditor has said in his report. It goes well beyond the analogies that I've read in the report. I think the arguments you're making go much, much further than I read into the auditor's report.

Mr Hampton: I spoke to the Provincial Auditor about this very matter and he reports that he was stonewalled, just as you're trying to do here, for almost a full year. He said that if he had not pointed out the conduct of the Minister of Transportation, it would have amounted to allowing your government to simply thumb your nose at the Provincial Auditor.

Either your statement is that the Provincial Auditor is factually wrong or you condone a minister who presided over a breach of the law continuing to be in your cabinet. It's as simple as that. Either you're saying the auditor is wrong or you're saying you condone a minister who presided over a breach of the law continuing to be in the cabinet. Are you saying the auditor is wrong or are you going to ask the minister to step down? If the audit fits, you can't acquit. That's the reality.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Let's deal with the issue at hand. The issue at hand was that when the first request came through, it came from people who worked in the audit department. They made their request to ministry staff. There was some concern with respect to the kind of information they were asking for. Therefore, the information was moved up to the auditor and the secretary of cabinet. The secretary of cabinet and the auditor met and came to a protocol on a process that would allow this information to be given.

If you continue to read the auditor's report, he outlined his concerns. He also suggested, in the very next paragraph, that the secretary of cabinet met with the auditor and did provide a protocol to allow this information to be released to the auditor.

We do not want to have a discussion or a fight with the auditor. We agree with the auditor and how he goes about doing his business. But I will say to the members opposite that we met the requirements. We asked for a meeting, we facilitated the meeting, and the secretary of cabinet met with the auditor. If you read through the audit report, he says in the very next paragraph that yes, they did meet with them and he was reasonably satisfied with the outcome.

HOME CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the assistant minister of health. It's about the hostile takeover of home care with Bill 130. My simple question to the assistant minister is this: I want to know whose advice was sought to bring forward Bill 130. It wasn't the seniors of Ontario, because you refused to meet those groups. It wasn't the local boards of the home care organizations, because they say this isn't the right way to go. It wasn't the provincial association; they agree that it's not the right way to go. It wasn't the nurses of Ontario; they're against the bill. It wasn't Tony Clement; he said he would never do this last August. It wasn't Jim Flaherty; he said he's for more local control. It certainly wasn't Pricewaterhouse, which you often have quoted as your source, because the recommendations in the Pricewaterhouse report specifically say that the number one request and recommendation is around funding, because the funding has changed and the required funding has increased. Minister, my question is this: whose advice did you seek to bring in this hostile takeover of home care?

1450

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): Let me say first off that the government of Ontario and the taxpayers of Ontario have been paying the full cost of community care access centres for some three years since their inception. So I fundamentally disagree with the point of the question. Let me say that the people in Ontario were concerned with the quality of care they were getting. They were concerned about the amount of care they were getting.

We went in and did an operational review in Hamilton. We had PricewaterhouseCoopers go in and review the CCACs across the province and made recommendations about changes. We met with a large number of people with respect to CCACs. My colleagues also met with people in their offices about CCACs. There has been a lot of work done on this. The people on this side of the House believe that we need to provide a quality service in the community, and we're moving forward to doing that.

Mrs Pupatello: The assistant minister is out there blaming volunteer boards for the mess this government created, like the board in Waterloo. This is the board in Waterloo, in home care, that received an award just two weeks before the bill was dropped. The award was for their effectiveness and accountability. The vice-chair of that board says that this bill is a slap in the face. The truth is that the assistant minister is hearing from everyone that no one told you to do this—no one but your own caucus. Even members of your cabinet said not to do this, and here you are taking over home care and doing this in a reckless manner that is, frankly, bad public policy.

Minister, the truth is that you have a million dollars to spend on partisan advertising, a million dollars, when our seniors desperately need home care. We have increases in client caseloads that you have never acknowledged, and in your statements on the telephone with the directors of CCACs, the moment one of them asked about funding, the telephone line was suddenly disconnected. This is a gag order by the minister. We ask you today to withdraw this bill from this House.

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me be very clear that the government of Ontario has moved from funding these community care access centres at about \$600 million to \$1.17 billion. Nobody has more of a commitment to community care than this government. Let me say that we've increased that funding even though there's not one red cent from the federal government going to home care. Let me say that the federal government promised that they would have a national home care proposal out before the public, and where is it? Where is it? The same happened, as a matter of fact, with respect to a drug program. Where is it? This government has made a commitment to community services. We're going to ensure that community services work for the people of Ontario, and we're moving forward with Bill 130.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): My question is for the Minister of Education. During constituency week I visited nine schools in my riding of Thornhill, speaking to grade 4s and 5s about government. I also had the opportunity to visit three schools in York region that had special education programs. One of the schools, Muki Baum, is attached to Holy Family school, which is in my riding.

I discussed with board members, administrators and teachers some of the concerns surrounding special-needs

education. I was happy to learn that great strides are being taken for students with special needs in Ontario's system. It was expressed to me, however, that with a 50% increase in the York Catholic board's special-needs enrolment, this board is facing increased pressures in meeting the needs of these very special students. Their biggest concern expressed to me was that the ISA funding is effectively being stretched further each year because of increased student enrolment. Minister, what measures have been taken to address these concerns?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Thank you very much, the member for Thornhill, for the question. Special education funding is indeed a very important support for school boards in offering education services to those children with special needs. That's one of the reasons why we've passed legislation in this House that protects it, that says that it can only be spent for special-needs purposes to help those students.

What we do for school boards is give them special-needs funding that does recognize the increase in enrolment growth, because obviously as the number of students increase, the needs increase. The money that goes to school boards through, for example, what's called the SEPPA grant does indeed clearly recognize the fact that, as enrolment grows, so do the needs. For example, the York Catholic board had 5.5% of overall funding, much higher than enrolment growth, and again had an increase of about 3% in overall special education allocation to support the growing needs.

Mrs Molinari: I was also informed that one of the biggest problems regarding students with special needs is the criteria that must be met to qualify for funding. Students must meet all the criteria of the assessment to be given funding. Even meeting nine out of the 10 requirements disqualifies the student. Both teachers and parents have expressed to me their concern regarding the formula used to assess special-needs students. The paperwork involved in these assessments is taking teachers' time away from the classroom. Minister, what is being done with regard to the criteria assessments?

Hon Mrs Ecker: One of the things that has concerned me greatly is the misunderstanding that the accounting process that goes on to estimate the number of high-needs students a school board has is somehow being interpreted to drive the services the student gets. What determines the student's needs, what determines whether a student should get various services, is the individual education plan. Where particular students are falling in terms of the accounting processes to calculate funding should not be used to drive service decisions. So, yes, there is a formula via which we make estimates and projections about the needs for boards, but where it is important on the ground, with the individual education plan, to drive the actual services and supports that a student gets.

Reducing the paperwork and administration is extremely important. That's one of the reasons we actually grandparented about a third of all of the students this

year, so no additional process was required. We will continue to make improvements in that area.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the associate minister of health. Minister, in November last year, the previous Minister of Health announced an increase of \$4.8 million for community mental health agencies. This was welcome and desperately needed funding. The money went to 443 community agencies to fund supportive housing for those with mental illness, children's mental health, sexual assault programs and suicide prevention programs. There was no indication last November that this was one-time funding, but your government has now taken that \$4.8 million back and those agencies are faced with having to make cuts to these vital community mental health programs. The same thing happened to drug and alcohol addiction programs: a \$5.2-million increase last November, now stripped away a year later.

Minister, can you explain why the decision was made to cut this \$10 million from community mental health programs and can you tell us what you believe should be cut? Do you sacrifice children's mental health, suicide counselling or do you cut back on sexual assault programs?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): Let me say that this government has a large commitment to mental health in Ontario. Although we made one-time funding last year to mental health, in this calendar year we have implemented a number of mental health task forces across the province to ensure that we have a strong mental health network fibre across the province. We have brought together many, many people into nine task forces who will give recommendations to the government about things we should do to improve the mental health system in Ontario.

On top of that, we've been moving to move people out of institutions and take them into the community, and that funding has been flowing with people as we have done that. We have made that commitment in Kingston. We're looking at making that commitment in other areas across the province. This government has a strong mental health commitment, and that of course was shepherded through the House last session by Dan Newman as the PA to health as he made recommendations to mental health and, of course, by Christopher's Law.

1500

Mrs McLeod: The fact that this government brought through Brian's Law makes it even more reprehensible that they are cutting funding for community mental health agencies and programs.

Minister, I have the announcements from last year. There is not one word in these announcements or in the previous minister's speech that speaks of one-time funding. You cut \$10 million from community mental health agencies this year. It was a cut and nothing less.

Since your government made the cuts, I suggest you should have some responsibility for the consequences. The agencies took the funding because they needed it. They set up the programs and now you expect them to shut the programs down. I say to you, you can't shut down a sexual assault program because you've decided you need money for a tax cut. Suicides don't disappear because you've decided you're going to cut the funding. Children's waiting lists for mental health services don't disappear because you've got other priorities this year.

The Minister of Health appeared to share some concern for this, and I want to quote in asking you my question. He said to the mental health agencies: "You have shared your disappointment that this spending announced last year was one-time only. I want you to know that I too was distressed by this situation, and I pledge to work with you to obtain other ongoing funding resources."

Can you tell us whether or not the Minister of Health has found some way to relieve his distress and the distress of community mental health agencies? What funding is coming for community mental health agencies this year?

Hon Mrs Johns: As you can hear from the question, the Minister of Health is working with agencies across the province. But let me say that since 1995 this government has invested an additional \$370 million into mental health in Ontario. It's unprecedented. In the past, the population who suffered from mental illness had been forgotten as report after report stacked up in previous ministers' libraries. This government has taken an unprecedented step to moving forward with mental health reform in the province. We have nine task forces, we have a regional task force, and we're working to ensure that people with mental illness get the help they need so they can move toward mental wellness. We have every intention of working with stakeholders to ensure that mental health continues to be invested in, to ensure that mental health is a strong component—

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

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, I understand last week you attended a federal-provincial-territorial justice ministers' meeting in Ottawa. I understand this important meeting was a continuation of the previous federal-provincial-territorial justice ministers' meeting which was adjourned because of the tragic events surrounding September 11. The events of September 11 created new challenges for governments at every level, particularly how to ensure the security of citizens of this province but indeed the country of Canada while maintaining their fundamental rights and liberties. Could you please share with the House what important security measures were discussed with the justice minister and other provincial leaders?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I appreciate the question

from the member. I will say to you this: September 11 has a special meaning for justice ministers across this country for a number of reasons, one of which is that we were all together in Nova Scotia in the midst of a federal-provincial-territorial justice ministers' conference when the tragic events occurred south of the border on September 11. All of us witnessed our free and open society challenged. We witnessed the vulnerability of our society, and we all agreed that action had to be taken.

At last week's federal-provincial meeting, justice ministers from across the country came together and discussed a number of urgent and important matters, including the need for a North American security perimeter, which was an issue, by the way, that we from Ontario raised, put on the table and, I'm pleased to say, was welcomed by most of the members around the table. We also talked about who was going to pay for many of the measures that are contained in the anti-terrorist bills that Ottawa has tabled, and we have committed to continuing those very important discussions.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you for that very thorough response, Minister. I know you take public security and border security, as well as anti-terrorism measures, as very important, and I thank you for your advocacy and leadership in that area.

But there are also issues, such as expanding the scope of the sex offender registry and the toughening the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which continue to concern not just me and the people of Durham but of course our constituents in Ontario. My constituents don't want to lose sight or lose contact with these issues while the government is developing other plans to deal with the immediate security issues. What's going to happen with the sex offender registry, as well as the Youth Criminal Justice Act?

Minister, can you tell us how you will ensure that these issues and priorities remain at the federal-level table, and how are you going to make sure the people of Ontario are well served?

Hon Mr Young: It is going to be a difficult time for justice ministers across the country to balance what is an immediate and relatively recent set of needs that have come out of September 11 and at the same time remember some other issues, ongoing issues, issues that have been there for a considerable period of time, issues like the ones referenced by the member for Durham, issues that include the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which both before and after September 11 we in Ontario have spoken out against. We made some constructive suggestions, amendments that we thought should be brought forward.

We also have said time and time again, and continue to say, that the DNA data bank legislation must be amended, and it must be amended soon. It makes no sense to have the loopholes that currently exist. It makes no sense to continue to have legislation, federal Liberal legislation, that does not allow us to obtain DNA samples from individuals who have committed multiple murders on the same day. We can only obtain samples from individuals who have committed multiple murders on

different days. It makes no sense, and it's dangerous to have left in place.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. She's talking at the back.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock for a quick moment, please.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Speaker.

Ma chère amie, why are you wasting \$1 million on partisan ads instead of providing a decent education for the students of Ontario? Across this province, 111 schools are at risk of closing. In my riding, it's Senhor Santo Cristo, St Francis. In the riding of my friend from Beaches-East York, it's St Bernadette, St Aloysius and St John at the high school level. The reason for that has nothing to do with school boards. The real reason is your funding formula, which is designed to wipe out schools that have fewer than 350 students. That's the reason.

So I say to you, what are you going to do about that? Do you have the backbone to protect the 36,000 students and their communities who are about to lose their schools?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): We are not wasting any money on partisan ads. But we on this side of the House do believe that in a \$13.8-billion public education budget, the highest the budget for public education has ever been, we should be investing some monies in keeping parents, who are a key part of the team in terms of improving student achievement, informed about what is happening in our education system, about what initiatives are going forward, and making sure we're asking parents for their views. That's indeed what we're doing.

Vis-à-vis school closures, as the honourable member will well understand, because there were many school closures when his government was in power, school closures are always a very difficult decision for school boards, school board trustees. I believe that duly elected trustees should have the responsibility to deal with that. The legislation, the funding, does indeed provide flexibility for them to make those school allocation decisions that they must make.

Mr Marchese: The funding formula, mon amie, is the problem, not the trustees and not the boards of education. I'm telling you that elementary school closings will become an epidemic in this province unless you start putting the future of kids ahead of the partisan ads that you're putting forth. I'm suggesting to you that you've got to look differently at how we protect our schools.

The NDP proposes several things. You may want to pay attention to this. First, immediately institute a moratorium on school closings. Second, change your funding formula so that it finally covers the majority of elementary schools. Third, let communities propose alternatives to closing elementary schools. All I'm asking of you, Minister, is, will you listen to that message?

1510

Hon Mrs Ecker: Let's be very clear: not one penny of funding that goes to school boards to run schools is being used for any information campaigns to deal with parents, to give parents information. Let's be very clear about that: not one penny is being taken away from our schools to provide information to parents.

Secondly, what the honourable member is saying is that if we have a school that has no students, we should leave it sitting there and boards have to pay for it. That's what a moratorium means, and that's not an appropriate response.

Thirdly, letting communities come forward with alternatives is indeed the policy of this government. That's why, by law, we say that school boards must consult the community, must look at proposals and alternatives. I know of many, many instances across this province where, based on that consultation, school boards have altered their decisions. That's why duly elected officials have that obligation, and I believe we should leave it with the trustees to make those difficult, but in some cases necessary, decisions.

INTEGRATED JUSTICE PROJECT

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Attorney General. I listened to the minister's tough talk on crime just a moment ago, but you should maybe check out the auditor's report. Laws have been broken because of the Keystone Kops security system in place that's supposed to be protecting the records of victims and witnesses and suspects, data in the hands of police and prosecutors.

The Provincial Auditor found that in fact these data have resulted in unauthorized access and manipulation. We know that privacy rights have been broken. We know that the victims' rights bill, as toothless as that law may be, has been broken. My question is, how many young offender disclosure prohibitions have been broken? How many cases are going to be thrown out because the defence counsel is going to argue that the data have been manipulated? The question is not, have laws been broken? It is, how many have been broken, and how many times?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): It's difficult to tell exactly what motivated my friend opposite to ask the question. It certainly isn't facts. He seems to think that he has absolutely no responsibility and that he is somehow or other empowered to engage in fearmongering, based on absolutely no grounds.

Let's be clear. The integrated justice program is a program that everyone, but everyone, involved in the justice system believes is necessary. It is better to get information to the parties involved, all the parties involved, faster and in a more efficient and integrated manner. That's what we're working toward.

What we have seen out of the integrated justice program is a groundbreaking area. We're moving into

new areas. In fact, even the auditor suggested that the way to do this is with the assistance of the private sector, and that's what we're doing.

Mr Bryant: Nice try. The auditor's report says, "We had serious concerns that security measures were inadequate over the systems already in use by the police." Fearmongering? Tell that to the auditor. The auditor says, "Confidential information contained in these systems ... is vulnerable to unauthorized access and manipulation." Fearmongering? Tell the auditor.

There's a password system in place, if you can believe this, that's one letter. You have to hit one letter to break into the password. You get 26 cracks at it, so a three-year-old who knows the alphabet can break into this system. It would be laughable if it wasn't that laws have been broken.

So my question to you is, what investigations have you undertaken to either disprove what the auditor has found or to confirm that laws have been broken because a security system that's supposed to be Fort Knox in fact is letting a three-year-old in to access data of the most confidential and serious nature?

Hon Mr Young: Let's remember what we're talking about. We're talking about a program that is being developed. It is being developed, and as a result of that development process we have determined certain things—some of which, by the way, came from the auditor, and we appreciated getting it. But somehow or other, the member opposite expects it all to be right the first time. If that was the case, we would have brought it in initially. They would have brought it in when they were in power. What we are doing is developing a program, making sure we have it right before it is out there.

I would challenge the member opposite, who made some very serious allegations, to name one case that has been thrown out of court in this province as a result of the allegations he has made—one case.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I know that many of the municipal leaders in my region and indeed across the north are concerned about the need to make investments in their local infrastructure. Mayors like Ted Knight of Parry Sound want to make improvements in the quality of life for the residents of their communities. However, the cost of these projects is quite onerous. What can I tell the municipal leaders in Parry Sound-Muskoka to do about the costs of infrastructure projects and upgrades in northern communities?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I thank the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka for his question. Yesterday in Sudbury, I was pleased to announce that the Mike Harris government is building a stronger future for northern communities with a new \$82-million infrastructure program from

the northern Ontario heritage fund. The new northern communities capital assistance program will provide funding to help northern communities build, renew and enhance their basic infrastructure. Funding will be based on a community's population, ranging from \$100,000 for small communities to \$5 million for the largest cities in the north.

The Mike Harris government recognizes that a strong local infrastructure is critical to a community's ability to attract new investment and to improve the quality of life for its residents. We listened to the northern municipal leaders and responded with a program that will not only target important capital needs but will also leverage a significant investment from our partners in return.

Mr Miller: Mr Minister, that is absolutely fantastic news for the north. I'm very happy to hear about that. Did I hear you right? I think I heard that \$83 million was to be spent on projects around the north, and that is certainly great news for Parry Sound-Muskoka. I am very happy to hear that and I am hopeful that municipalities will be able to leverage even more money for new projects in the north, like fire halls and community centres. I certainly hope the small municipality of Kearney, which is desperately after a new fire truck, will qualify for this program as well. For the benefit of all members of this House, could you tell us more about this new capital assistance program, which is such great news for the north?

Hon Mr Newman: Indeed this is great news for northern Ontario, because the northern communities capital assistance program is the newest flagship program from the northern Ontario heritage fund. It joins five other flagship programs designed to support job creation, economic growth and strong, vibrant communities throughout the north.

Under the new program, communities may apply for funding for projects that are identified as local priorities. These projects include water and sewer services, fire services and equipment, community centres, recreational facilities, existing airports and roads, to name but some of the projects that are eligible. Like other heritage fund programs, the northern communities capital assistance program encourages municipalities, First Nations, local services boards, the private sector, non-profit organizations and government agencies to develop strategic partnerships to meet shared goals.

The Mike Harris government is proud of our commitment to northern Ontario. Since October 1996, the heritage fund has contributed nearly \$290 million to some 840 projects, generating an additional—

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

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question, in the absence of the Minister of Health, is to the associate Minister of Health. Yesterday, we learned in Ottawa the intention of the government to sell off the

Ottawa ambulance dispatch service. The city of Ottawa actually put aside some funds, some money to invest in a high-tech dispatch system. Yet for some reason, the ministry or the minister wants to instead call for an RFP. The mayor and the city council have said that this is totally unacceptable. Because of your government's downloading, the municipality already operates more than 50% of the total cost for the ambulance service.

In Hamilton, the city was enabled to take back the dispatch service so they could have an integrated system. They've done extremely well. They took it back from the private sector. Their time responses are favourable and excellent. Will you provide the same option for the city of Ottawa?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): Let me say that the Premier last week said to everyone in Ottawa that he was happy to open up the request for proposals to anyone who wanted to bid on that proposal.

1520

If the member opposite is correct that the program has incredible merit—and as I say, I haven't seen the proposal to be able to know that yet—I'm sure that it will be considered appropriately. When we don't go out for a request for proposal or we don't get a lot of bids, they say we haven't done the taxpayer right. Now they want us to say, "Sure, just give it to the first person." They can't have it both ways. We've been very clear. We want a request for proposal. We want lots of people involved in the proposal. We want to get the best services for the people of Ottawa. If we have the same common value here, I'm sure we will be very successful, all of us.

Mr Patten: You know that this is an opportunity to have the private sector break into this business. You know that they'll be tempted to lowball a bid, and so you'll make a decision on a cheap response rather than the best response.

All throughout North America, the best response is an integrated system with a dispatch and the operators of the ambulance service. You have a bill called Bill 11, the new Municipal Act, which dwells on working co-operatively. This is your partner. They're paying better than 50% for the hospital service now, and you're not even talking with them. They've offered to take this at the present cost. If the costs are increased from that, they will even pay for it out of municipal funds. You can't lose. Why are you going to the private sector on this when the models of effectiveness show that you integrate your dispatch system with the operations of the ambulance?

Hon Mrs Johns: This is a very important question. Really what we want in dispatch is the best services for the people of Ottawa. We are going to make sure that happens. As you know, the new Municipal Act allows municipalities to start a business and compete. We also could have non-profit organizations coming forward to be able to work on this project. I think about hospitals. I think about other organizations in the community that may well want to provide the dispatch because of the expertise they have within their organizations.

The government of Ontario pays 100% of the dispatch costs across the province. It is important for us to be the guardian of the public trust and to ensure that the people of Ontario—and especially, in this case, the people of Ottawa—get the best services in Ottawa.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Last week, I was particularly pleased to read about the 2001 Lieutenant Governor's Awards for the Arts, which were presented here at Queen's Park. It is my understanding that 18 arts organizations from across Ontario received a total of \$300,000 in recognition of their achievements. It is interesting to see that the former minister of culture across the way is really interested in this particular question.

Minister, could you please tell this House a little more about these awards and how the winners were chosen?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): I appreciate the member for Scarborough Centre's question. Hal Jackman has always been a champion of the opportunity for the private sector to give to non-profit arts organizations. Mr Jackman is not only a proponent of that, but is putting his money where his mouth is through the Jackman Bickell Awards, also known as the Lieutenant Governor's Awards for the Arts. In fact, since 1995, when the awards were born, over \$2 million has gone to 80 different arts organizations, rewarding those that bring in more attendees, more through the gates, more donations from the private sector, those that increase their own revenue.

This year's top prize award winner was the Soulpepper Theatre Company of Toronto. The Guelph Jazz Festival was also recognized. The Burlington Arts Centre and, of course, the haunt of the member for Nepean-Carleton, the Ottawa International Jazz Festival, were also award winners here. There are many great success stories of accessing new funds and their own funds from the private sector and from attendance at the gate.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that response, Minister. I'm particularly glad to hear that so many arts organizations are able to garner so much support from their communities. I think that's an extremely important point. I was particularly pleased to note that several of the winning arts organizations are based right here in the cultural capital of Canada, right here in Toronto.

I wonder if you could provide this House with details on how those organizations are able to meet their goals of greater self-sufficiency, which is something that our government has been trying to achieve for some time. Are they using better sales techniques through their ticket sales? How are they able to garner greater support from the private sector?

Hon Mr Hudak: I appreciate the member's question and her interest as a former minister of culture, in fact, beginning this process of asking for more private sector contributions to the arts.

The member for Etobicoke asks, "Well, how do you do it?" You do it through a lot of hard work, creativity and a lot of energy. It's more than just serendipity.

Some of the award winners I mentioned: Soulpepper has increased revenue by more than double, over \$1 million. The Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's private sector contributions more than doubled. The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art in Toronto more than doubled their revenue.

We want to make sure that the arts community in Toronto and the province of Ontario is strong, vibrant, growing and full of potential.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

"To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas Health Canada approved Visudyne on June 1, 2000, as therapy for the treatment of wet form age-related macular degeneration. However OHIP does not yet pay for the procedure and it has not been added to the Ontario drug plan formulary;

"Whereas the provinces of Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have already added Visudyne to their provincial drug plans;

"Whereas clinical trials have demonstrated that this treatment safely and effectively stabilizes vision loss in 67% of patients and improves visual acuity in 13% of patients;

"Whereas patients requiring therapy using Visudyne face a cost of \$1,750 for the drug and \$750 for the clinician procedural fees each time therapy is administered and to complete a full therapy cycle, a patient would be required to pay \$15,000 to preserve his or her sight; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health was to make a decision on Visudyne treatment at the end of February 2001;

"Let it be resolved that the Ministry of Health immediately approve and add Visudyne treatments to the Ontario drug plan formulary to assist those suffering with macular degeneration."

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

OHIP SERVICES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition from my riding of Hamilton West that reads as follows:

"Petition to the Ontario Legislature:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On behalf of myself and my NDP colleagues, I add my name in support to this petition.

1530

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I've got a petition here which is supported by Scarborough-Rouge River too.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I'm going to affix my signature to this, in full agreement with this petition.

CHILD CARE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a petition here, signed by a number of people up in the Timmins-James Bay area, that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an internal government document indicates the Conservative government is also considering completely cutting all funding for regulated child care and family resource programs in Ontario;

“Whereas the Conservative government has already cut funding for regulated child care by 15% between 1995 and 1998 and downloaded 20% of the child care and family resource program budget on to municipalities;

“Whereas further cuts would run counter to the support identified for regulated child care and family resource centres by Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain;

“Whereas the Conservative government received \$114 million this year for early childhood development and will receive \$844 million from the federal government over the next five years for the same;

“Whereas Ontario is the only province which didn't spend a cent of this year's federal money on regulated child care;

“Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable, and accessible child care programs such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program; and

“Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resources continues to grow in Ontario;

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

“We demand the Conservative government guarantee the current child care and family resource budget is secure and will not be cut under this government's mandate. We demand future federal Early Years funding be invested in an expansion of affordable, regulated child care.”

I sign that petition in full agreement.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr Tascona: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I too have signed this petition.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

CENTRES D'ACCÈS AUX SOINS
COMMUNAUTAIRES

Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): I have a petition from the constituents of Ottawa-Vanier which reads:

“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 \$175 million due to a funding freeze by the provincial government;

« Attendu qu'en raison de ce manque à gagner dans leur financement, les CASC ont dû réduire les services de soins à domicile, ce qui a répercussions sur bon nombre d'Ontariens et d'Ontariennes malades et âgés ;

« Attendu que ces réductions dans les services ont principalement été effectuées dans les services d'auxiliaires familiales, ce qui oblige » encore une fois « les Ontariens et Ontariennes à recourir à des établissements de soins de longue durée plus coûteux ou à retourner à l'hôpital,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately institute real patient-based budgeting for health care services, including home care, so as to ensure that working families in Ontario can access the health care services they need.”

It is with pleasure that I write on this petition.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Again I have a petition here from the people in the Timmins-James Bay riding, this time on a different issue, which reads:

“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:

“(1) permit adult adoptees unrestricted access to full personal identifying birth information;

“(2) permit birth parents, grandparents and siblings access to the adopted person's amended birth certificate when the adopted person reaches age 18;

“(3) permit adoptive parents unrestricted access to identifying birth information of their minor children;

“(4) allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a contact veto restricting contact by the searching party; and

“(5) replace mandatory reunion counselling with optional counselling.”

I sign that petition and agree fully with it.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): This is a petition addressed to the provincial Legislature of Ontario, and it's to shut down puppy mills and stop cruel animal breeding activities by passing MPP Mike Colle's private member's bill, which will be up for debate this Thursday morning. It states as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

“That the province of Ontario pass legislation that outlaws puppy mills and other cruel animal breeding

activities, and 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 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to impose fines and jail terms on those found guilty of perpetrating cruelty to animals for the purpose of selling these animals to an unsuspecting public.”

I agree with the petition, I've signed it and I'm now handing it to Andrew, one of our pages.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ CONSERVATION ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA MORAINÉ D'OAK RIDGES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 7, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 122, An Act to conserve the Oak Ridges Moraine by providing for the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à conserver la moraine d'Oak Ridges en prévoyant l'établissement du Plan de conservation de la moraine d'Oak Ridges.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 3, 2001, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Kells has moved second reading of Bill 122.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: You may have some comments and they would be quite welcome outside the chamber at any time. The member for Timmins-James Bay will bring himself to order.

Mr Kells has moved second reading of Bill 122, An Act to conserve the Oak Ridges Moraine by providing for the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1543 to 1548.

The Acting Speaker: First let me apologize that the order of the House has to interrupt your conversations.

On November 5, 2001, Mr Kells moved second reading of Bill 122. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn
Arnott, Ted	Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bartolucci, Rick	Gilchrist, Steve	Parsons, Ernie
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	Patten, Richard
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Bountrogianni, Marie	Guzzo, Garry J.	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Pupatello, Sandra

Bradley, James J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Christopherson, David	Jackson, Cameron	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Smitherman, George
Churley, Marilyn	Kells, Morley	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Kennedy, Gerard	Sorbara, Greg
Cleary, John C.	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kormos, Peter	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Marchese, Rosario	Stewart, R. Gary
Colle, Mike	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cordiano, Joseph	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Crozier, Bruce	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cunningham, Dianne	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton	Wettlaufer, Wayne
DeFaria, Carl	McLeod, Lyn	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Duncan, Dwight	Molinari, Tina R.	Young, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	
Ecker, Janet	Murdoch, Bill	

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

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 94; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the same order of December 3, 2001, this bill is referred to the standing committee on general government.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I was out of line a few minutes ago. I made a smart-aleck remark, and I shouldn't have. What I should have said was that I expect proper decorum during votes and so on. I don't know that anybody has ever been ejected during a vote, but if you'd like, make it today.

RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRE (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 27, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 127, An Act to implement measures contained in the Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government / Projet de loi 127, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le budget de 2001 ainsi que d'autres initiatives du gouvernement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 28, 2001, I am now required to put the question.

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1554 to 1559.

The Acting Speaker: On November 21, Mrs Elliott moved second reading of Bill 127. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Sorbara, Greg

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 42.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House of the same date, November 28, this bill stands referred for third reading.

I want to thank you for the orderly way you conducted yourselves during the vote. If some would like to make their way out, this would be a good opportunity to do it.

RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRE (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr O'Toole, on behalf of Mr Flaherty, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to implement measures contained in the Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government / Projet de loi 127, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le budget de 2001 ainsi que d'autres initiatives du gouvernement.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Indeed it's my pleasure as the parliamentary assistant to Minister Flaherty, the Minister of Finance, to rise today on third reading of Bill 127. It's my pleasure to share the key measures in Bill 127, the Responsible Choices for Growth and Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2001. In addition to measures announced in the 2001 Ontario budget, this bill contains a number of initiatives announced in recent weeks, including important tax measures and commitments to infrastructure. Together, these measures will help our government meet our goal of ensuring Ontario has the best-performing economy and highest quality of life in North America within the next 10 years.

As you know, our tax strategies have been an integral part of this government's comprehensive economic policies since 1995. Under the leadership, I might say, of our current Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, Minister Flaherty, I'm confident the future looks bright. Our tax policies are the single most important reason why Ontario has enjoyed strong economic growth, why a total of 824,000 net new jobs have been created and why disposable income has increased by 20% and tax revenues, remarkably, have increased by \$15 billion since 1995.

There's more to be done. In the 2001 budget, we announced further cuts to personal income tax, business income, corporate and capital taxes, which are intended to ensure that our province continues on the road to prosperity. The next step in these cuts was to come into effect on January 1, 2002.

Under the strong leadership of this government, the tragic events of September 11 and their aftershock rippled through our economy, as it did throughout North America and indeed the world. They have led our leadership to rethink our schedule of implementing these cuts and have resulted in our decision to propose accelerating these cuts to October 1, 2001—good news for small businesses, not just in Durham but indeed throughout the province of Ontario.

Accelerating tax cuts could provide a more immediate stimulus to the provincial economy, which is currently experiencing a slowdown, slower than anticipated. Accelerated cuts to personal income tax would leave more money in the pockets of Ontario's hard-working taxpayers during these difficult times. Accelerating corporate income and capital tax cuts would free up to \$116 million in savings this year that businesses can use to invest, indeed helping to keep workers on the job and on the payroll. Cuts to business tax also send a strong signal to investors that Ontario is open for business. Tax cuts will remain the cornerstone of our economic policies and our collective value in those, and we will continue along the economic course that we set out in 1995.

Slower economic growth such as that currently being experienced in the province affects both the people and

the businesses of Ontario. The businesses I'm referring to are the small businesses. These are small businesses that these tax measures more importantly affect.

We know that low- and middle-income families with young children are particularly hard hit by any economic slowdown, and we believe it is important to provide these families with some extra help, especially at this time of year. Our minister and this bill propose to provide eligible low- and middle-income families with a one-time tax-free payment of \$100 for each child under the age of seven to help them do what they do best, that is, care for their children and their families.

This proposed one-time payment has generated tremendous excitement among the citizens and businesses in this province. I encourage, and the minister has encouraged, retailers across the province to put their support behind these payments and enhance them. This will only add to how helpful these measures will be to Ontario's low- and middle-income hard-working families. It is, of course, the responsible thing to do; it is the right thing to do.

As promised in the 2001 Ontario budget, the province is assuming a leadership role in promoting an efficient, integrated transportation system across Ontario. Taking back responsibility for GO Transit is a significant part of our promise, and it demonstrates our commitment to addressing traffic gridlock throughout the greater Toronto area, supporting economic growth and protecting the environment, two important priorities for this government.

1610

Municipalities in the greater Toronto area would benefit from this initiative—and indeed I could say the region of Durham will benefit, and my constituents—as it relieves them of the responsibility for GO Transit, freeing up \$100 million for reinvestment in local and regional transportation priorities.

Commuters would benefit by enjoying more efficient methods of transportation choices as well as having less gridlock to contend with and more time to spend with their families.

Benefits will accrue to business, because an efficient transportation system reduces costs, improves competitiveness, attracts investment and supports sustained economic growth.

Finally, the environment would benefit—and that includes all of us, for a better quality of life—from a reduced dependence on automobiles by commuters, reduced air pollution and reduced congestion on provincial highways and other roads.

The anticipated—and achievable—outcomes of our transit initiative, therefore, are cleaner air, less crowded roads, more competitive businesses and a higher quality of life for all Ontarians.

It is estimated that the small and medium-sized businesses create more than half of all new jobs. During a time of slower economic growth, these businesses are more important than ever to the provincial economy. Since 1995, we have introduced measures designed spe-

cifically to assist small and medium-sized businesses in this province, and this will indeed continue and is our legacy of support for small business.

The accelerated tax cuts are clearly an indication of the focus of this government to make sure that we create jobs in the economy that creates jobs by working in partnerships with the private sector and indeed all the hard-working taxpayers who really just want the opportunity to work.

We are proposing to accelerate the application of the small business income tax rate to more businesses. Currently, this rate is 6.5% and applies to the first \$240,000 of income. We would accelerate a reduction from 6.5% to 6% and raise the eligibility threshold from \$240,000 to \$280,000, effective October 1, 2001.

These initiatives were first introduced in the 2000 budget and were originally scheduled to take effect January 1, 2002. However, accelerating the application of the reduced rate and the increased threshold to October 1, 2001, would provide more immediate benefits for Ontario's small and medium-sized businesses, which is vital during this period of global, if not local, economic uncertainty.

The point here is to be there to support small business by introducing tax policy and strategy on a timely basis when and where it's needed.

Currently, corporations, many of whom are large employers, are required to pay monthly corporate tax instalments if annual tax payable in the current or preceding year is \$2,000 or more.

We understand that Ontario's small business owners would rather focus their efforts on creating jobs, not filling out unnecessary, complicated red tape and paperwork.

In the 2001 budget, therefore, we proposed to reduce red tape for Ontario's small businesses by allowing businesses with corporate tax payable of at least \$2,000 and less than \$10,000—these are small businesses—to remit tax instalments quarterly instead of monthly, a simple procedural improvement, eliminating red tape and paperwork, allowing them to focus on core business priorities. This change would apply to taxation years commencing in 2002.

Allowing a simplification of tax filing procedures is a significant red-tape reduction measure that would help encourage the growth of Ontario's small business community.

We also propose to extend the deadline for registering new community small business investment funds for an additional year, from December 31, 2001, to December 31, 2002. Good news, indeed. This would allow the program to continue to raise much-needed venture capital for small business, especially in the areas of university and hospital research, the commercialization of academic concepts to marketable commercial ideas and products.

One of the most important tax-based incentives for research and development, R&D, is the super allowance, which provides over \$100 million in benefits to R&D-performing firms. The federal government, in its 2000

budget, stated that provincial deductions for research and development in excess of actual expenditures would be treated as taxable government assistance. We made our opposition to this measure very clear, very early, under Minister Flaherty's insistence. We do not believe in eroding support for very badly needed research and development right here in Ontario for our small businesses and our university and development centres.

In order to maintain support for ongoing research and development and to respond to the 2000 federal budget, which raised the cost for R&D in this province, Ontario's budget proposed to do the following: suspend the R&D super allowance and allow corporations to exclude the federal research and development tax credit from Ontario taxable income. Really, the federal government was clawing back any benefit that we were providing, therefore penalizing colleges, universities and small business partners in important R&D projects. Ontario's proposed action would restore R&D tax benefits for most firms to their level before the federal budget.

Throughout my remarks, I have spoken of our measures to address current economic challenges, of our responsible choices to benefit the people and businesses of this province. Our minister and Premier Harris are committed, through the Responsible Choices for Growth and Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2001, to protecting the gains we have made and ensuring that the outlook remains bright for the people of Ontario and our collective future.

In my concluding remarks, September 11 was a wake-up call for all Canadians. This government, by responding in an appropriate fiscal manner, injected stimulus through the measures that I've announced here today, following on third reading. We're still waiting for the federal budget, which will be read next Monday in Ottawa. The point that's being made by the question period here today, and that I want to leave on the record, is that the federal share in health payments is an important issue that people who might be listening today should be aware of.

In the Mulroney government, the federal government was funding health care at about 18 cents on the dollar. When the Chrétien Liberal government came into power, they reduced that funding to the order of about nine cents on the dollar. Under the insistence of Premier Harris and indeed the Premiers from all the provinces, in around 1995 they increased that share to about 14 cents on the dollar.

More is needed. The demands on health care and our environment are high and it's apparent. I'm looking for the federal government on Monday to make sure that they understand and appreciate that this is a high priority, not just for this government but for the people of Ontario, and I expect the opposition in their remarks to call on the federal government to do their fair share. Health care is the number one priority.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): The spring budget brought in earlier this year, the budget for 2001-02, is of

course a fiscal plan for the government to give some idea of its spending over the next year. As well, this bill, Bill 127, is named so that some of those initiatives may be further refined and enacted. In fact, in the case of corporate and provincial income taxes they're even going to be expedited.

The Provincial Auditor, an officer of this Legislature, is the individual who is charged with the responsibility to then take that government plan, to take the government spending, to take the government's accountability into consideration and to report back to the Legislature and tell us how well the government is doing.

1620

I'm going to quote from the recent report of the Provincial Auditor to give some indication why there might be reluctance in some instances for the federal government to pass any money on to this government. I think we all want to remind ourselves and the so-called senior government in our country that health care is one of the issues that's foremost in our minds, and I certainly do that when I speak with my federal member. Let me put into some context the concern there is, oftentimes, when money is passed on to another level of government.

For example, this government back in 1995, when it was first elected, notwithstanding the fact that the new Premier, who previously had been the leader of the third party, said that the province was bankrupt, decided at that time that it would give the citizens and the corporations of Ontario a dividend. I don't think this would happen in normal business, but in this case the Premier decided that the province was bankrupt but they were still going to give a dividend, so he went out and borrowed \$20 billion for his tax cut, and we're still paying for it. Today, they want to enhance the tax cuts to corporations, which will amount to about \$2.5 billion, when many of us on this side of the House and I think many of the people of Ontario would prefer that it be put into health care.

I want to quote from the document of the Provincial Auditor, his report of this year, which is a very extensive report and I think a fair report, some 380 pages long. Let me just quote in part, from page 349 on, under the heading "Ontario's Accounting for Supplemental Federal Health Care Transfer."

"The largest transfers from the federal government" of Canada "are the Canada health and social transfer payments," as we all know, the CHST payments. "... the federal government irrevocably committed" a year ago "to ... a \$3.5-billion supplement to its existing Canada health and social transfer program. The \$3.5 billion was to provide additional provincial and territorial health care funding for a three-year period commencing in the 1999-2000 fiscal year and ending in the 2001-02 fiscal year...."

Just "one year later, on March 31, 2000, the federal government created a second irrevocable trust, the Canada health and social transfer supplement trust.... A total of \$2.5 billion was irrevocably committed and later provided under this trust agreement, to cover a four-year period commencing in the 2000-01 fiscal year and ending in the 2003-04 fiscal year...." So we have \$2.5 billion and

\$3.5 billion: \$6 billion in irrevocable money transferred to the provinces and territories.

“Once the trusts were funded, provinces,” in this case the province of Ontario, “began withdrawing their respective allocations. The federal government treated the first \$3.5-billion transfer as an expenditure for its fiscal year ended March 31, 1999, and the second \$2.5 billion” of this \$6 billion in transfers “as an expenditure for its fiscal year ended March 31, 2000.”

Here is where it starts to get interesting. Ontario has “taken the funds into income in a manner consistent with the periods set out in the federal schedules.” In other words, the province of Ontario did it right. They took the first \$3.5 billion into income in the year in which they received it and they took the second \$2.5-billion transfer from the federal government into income in the year it was received.

Now the Provincial Auditor gets a bit concerned. I won't put words into the Provincial Auditor's mouth, but if it were me, I would start to think that maybe the province of Ontario was cooking the books, maybe the province of Ontario has two sets of books. I emphasize those are my words, not those of the Provincial Auditor. I will quote again, then, from the Provincial Auditor's report, on page 350, under the heading “Need for Greater Consistency and Transparency in Ontario's Accounting.” The Provincial Auditor says:

“As I commented on last year, \$1 billion in grant funding was provided in May 2000 to Ontario hospitals to help finance proposed capital construction projects over the subsequent four years. The entire \$1 billion was charged to expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000.

“This year, an additional \$140 million was provided to seven of the hospitals based on revisions to the originally submitted future plans. Again, the entire \$140 million was provided subsequent to March 31, 2001, but charged to expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001.”

“Therefore,” the auditor concludes, “these grants have not been accounted for in the same manner as the Canadian health and social transfer revenues—that is, allocated to each of the accounting periods that the grants are meant to apply to.”

I quote further from the 2001 auditor's report.

“Contributing to the inconsistency and lack of transparency in Ontario's health care accounting is the fact that the province's accounting records for all government expenditures continue to be maintained and publicly disclosed on two separate bases: the modified cash basis for legislative appropriation control and the modified accrual basis as prescribed” in accounting “standards.”

The auditor goes on to say with respect to these transfers, the \$6 billion in transfers from the federal government, “Given what is occurring, as illustrated above, I am also concerned that public reporting on two different bases can only contribute to public confusion with respect to annual expenditures and financial results.”

Today we are told that there are advertisements throughout Ontario about the concern of Ontario with the

funding that's being received from the federal government. I say to the members opposite and particularly to the Minister of Finance and to the Premier, Mr Harris, that if we were to treat those funds in a fair, transparent and open manner, perhaps the federal government would have more trust in transferring them to you.

I don't think that if any of us were in business and conducted our accounting affairs that way, we would last very long. I happen to be an accountant by profession. I was the chief financial officer of a retail lumber business for 22 years. I can't recall in 22 years of audits when my auditor ever came in and said, “Bruce, it's OK for you to have two sets of books.” We always had to account for the monies received, or the sales that we had, if you like, on an accrual basis, if you're going to treat everything on an accrual basis. By the same token, this government is being told by the Provincial Auditor that you can't take this \$6 billion in special trust money that has been sent to you by the federal government and treat it as income one way and treat the expenditures in another.

We talk about trust. We talk about trust with our municipal partners, and we should talk about trust when it comes to the way we deal with our federal partners. So as part of this discussion today, and as part of the discussion on this budget bill, I only point out that if you have trust with your other partner, it's much easier to carry on business with them, and, in this case, perhaps the federal government would be much more likely to transfer funding to the province if they only knew that it was going to be treated, from an accounting standpoint, in a fair way and if it were only going to be spent in the right place. As I said, in business, if the Treasurer of a company did that—and in this case I'm referring to the Treasurer of Ontario—he'd be fired.

1630

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate with respect to Bill 127, the Responsible Choices for Growth and Fiscal Responsibility Act (Budget Measures), 2001. There are a number of measures in this piece of legislation that are very positive news for the province of Ontario from a fiscal point of view. In particular, for my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, the province, through this legislation, is taking back responsibility for GO Transit, in terms of its operations.

The reason I find that very important is that, in looking at the history of GO Transit, in 1992, the government of the day—that was the NDP government—decided to remove and discontinue the GO operations from the city of Barrie, which connected through the town of Innisfil to Bradford-West Gwillimbury. Since that time, there has been no GO service connecting Barrie to Bradford-West Gwillimbury. The town of Bradford-West Gwillimbury does have GO service. In fact, they have three trains a day from the station in Bradford-West Gwillimbury.

The province took some very significant action. There had been action taken by the federal government with respect to passing legislation in 1996 that led to the discontinuance of rail lines, in particular those owned by

CN and CP, which resulted in a piece of legislation that saw the permanent removal of the railway track from Barrie to Orillia. The line between Bradford-West Gwillimbury and the city of Barrie was slated for removal, but thanks to negotiations through the city of Barrie and the provincial government, the rail was secured through the purchase of the line. The province contributed \$2 million toward preserving the line between Barrie and Bradford-West Gwillimbury. The city of Barrie was the purchaser of the line and also the waterfront lands around the city of Barrie, where the rail line follows.

I have worked very hard to try to get GO Transit to return to the city of Barrie and service the town of Innisfil through Bradford-West Gwillimbury. Certainly when GO Transit was looking at their operations, when the Greater Toronto Services Board was established in 1997, I made it very clear to the GO Transit people that we wanted to keep the rail line and the GO operations in Bradford-West Gwillimbury. Fortunately, the GO Transit people decided to keep it there, even though Bradford-West Gwillimbury, which is in Simcoe county, was outside the boundaries of the Greater Toronto Services Board. They kept it there because, quite frankly, it was in their interest to keep it there, and it was also used as the turnaround part of the GO Transit line.

So the line and the GO Transit operations were maintained in Bradford-West Gwillimbury. Since that time, not only was the line between Barrie and Bradford secured through funds from the provincial government through the city of Barrie, but GO Transit has purchased its rail track from CN, so GO Transit owns the line that used to be CN that serviced the Go Transit. So the line is now owned by GO Transit up to Bradford-West Gwillimbury.

The issue I'm excited about is the Barrie passenger rail services committee, which I recently chaired and which was headed up by a number of individuals: Jack Lennox from the town of Innisfil and Jack Garner from the city of Barrie, just to name a few. We worked very hard for a number of years, and we recently brought forth a study with respect to the economic feasibility of returning GO Transit to the city of Barrie and the town of Innisfil. That study was funded by the city of Barrie, the towns of Essa, Oro-Medonte, Innisfil and New Tecumseh, VIA Rail and SuperBuild of the province of Ontario.

It's also important to note that VIA Rail has not provided service to the city of Barrie since 1983, when the federal Liberal government of that day decided to discontinue rail service to the city of Barrie. But VIA Rail has shown some interest in their line expansion, so we're hopeful that they will continue to have interest in the city of Barrie in terms of providing a commuter rail service there.

The report was released a few months ago, and it indicated that Barrie and the town of Innisfil were quite capable of supporting the three trains currently in the town of Bradford-West Gwillimbury through their

population and ridership. When the line was removed by the NDP government back in 1992, Barrie's population was around the 50,000 area and I think Innisfil's wasn't even 20,000. Since then, the population of Simcoe county, and the city of Barrie and Innisfil within it, has significantly increased. Anyone who drives the 400 knows that the traffic on that highway seven days a week, up and down, north and south, is very, very congested and is growing significantly because of the home construction that is happening there.

That report was given to all the parties that participated in it. I'm hopeful that VIA Rail has interest in commuter rail service in the city of Barrie. I know they do provide some rail service through GO Transit to the city of Hamilton, for example. But also, with the province getting back into GO Transit, I've certainly made the Minister of Transportation very aware of the interest in my riding of returning to the GO Transit system. I think there is reason to be optimistic that that can occur, because we have maintained the rail and there is a market for that rail service. I think it's in the interests of good, sound transportation planning, environmental planning and certainly the infrastructure growth north of Highway 7 and up to the county of Simcoe for that to happen.

For me, that's one of the major pieces in the legislation that provides some real input and stimulus in terms of economic growth for my riding. I think it's also good news in terms of addressing gridlock through the greater Toronto area because of the province's commitment to take back responsibility for GO Transit. So I would say that, with the passage of this legislation, we're going to enter another era of public transit in this province, something I believe is very, very important for the province to be involved in, and certainly something that is in step with what's happening in other jurisdictions, especially in the United States, in the northeast and in the Midwest, in terms of the investments that the state governments put into public transit. They recognize it is certainly in the interest of the infrastructure of the area, it is certainly an environmentally sensitive form of transportation, and it also addresses the transportation needs of the areas in question.

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Let's face it, the automobile on the highway isn't the only mode of transportation. I would certainly hope that the federal government also looks along those lines and increases their involvement in public transit. I believe that what we have here is a great opportunity for public transit to play a very important role, because of the tremendous growth that we have seen in the population in and around the greater Toronto area, and it's just not going to stop. It's going to continue. We'll see that growth. I think they say there are about 100,000 new people who come to the city of Toronto every year. There are people coming from the city of Toronto, moving into other areas, people moving into my area—just phenomenal growth that we've seen now. I think Barrie's population could be estimated in the area of 125,000. I know Innisfil has grown to about 28,000, and Bradford is slightly less than that.

This is a great opportunity. I want to commend the government, for the vision that they're showing with respect to public transit and the importance of GO Transit in the everyday lives of the people in this province.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): It was kind of interesting listening to the last speaker talk about transit and the demands that he places on the federal government, when he well knows that it was this government that basically got out of the transit business about five years ago. It has now recognized the error of its ways and decided to go back into the transit business again. I applaud you for that, because it's a well-known fact that transit across the province, whether it's GO, or the local transit in the smaller communities, couldn't exist without the support from the provincial government.

It's rather unfortunate. Here we have a bill, which is an omnibus bill that goes on for 171 pages, which affects some 30 different acts—and some of the acts are very major—that the province has under its jurisdiction, and we are expected to deal with it on third reading in the matter of a two-hour debate here this afternoon, because this is another bill that has been time allocated.

So far, over the last three or four weeks, every bill has come to us as a result of time allocation. There may have been one or two minor exceptions, but every bill with any meaning has come by time allocation. The reason I'm saying that is that this bill contains so many different provisions. There are some good things in the bill. There's the one about transit—that government has decided to get more heavily involved in the transit financing again is a good thing—and the one dealing with heritage properties, allowing municipalities to basically give tax relief to individuals who own heritage properties.

I can tell you that in my community of Kingston we have over 400 designated heritage properties. At one time, I believe we had more properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act than in the rest of the province together. As a matter of fact, it's the only act that's ever been proclaimed outside of Queen's Park—in Kingston, back in 1971 or 1972. We know the value of heritage property, not only to the individual, but to the community as a whole. We realize that we have to put measures in place whereby government protects these properties and also encourages the owners to protect the properties. If some tax relief can be given to individuals who own heritage properties, so much the better. So there are two good measures in the bill.

Unfortunately, with an omnibus bill like this, there are many, many other aspects of it that we cannot agree with under any circumstances. The fundamental disagreement we have with this bill is the corporate tax cut of \$2.2 billion, that was first initiated by this government back when the economy was going full blast in April or May of this year, and it's still being adhered to in this bill. As a matter of fact, the corporate tax cut of \$2.2 billion is not only being implemented when it was initially intended, namely next January 1, but in this bill it has been made retroactive to October 1 of this year. Not only

is that costing the public purse some \$187 million, but also the notion of having a corporate tax cut of this magnitude, or any tax cut, when we know the province is going through serious economic problems right now, is preposterous. Even one of the leadership candidates in the Tory leadership race, Chris Stockwell, has indicated that you cannot talk about tax cuts at a time when the economy is going through a cycle that it's currently going through. It's as simple as that.

You have choices, of course. You can still have your tax cuts by either going into a deficit situation, which nobody wants to do, or you can cut programs. So why don't you at least have the courage of your own convictions and say, "Yes. As a result of the corporate tax cut that we're implementing—and not only implementing, but implementing faster than was originally contemplated—we are going to cut the money out of programs, and probably out of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment, just about any ministry you can think of?"

When you think of all the problems we've had recently with respect to Walkerton, with respect to the food inspection deficiencies that the auditor has brought to our attention in his latest report, people feel a sense of insecurity and feel unsafe about the world they live in and the food they eat and the water they drink, and you can just go on and on. Nobody is going to tell me that if you do have to make those kinds of cuts, those cuts aren't going to come in health care and education, on which we spend roughly two thirds of the entire budget for the province. I say to the government, you have made a very bad situation even worse by implementing or by accelerating the tax cuts that you had originally proposed this spring.

You can look at it in so many different ways. The one that I find interesting is that the government's reasoning for accelerating the tax cut from January 1 to October 1 was in order to stimulate the economy, which is going through some troubled times right now. Yet at the same time we know that many companies out there that will be implementing the tax cut for their employees in the personal income tax area cannot implement it—there were stories in the media a couple of weeks ago—until after January 1, because their payroll systems aren't set up for that. So I say to myself, why have it at all if the people cannot even get the money into their pockets now that they can spend, presumably in order to boost the economy that you're saying needs a boost right now? The whole thing makes absolutely no sense. That's why we are fundamentally against Bill 127.

Then you look at some of the other things that are happening around the services to people, particularly the vulnerable and the elderly in our community, and I think of the community care access centres across this province that have been crying out for at least the same level of funding that they got last year, so they can provide the necessary services to those people who come out of hospitals quicker and sicker, to those individuals who want to stay in their own homes rather than go into a

nursing home, at probably a much greater expense than if they were given some nursing care and home care in their own communities.

How does the government deal with that situation? It doesn't give them the money they require, and these are not exorbitant demands by these organizations. It basically is telling them, through Bill 130, which we have already debated and will be debating in this House over the next little while, "The board of directors of all of these organizations are out of here. We no longer have any use for you. You're the people to blame for not getting the necessary home care services in your communities." And these are all volunteer boards. Many of these people were appointed by the government in the first place. Many of these people are leaders in their own communities. Many of these people have been involved in the health care sector or in other boards for many, many years. And what does the government want to do? It wants to get rid of those boards so it can appoint its own boards by order in council, and not only that, not only the boards, but the executive director of each one of the community care access centres will also be appointed by order in council.

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What kind of image does that leave? It leaves the image that the person who is in charge of the administration of each one of these community care access centres and the board that manages them will all be appointed by the government. That leads to only one conclusion: that these people will obviously be in such a position that they will be afraid to criticize the government or ask for more money because in effect, in their jobs, in their positions, they will be beholden to the government.

That, to me, is something I cannot comprehend. That's got to be about the lowest any government can go, by saying to the well-established boards, "You don't know what you're doing. It's all your fault and we're not going to give you any more money, even though that is the real problem so that we can give the services to the individuals involved."

The other issue I quickly want to talk about is the Ontario security fund. We all know that since September 11—it's been talked about in this House ad infinitum during the past three months, and all you have to do is watch television, whether it's CNN, CBC Newsworld or CTV news, the 24-hour news channel—people are afraid for their own sense of security in the world. The security umbrella we used to have around ourselves here in North America, where we somehow thought we were not going to be the subject of terrorism etc, has somehow been breached and broken, and we no longer have that same sense of security. Whatever's happening elsewhere in the world may very well happen here.

The attempt the government has made to deal with that situation, in my opinion, has just been a drop in the bucket. Yes, it's put some money aside, \$2 million or \$3 million for special investigative units etc. What we have suggested is a plan that I think makes eminent sense. We

are saying, why don't we take \$100 million of capital money that is already in the various budgets of Super-Build and put it aside and that the Ontario security fund, and we not only set up all the special little organizations and investigative units that we've talked about, that the government has mentioned, but we also help each local municipality to deal with their own security issues by in effect boosting the police and emergency services in those municipalities by giving them the extra funding to do that? It really wouldn't cost us a penny, because it would come from the capital monies that have already been set aside for projects that, for whatever reason, the government doesn't want to announce.

I say to the members of the government, forget about your corporate tax cuts. I implore you to forget about it. We can utilize that money to really build good-quality health care that's accessible to one and all in this province, to give the kind of services the community care access centres need to help the frail and elderly in their communities.

I can tell you of personal incidents, and I will at some stage later on during some other debate, about what the situation is in hospitals right now, where we literally have people in some hospitals waiting for as long as two years—I know what I'm talking about because I was involved with it myself very recently—where people are waiting in acute care hospitals for up to two years to get into a nursing home, to get into a long-term-care facility. I say, surely in a province like Ontario that has so much to offer, where so many people want to come, from all over the world, we can do much better than that.

We don't need corporate tax cuts. We're already competitive with adjoining jurisdictions. What we need is a government truly committed to good-quality health care, accessible to everybody, and to good-quality education, where every one of us and every one of our children can reach their true potential in our society. That's what this government should be about, and Bill 127 isn't doing that.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate. Let me just say at the outset that for the entire time that this government has been in power, I and the NDP have maintained that this government talks one world in words, and Ontarians have to live a different world in reality. Of course, the government members always accuse us of not knowing what we're talking about, fear-mongering, trying to rewrite history, we don't understand business well enough and that's why we don't get all the concepts—and on and on and on.

Just the other day we had an interesting document, a scary document actually, tabled here in this House. It was the auditor's report. I want to begin my remarks today, in the short time I have, with what the auditor has to say about some of the key things this government has said to us over the years in terms of how wonderful things are going to be and how much money will be saved and how much more efficient things would be if we just followed the path that this government talks about. Well, given

that they have a majority government, we don't have much choice. The people of Ontario are forced to follow the direction of this government.

And where has that led us? Let's take, to start with, the issue of downloading. Much of the money that this government has found to give away in corporate tax cuts and tax cuts to the very wealthy—and we are talking billions of dollars; not just a few dollars but billions of dollars—a good chunk of that money came from cutting back on transfer payments to municipalities. In my hometown of Hamilton, as in many other communities in Ontario, we've been hit—devastated, actually—by the level of cuts and what it has meant to the budget process municipally and to the ability of Hamilton city council to deliver services.

This government has said all along that the downloading was revenue-neutral. You'll recall that, Speaker: "revenue-neutral," meaning that the value of the services that this government said to municipalities they were now responsible for was balanced by the amount of money they got. We in the opposition and most municipalities across the province maintain that, no, there was a huge imbalance, that you gained money, that your bottom line benefited because you made sure you downloaded more responsibilities than you gave money for.

Toni Skarica, the former member of the Tory government who held the Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot seat in the new city of Hamilton, voted against your legislation because he couldn't bring himself to say or vote with an argument that said, "This is revenue-neutral." Ultimately, just to point out parenthetically, Speaker, Toni Skarica resigned as an MPP over a broken promise that this government made to him. He resigned because he felt there was a matter of principle. Yet through all of that the government maintained, "Oh, no. It's revenue-neutral. It's just the opposition members fearmongering and it's municipalities bellyaching because they want more money. They're just whining."

What does the auditor have to say? The auditor said, "It's clear that in the province's downloading exercise, they said one thing. It turned out to be something different."

How many times have we said, certainly myself and other members on this side, "Listen, public, they are saying one thing, but what they are going to do is very different"? Now you've got the Provincial Auditor saying that's exactly the case.

Is that the only example in the auditor's report? Oh, no. It's far from being an isolated incident.

One of the big things this government touts as being the saviour of all economic woes is privatization. If it's in the public sector, the government maintains it must be wasteful, it must be overly bureaucratic, there must be too much red tape. All we have to do is privatize it and everything will be wonderful.

1700

If Ontarians had a nickel for every time they heard a government backbencher talk about the benefits of privatization. What does the auditor have to say, though,

the independent, arm's length, non-partisan auditor, the same auditor who was there when we were there? What does he say?

Well, on road maintenance—remember the road maintenance that was privatized? And let's remember that the labour laws were changed to deny public sector workers successor rights. What that means is, in the private sector, if somebody new buys a company and there's a union there, you take the union and the contract and the benefits and the grievance procedure and the health and safety rights with you. It's all one package. But in the province of Ontario, if you're a worker covered by a collective agreement and you work in the provincial public sector and your service is privatized or sold to a new owner, your contract is ripped up and your rights are gone.

What does the auditor say? Because the government would have us believe that, first of all, that's not a horrible thing. And then secondly, they said, "But it's going to be worth it because it's going to give us better service, better roads, and we're going to save money. Therefore it's OK to run roughshod over these workers' lives and the rights that they've earned over decades of negotiation. It's OK to eliminate all that, because at the end of the day, privatization is going to be such a huge win for the public."

What does the auditor say? The auditor said about road maintenance that "the consultants' work cited by the ministry does not sufficiently support the ministry's claims of actual savings achieved from outsourcing," outsourcing, of course, being another word for privatization in this case.

"It is also unlikely that the consultants' report can be used to support the achievement of the 5% savings target set by the Management Board of Cabinet. In addition, we noted that the consultants observed that several cost estimates for the pilot contract were based on historical information that was not kept by the ministry and could not be verified by the consultant."

I say, how convenient.

The auditor goes on to say, "We were particularly concerned about the fact that all highway maintenance activity was irreversibly outsourced without first evaluating the results of outsourcing in the pilot district in order to make a business case for further outsourcing."

That's what the auditor has to say.

I can remember sitting in government on the other side of the House and listening to members of the Tory caucus who were here in the third party in the period between 1990 and 1995, and one of the things they kept touting was that government shouldn't spend a nickel without a business plan. Not a nickel. Heaven forbid you should start a new enterprise, something significant, without that almighty business plan. They jumped on that huge, and here they are six years later being accused by the Provincial Auditor of not doing a proper business plan, an impact study, an economic impact study. You didn't do it. There's a word for that. I can't use it because it's unparliamentary, but what it means is that you say

one thing and you do something else. And that's exactly what the auditor has found you guilty of.

Again, it's not the only example. Driver testing. I believe that legislation has now cleared this place. A little while ago it went off, finished third reading, and now you're going to privatize driver testing. We heard all the same arguments about the benefit of driver testing that we heard about road maintenance. Well, we heard what the auditor thought about your experiment with road maintenance, which, by the way, he points out is irreversible. Where are we with driver testing?

The auditor says, "The financial information presented to the cabinet committee on privatization and SuperBuild to support the ministry's calculations and demonstrate the financial prudence of the licence option was taken from the unfinished business case.... We question the prudence of making important decisions, such as selecting a service delivery option, without sufficient information and without a complete business case.... Therefore, the ministry did not demonstrate to us that a proper cost-benefit analysis was done, nor did it demonstrate the validity of the assumptions and other information on which the decision to outsource was made."

We said at the time that it was pure ideology and this confirms that's all it was: privatize, no matter what. Privatize, privatize, privatize. It doesn't matter whether it makes sense; it doesn't matter whether working families in Ontario get hurt; it doesn't matter whether it's going to be more efficient or not; it doesn't matter whether at the end of the day the public gets better service. The only thing that matters to this government is, "Privatize it." Why? Because whichever company ultimately buys the service probably—there's a good chance—is going to be a supporter of this government. So it's a huge win politically for the government.

Let's remember, this is a government that changed the way elections are financed in Ontario. They doubled the amount of money corporations can contribute to a political campaign. How convenient.

But now the jig is up. The auditor has called you on it. The auditor has pointed out virtually everything we argued from the beginning, which you dismissed with a royal wave of the hand as being just the opposition, in our case, "Just the NDP. What do they know about it?"

You didn't even have the business plan or the cost-benefit analysis that you touted, standing right in this spot. There were members who are in the government today who said you shouldn't do anything without a cost-benefit analysis and a business plan, and you didn't do any of it. And in the other case when you privatized, the money you said would be saved wasn't. What are people left to conclude but that you say one thing and do something else?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): It's them.

Mr Christopherson: No, I say to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, it's not "them," pointing to the official opposition; they're talking about you, you in particular, being a member of the cabinet.

Before I leave the auditor's report—and by the way, you can't give enough emphasis to what this means, the implications, because of the privatization that's going on, because of the continuing downloading that happens, other than in this bill when there's GO Transit. If I have enough time I'll come to that again, but I probably won't; there's not a lot of time.

I didn't hear any of the members, by the way, on the issue of GO Transit, as much as they're repatriating it, as they call it. I didn't hear one of them say, "Sorry. We made a mistake. We really shouldn't have downloaded that to municipalities. It was too much. It's too important an issue to leave to the struggling municipal budgets." Not one of them that I'm aware of—and I'm prepared to stand corrected if there's a Hansard that says otherwise—to my knowledge not one of them in the government has admitted they were wrong.

Because of course they're infallible; they don't make mistakes. I'm not sure what they said. I'd really, really be interested to hear one of the backbenchers address the comments of the auditor. They won't, of course. They'll just go on giving their spin. But I'd like to see them tackle these allegations, these accusations, actually these findings of guilt, head-on.

Tell me why the auditor's wrong when he says that downloading on municipalities wasn't revenue-neutral. Tell me why the auditor was wrong when he said the 5% savings that would be there in privatizing road maintenance didn't happen, and why you haven't made the business case and therefore shouldn't be moving forward with privatizing driver testing. I'd like to hear one of you tackle those quotes dead on and tell me why you say the auditor is wrong and why you're right. When it's all projection, when it's about what's going to happen in the future, oh, you're so comfortable. You know everything there is to know about economics, and every good thing that happened in this province is a result of your genius. Well, geniuses, it ain't the way you said.

With regard to the tax cuts and the bill in front of us today, Bill 127, same story. Corporations will do quite well. I heard one of the backbenchers mention working people. I'd like to know where working people come into this, other than the \$100, which is a smokescreen to cover off the billions you're giving away to corporations, and which, by the way, you don't even make available to the poorest of the poor children in this province. That's how bad a smokescreen it is. This is all for your friends, and we know what the auditor's reports are going to look like down the road.

1710

Before I leave the auditor's report, let me say this: we have all heard this government talk about the fact—and I can remember the 1995 campaign really clearly, where the candidates and the government and ultimately the Premier-elect were talking about the fact that one of the most important things to the Mike Harris Tories in Ontario was transparency and openness, open government and transparency, so you could see through it, you could see what they were doing. This was so huge to them.

What does the auditor say about that? I can't believe it's still not screaming headlines, because it ought to be.

This is what the auditor said about a majority government in the province of Ontario—meaning all-powerful. The auditor said, “For the first time since being appointed Provincial Auditor”—for the first time since he was appointed auditor—“I have to report an instance where my office did not receive all the information and explanations we required.” I'd like to see one of the government backbenchers tackle that head-on. Read that quote and then tell me why the auditor is wrong. It's not going to happen. I guarantee you it's not going to happen, because it can't. The fact of the matter is that for the first time the Provincial Auditor, an officer of this House, was unable to get the information they required to conduct their lawful responsibilities, and it's a government that touted openness that said no.

Further, “When conducting audit examinations, audit staff must have full access to all pertinent information and explanations. During this audit, however, we encountered difficulties and delays in obtaining the required information: we were not given full access to files or given all the information we requested.” This is mind-boggling: “In some cases, information had been altered by deleting parts of documents that were provided, or information was specifically prepared to only answer our questions without providing supporting documentation to verify the answers.” Once again, they love talk, but it's so different from reality. What they say and what they do are worlds apart, and have been since the day they took power in 1995.

“Finally, restrictions were often placed on ministry staff in that they were not allowed to be interviewed without their superiors present.” Come on. If the roles were reversed and we were over there and this governing party was still over here in third place, we'd be peeling some of those members off the ceiling if an auditor's report was tabled with those comments in it. Instead, they all sit there quietly, diligently reading, somehow trying to convince themselves that, “I'm not a part of that; it's got nothing to do with me.” This is so damning.

Just for the record, let's review. There are so many issues in that auditor's report. Again, the party of law and order. That's what they want everybody to believe, that they care about law and order, which is public safety. This is the party of Walkerton. This is the party of Plastimet. And they tell us they care about law and order and public safety more than anybody. When did food stop being a public safety issue? When did water and food stop being public safety?

Look at the headlines: “Ontario Food Safety Blasted”; “Food Safety Branded ‘Critical’”; “Food and Road Fear.” That's because of some people who shouldn't be driving. Because you've cut back on staff, the documents weren't processed properly and people who shouldn't be driving still have valid drivers' licences. Isn't that public safety? It is if it's a family member of mine. For anybody watching this, it's suddenly a major public safety issue.

They want to talk a good story. It's like the Victims' Bill of Rights, and I won't get going too far down that road, but do you remember the Victims' Bill of Rights? That was going to be the be-all and end-all for victims. At the end of the day, you actually rolled in government lawyers to argue that Ontario citizens who you said had rights—you sent in the heavy guns from the government to argue in court that those Ontario citizens didn't have those rights, and Judge Day said so. It's in the public record. They say one thing; they do another. Two different worlds.

Speaking of two different worlds, we all know that on November 21, as a result of there being no flexibility left in the budget because you've given away so many billions of dollars in tax cuts and there's so little wiggle room left in the budget now that revenues are declining—and by the way, if you listen to their earlier speeches about earlier budgets, all that pain we went through was so we wouldn't ever be in recession. The Premier said, “As long as you don't elect any Liberals or NDP, don't worry. We won't ever be in recession.”

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade): It's true.

Mr Christopherson: I hear—I think it was the cabinet minister. Can you believe it? A cabinet minister said, “It's true.” What world does he live in?

Hon Mr Runciman: He didn't say that.

Mr Christopherson: Oh, I think he did. We'll see what Hansard says. They're closer.

Hon Mr Runciman: I'm talking about the Premier.

Mr Christopherson: Oh, yes, he did. The Premier said this. I can send it over later to the minister who's questioning it. Yes, he did say it. He said it in this place. In fact, he said it in answer to a question from the leader of the third party, Howard Hampton. That's exactly what he said. Furthermore, go back and look at the debates coming out of the other previous budgets we've had in this place. Backbenchers in particular, and even some ministers, stood up and said, “Don't worry. Things will turn around under us and we'll never have to go back to the days of recession. Those sorts of things won't happen because we're going to put Ontario on such a firm footing,” yadda yadda yadda.

The reality is that exactly what we said would happen did; that is, the moment the US economy started to turn, ours would turn with it, and as soon as theirs went in the ditch, ours would too. That's exactly what happened. Yes, I hear some of you talk about September 11, and yes, that exacerbated things, no question. But there's not an economist out there who will not acknowledge that with or without September 11, the economy was in serious decline. We're now in recession. We're now facing \$5 billion in cuts to public services so this government can not only maintain their promised \$2.2-billion cut to corporations, but can accelerate the cut from January 1 to October 1.

But it's interesting, because on November 21, Premier Harris was quoted in the Toronto Star in an article by Carolyn Mallan, and I'll read the first two paragraphs:

“Premier Mike Harris says his government is ‘absolutely united’ in its decision to proceed with corporate tax cuts.

“Harris denied reports yesterday of leadership-driven dissent at the cabinet table about how best to deal with a possible budget shortfall next year that could climb to \$5 billion.”

Well, isn’t that interesting?

I read into the record the last time we debated this an editorial from Gord McNulty, and it ended with this paragraph:

“Is Flaherty using the economic downturn as an excuse to subject Ontario to a neo-conservative double whammy of program cuts and lower taxes? If so, the cabinet voices who don’t share his agenda should draw a line in the sand before it’s too late.”

1720

I read those two articles because, isn’t it interesting that now that the leadership campaign is well under way, one of the members of the executive council, one of the candidates for Premier, has said—I’m paraphrasing but I’m not off the message at all—that he didn’t understand how you could have a \$5-billion deficit facing you and still look people in the eye and go ahead with a tax cut. I believe he said, “How do you square the circle?” Exactly.

According to the Premier, everybody is absolutely united. Well, no, they aren’t. That’s just like saying that if we followed the Tory policies of all the pain we’ve been through in the last half decade-plus we’d never be in recession. Not true. They said that if we privatize public services, it will be better for the public. Not true. They said if we privatize public services, we’ll save money. Not true. They said that their downloading to municipalities would be revenue-neutral, it would be fair. Mike Harris even pinky-swore with Mel Lastman. Not true. Today, the government maintains that this budget bill, Bill 127, is going to be the very instrument that takes us out of recession and takes us into a bright, new, sunny day. Not true.

Yes, everybody likes tax cuts. I like tax cuts. Who doesn’t like tax cuts? But when it comes at the expense of the quality of life of the province of Ontario and the kind of upbringing that most of us in this place benefited from, and that we have no right to take away from the next generation, that’s not a fair trade-off. That’s not worth it. It’s not worth this. It’s fine if you’ve already got lots and lots of money, but most people don’t. There’s nothing here for middle-class folks. There’s nothing here for the vast majority, and the people of my community of Hamilton. Just more talk—more talk. They’re going to do it again today, as they’ve been doing. They’re going to talk, talk, talk, talk about this wonderful, terrific, beautiful world; this Garden of Eden that they’re going to create for all of us. Down the road, it’ll be proven yet again that they said one thing and did something entirely different.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It’s a pleasure to rise to talk about Bill 127. I just want to respond to some of the comments of my colleague across the way.

First of all, I want to address the Provincial Auditor’s report. Everyone who follows provincial or federal politics knows that every year the Provincial Auditor, and the Auditor General in Ottawa do a report. The auditor works for this assembly. Every single year—and you can go back and look at any report over the past decade or further—you will find the auditor’s report full of concerns that the auditor has found in areas where he’s done value-for-money audit. That is the very purpose of the Provincial Auditor.

Right now, there are 57 members of the government on this side of the House. We have thousands and thousands of people who work in the civil service here in the province of Ontario. Some 57 government members set policy and set broad spending programs, and then we ask those thousands and thousands of people who work for the government to carry out these programs, to carry out these policies. As we move from one issue to the next, in health care, in education, in social assistance, in so many areas, we can’t possibly watch every nickel, all 57 of us, by ourselves. That is why we have the Provincial Auditor, and we on this side of the House appreciate the Provincial Auditor.

When he comes back and gives a report that shows there are problems in ministries, in programs that are being delivered by ministries, sure it concerns us. Sure we get bad headlines in the paper that year. It’s the same thing that happened to the NDP, only 10 times worse. It’s the same thing that happened to the Liberals before them. It’s the same thing that happens to the federal Liberals every year a report comes out.

We want to expand the role of the Provincial Auditor’s office. We said that. I’ve had a private member’s bill in this place to expand the Provincial Auditor’s office because there are billions of dollars of our expenditures, dollars that we give to hospitals, dollars that we give to municipalities and other transfer partners, that we can’t audit right now. In fact, some of those institutions, hospitals, universities and colleges have actually hired lawyers to keep the Provincial Auditor out, and that’s shameful. That’s why we need to expand it. That’s an initiative that this government is taking, and the other parties failed to do that.

The other thing is, as I said, I’m a member of the public accounts committee, with several members opposite. What we now do is—I want the folks at home to know the process—the ministries have to respond to the Provincial Auditor. Many of them already have. Right in the Provincial Auditor’s report are the responses to the concerns of the Provincial Auditor. We continue to follow that up by bringing these civil servants mentioned in the Provincial Auditor’s report to the public accounts committee, where we ask them about the Provincial Auditor’s concerns and we ask them what they’re going to do. We then follow that up by writing reports asking the ministries to continue to take steps to address these concerns. It’s an annual process. It’s a good process that this Legislative Assembly has had for many years, and we will continue it. In fact, we want to expand it. The parties opposite refuse to do that.

I want to also talk about the member from Essex, who was in here earlier. Again, strangely to me and strangely to the members opposite in the third party, we can't understand why—well, I can, actually—the Ontario Liberals continue to try to defend the indefensible. They try to defend the federal Liberals' cuts to health care. Everybody in Canada understands that the federal Liberals have cut their spending in health care. Everybody understands—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Hamilton East, come to order.

Mr Maves: The member from Hamilton East, again, is trying to defend his federal cousins. He thinks the federal Liberals cutting health care is a good thing, I guess; he thinks it's OK. We disagree with that. Every single provincial government in Canada, every single Premier, be it Liberal, be it NDP, be it Conservative, has said they're cutting health care. Allan Rock, the federal health minister, admitted that he cut health care funding from the federal Liberals. We've increased health care funding by over \$6 billion. We've increased it every single year we've been in office. In 1993, I just want to point out to the members opposite, 18 cents of every dollar spent on health care in Ontario came from the federal Tories. That was in the Brian Mulroney days. The federal Liberals cut that to 11 cents by 1999 and they admitted they've cut it. They didn't hide from that fact. They admit that openly.

Now we've put a lot of pressure on them. Premier Harris led the way with all the other Premiers and everyone in the country, including Howard Hampton, the leader of the NDP, signed a letter saying, "Federal Liberals, you cut health care. Restore health care." Mr Harris led the fight, and of course, before they had to face a federal election, the federal Liberals started to put some money back. How much did they put back? Not nearly enough. They're now at 14 cents out of every dollar, so they're still not back to the 18 cents where they were in 1993. How the members opposite could continue to defend that is beyond me.

One of the things they try to talk about is this nonsense tax points argument that the Liberals try to make. Back in 1977, the federal government said, "We're going to vacate some tax space. Provinces, you come in and fill up that tax space and you use that money for health care." That's all fine and good. That was fair deal, until the federal Liberals started adding taxes and refilling the tax room, and it took them less than 10 years to do that. As soon as they do that, the whole tax point transfer is gone, it's out the window, and everybody who knows anything about it knows that. So why the Ontario Liberal Party continues to support the federal Liberals is beyond me. They're elected by the people of Ontario. Why won't they stick up for the people of Ontario?

Don't take my word for this. Let me read some quotes. Tom Kent was a key adviser to the federal government in the mid-1960s. In fact, he's called one of the fathers of medicare. He was asked about the tax point transfer

argument. What did he say? He said that argument by the federal Liberals is a complete "misrepresentation." A transfer, he says, "is money that the federal government provides to the provinces out of its taxes, not theirs." That's exactly the point.

1730

Let me go further. Paul Boothe from the University of Alberta, another economist, says, "It is bizarre for the federal government to claim that it is 'giving' the provinces ... this tax revenue each year. In the interests of common sense (and of making some sense of the real disagreements), future discussions ... should focus exclusively on cash transfers."

Here's another quote from Tom Courchene of Queen's University, a well-known political analyst and a great contributor to the dialogue of politics in Canada over the years. He says, "It is not obvious that much, other than confusion, is achieved by referring to the tax-point transfer under EPF as federal transfers."

Finally, Robin Boadway of Queen's University, another noted academic, says, "The decision to fold in the CHST with the EPF program and to allow the resulting transfer to be comprised partly of a tax-point transfer dating back to 1977 completely defies reason.... There is no rationale given for doing this: indeed, I would say"—I want the members opposite to hear this—"that it is the ultimate in dishonesty to do so."

This is not even a debate any more. Everyone in the country understands that the federal government has backed out of its fair share of health care. I beg the Ontario Liberals to please stop selling out to your federal cousins. Start standing up for your Ontario voters. We need your support or the federal Liberals will continue to shirk their responsibilities.

I want to continue on with the budget. There's an important part of this budget for my riding in particular. Everyone knows how important tourism is to Ontario. In fact, it's the sixth-largest export industry. It generated in 2000 approximately \$17.7 billion in revenues, including \$7.6 billion in foreign exchange. The industry accounts for some 443,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs. It represented over 9% of Ontario's employment last year. With September 11, tourism took a hit in Ontario. My colleague the member from Fort Erie—Erie-Lincoln we call his riding—the current Minister of Tourism, quickly reacted to this. He rearranged about \$4 million of spending within his own ministry—

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): With good advice from local members.

Mr Maves: He credits me for giving him advice in moving in this direction, which I thank him for, but I want to congratulate him for his leadership on the issue. He reacted very swiftly and rearranged \$4 million to put into marketing. He then worked with me and the provincial finance minister, and in the budget update, in this bill we're talking about, the Minister of Finance agreed to put \$10 million more into tourism marketing.

I can't tell you how important this is for the people of my riding. Obviously, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-

Lake, which is all of my riding, are very dependent upon the tourism trade and we appreciate this immensely. We appreciate the minister's taking the time to consult with all the tourism folks in my area and reacting favourably, both the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Finance and all of cabinet, to this initiative. I want to thank them and I want to say how much I appreciate that.

There are two other items in the budget that I really think are important. There are the children's treatment centres: \$20 million, something we also worked hard for. We really appreciate that money. Money for adults with developmental disabilities: that's what government should spend money on. It should be spending money on those in Ontario who are less fortunate, who have a great deal of difficulty in helping themselves in life. It's important we put money there.

The NDP back in 1993 invoked the social contract on children's treatment centres. They froze funding. Because of the situation they had us in when we took office, we couldn't do too much with funding until a couple of years ago, and again this year, where we've given big increases in those budgets. I think those are important and I really appreciate those.

I support the bill. I still am befuddled by the Ontario Liberals, why they take this position. On a law-and-order issue, I recall, two weeks ago they stood up to the federal Liberals, the first time I've ever seen it in six and a half years. On this health issue, I really wish they would get with it because they would really help Ontario taxpayers and Ontario citizens if they would, along with everybody else, including the NDP, across this country, push the federal government to fund their fair share of health care.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): It's true I've got something to say, and I've got plenty of time to say it. The member from Niagara Falls usually follows me. It's good to hear him first, so we can have a fair exchange from time to time.

I have to tell those of you who are watching this channel, this very political channel—this is one of the most important sources of information; you get to hear all of us, for good or bad—this is the bill that accelerates income tax cuts for individuals and corporations. They do this with a great deal of hubris. Why not be proud of what it is that's causing a disaster? If you're going to cause a disaster, be proud of it and do more of it. Compound the problem as a way of convincing the public you're on the right course. To do any different is to suggest to the public that somehow the income tax cuts are wrong. So in order to say to the public, "We are right," compound the problem. Give more tax cuts. The province is bankrupt. They have no money, and they accelerated the income tax cuts earlier as a way of making sure they put \$200 million more out of the pockets of the provincial government, money we don't have. They know they don't have any money. The member from Niagara Falls just a few seconds ago whined about the fact—

Mr Christopherson: They're crying, repenting and crying over there.

Mr Marchese: He's weeping. It's true, David is weeping.

The member from Niagara Falls knows they have a shortage of money. That's why he whines about the fact that the Liberals provincially were defending the federal Liberal government with respect to the fact that money has not been flowing to the province in the way it should. Provincial Liberals defend it, and Tories are attacking it. We say they both have a problem. We say the federal Liberal governments have cut provincial dollars for health; this is true. But so did Mulroney before Chrétien, although Mr Bart Maves from Niagara Falls barely makes mention of it. He only talks about Chrétien and doesn't talk about the fact that Mulroney in 1990 to 1993 severely cut the support Ontario should have got—the NDP was in power at the time—that we should have got and that we deserved, given, of course, the fact that our economy was in shambles. We had a recession, and we pleaded with the federal government to give us the money that was properly ours.

But it was so funny to hear Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, today defend their ever-so-competent whining about why the federal government isn't giving them enough money. It was Mr Stockwell, the now Minister of Labour—and the critic of everything when he was on this side—who, with the ever-so-brilliant projectile eyes he has, would attack the NDP on a very consistent basis, claiming, of course, that the New Democrats didn't have a problem with financing; the problem was our spending. He, on a regular basis, reminded Bob Rae, the then Premier, that both the Mulroney Conservative government and the Chrétien government were presumably being very fair to us at the time and that we New Democrats shouldn't be whining, because we were in charge. If we just got our spending in control, everything would be OK. Well, here's the same guy, Stockwell, Minister of Labour—not just he but every other whining kid on the other side—saying, "We're not getting our fair share."

Speaker, I know you weren't here. But if you're listening to this debate, I'm sure you're crying internally, of course with irony, to hear this kind of exchange. You must be shutting your ears so as not to hear and to pretend this can't be so. But it was Stockwell today who said it, and you can't help but chuckle at it.

1740

It's terrible to hear Mr Maves from Niagara Falls defend that in the good economy we've had in the last six years you people couldn't put enough money away to deal with the rainy days that would follow, so you wouldn't have to get on your knees and plead with Chrétien to give you just \$1.2 billion more fast enough so you could probably deal with the economy and the problems the economy brings, meaning you have less money in your pockets as a government. If you had put some money aside in the last six years, when we had a good economy by and large, to the extent that you had loads of billions of dollars in your pockets—not for everybody, but certainly for some. Where did it go? Why wouldn't you save a couple of dollars for a rainy day?

Why wouldn't you do that? To now suffer the fact that you claim you are \$5 billion short, that you're going to have to cut from every ministry—\$5 billion short? Where did you put the money this good economy has so graciously given you that you're now short \$5 billion and you want to give \$2.3 billion to the corporate sector? What gives?

Every Ontarian who's watching this program is probably saying, "This is nuts." We don't have money, we've got to cut \$5 billion, but you've got \$2.3 billion to give away to corporations, because they've got deep pockets, and wealthy bankers—I always like to talk about the bankers. Bankers who earn \$1.5 million get \$120,000 back, because, you understand, they need it. They need new fridges, new stoves, new boats.

Mr Christopherson: New Mercedes.

Mr Marchese: There must be more expensive Fiats around. There are expensive Fiats, some beautiful sports cars that I'm sure Mr Eves—

Mr Christopherson: A couple of each.

Mr Marchese: A banker could buy so many cars with \$1.5 million. The government feels so bad for them that it wants to give them more back.

Mr Christopherson: We want the happiest bankers in the world.

Mr Marchese: They're smiling like this. They can't get that smile off their faces, because with that extra \$120,000 they're getting back, man, are they helping the economy grow.

And those poor folks, 50% of working people who earn less than \$30,000, what do they get? They get so little. What they get is an auditor's report that tells them—they get this, Bart Maves. Look. This is what the 50% of Ontarians who earn less than 30,000 bucks get. They get this auditor's report. And what does it tell us? It tells us that we have a food safety problem.

It tells us that the government is endangering the safety of our food, as if it wasn't enough that they endangered the lives of people and caused deaths through the contamination of water—they caused deaths. Never did we have such a problem in the NDP. Now, in a good economy, we have deaths because of contaminated water. And now we've got an auditor who's saying we're endangering our lives because we're not protecting the safety of our food: slaughterhouses not meeting health and safety rules; rusty equipment; transporting meat in non-refrigerated vehicles—all this under your gracious governance—the government failing to inspect milk producers; insufficient inspectors. They lack proper equipment to detect bacterial contamination; no standards to enforce levels of bacteria. The government cut meat inspectors from 120 to eight. You guys are nuts. You guys are so nutty.

We have no money, but you find 2.3 billion bucks to give away to corporations, people who don't need our money, and we have the safety of our food in jeopardy, which affects 11 million Ontarians. You guys have got to be nuts. Please, you Ontarians who are watching this political program, you've got to tell these people in this

government they're nuts. We've got to rein them back in, get them out of office, bring in somebody to bring back some sanity in Ontario.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I'm certainly pleased to have a few minutes to join the debate on this piece of legislation. When you look at the title, it says, Responsible Choices for Growth and Fiscal Responsibility Act. It's an interesting title, because clearly there's a significant difference between what the government believes those responsible choices are and what we in the Liberal caucus, in the official opposition, believe those responsible choices are.

This is a government that decided we were going to start a race to the bottom when it came to corporate tax cuts and competitiveness with our American friends at the borders. As we have said before, we believe we need to be competitive. Being competitive roughly means being at the same level, a couple of points around that. That, I think, is what most reasonable people would say when you're being competitive: you're in the ballpark, you're in the range. This government decided that those gifts to their corporations were not enough. So as part of this responsible choice, they decided they were going to be competitive by being 25% lower than the bordering states—not 2% to 3% lower, not 5%; 25% lower. That is their definition of being competitive. That decision cost the taxpayers of Ontario, in revenue—or you can flip it the other way—\$2.2 billion that could have been put into services that Ontarians rely on government to provide, like health care, like education, like clean air, clean water. It is a matter of choices. It is a matter of what is a responsible choice.

So not only do they announce the corporate tax cut; then, as a result of the September 11 situation, they decide, "We're going to speed those things up even faster," not understanding that there's going to be an economic slowdown, not understanding that, as you look around, things have changed and the world has changed dramatically. They decide the way you solve the problem is you just speed up the tax cuts to your corporate friends.

So we have a situation now where in this legislation the tax cuts, which, again, we believe don't need to be 25% below the Americans—if you start that race to the bottom, what happens when our bordering states then decide, "Well, we can't be 25% below Ontario, so we're going to lower our corporate tax rate even further"? So Michigan will lower their corporate tax rate further; New York state will lower theirs further; Pennsylvania will lower theirs further. Do we then follow that? How much further are we going to go? How much further down that race to the bottom, when it comes to corporate tax cuts, are we willing to risk and gamble with at the expense of hard-core, necessary services we provide to our constituents?

Yes, there is a fundamental difference. We believe that the \$2.2 billion would be better served being put into other services. This government for the last five years, but particularly the last two or three weeks, has done nothing but whine and complain and cry and whine and

complain and cry some more about the federal government. They're looking for more money so they can sink more money into corporate tax cuts, so they can speed up the tax cuts even further.

The reality is that this government today—just today—blew \$1 million on advertising to try to fight against the federal government and the corporate tax cut; \$1 million out the window in ads that could have gone to the front line of health care, that could have opened up more beds, that could have hired more nurses or could have hired teachers for the classrooms or bought textbooks or bought computers. This government thought, again, choices—the choice was to pump \$1 million today into an ad attacking the federal government.

I look at my own community and I look at the issues that I've raised in the last few months in here and, again, it's a question of choices. This is a government that can't fund additional beds at the burn unit at the Hamilton General Hospital, a world-class facility. That facility has 10 beds right now and is at capacity literally year-round. They've asked for 10 to 12 additional beds because they serve a catchment area of 2.2 million people.

Again, you talk about choices. This government has the ability to pump \$2.2 billion into corporate tax cuts, but can't fund 12 additional beds for individuals who are victims of burns and who need that treatment at the Hamilton General Hospital. I know what my choice would be. My choice would be to pump that money into those beds at the burn unit at the Hamilton General Hospital, not into corporate tax cuts.

I've raised the issue of palliative care. We've got a situation in Hamilton with St Peter's Hospital. Again, an unbelievably effective, first-class facility has said to this government, "We need more money for palliative care." These are individuals who are in the last few days of their lives, who need to be in a situation where they can die with dignity, with respect, with some care around them, because they can't be taken care of at home. They've asked for this.

1750

They asked in February for \$700,000 to open up 19 new beds. The government has not yet answered. So again, if I had that choice and the Liberal caucus had that choice, would we put \$2.2 billion into corporate tax cuts, or would we open up 19 new palliative care beds at St Peter's hospital in Hamilton? It's pretty clear to most Ontarians that the priority should be to open up these beds at St Peter's and not put \$2.2 billion into corporate tax cuts.

It goes on and on. We have a situation in my own community right now that a number of schools in the city of Hamilton are in such bad shape because of the lack of funding and the fact that this government has cut capital funding to schools significantly that when it rains in certain schools, teachers have to move the desks so the kids don't get wet. That's today in Ontario under the Mike Harris government. The Hamilton board has asked for \$17 million in emergency funding to fix those roofs and boilers to make sure that in the winter there's heat

and if it rains or snows those kids are not getting wet in the classroom.

Again, it's a matter of choice. Would I choose to put \$2.2 billion into corporate tax cuts, or would I spend \$17 million to make sure that the roofs in our schools in Hamilton are fixed and the boilers are working for the winter months? It's a pretty clear choice. That money should go into the schools, not into the corporate tax cuts.

We have, in Hamilton again, a first-class neonatal unit at McMaster medical centre in Hamilton, but they don't have an intensive care unit. There isn't a dedicated intensive care unit for the neonatal unit at McMaster hospital. We had a situation a couple of months ago, on October 11. A two-year-old girl from Brampton was critically ill. She was turned away from Sick Kids in Toronto. They could not find a bed to put her in the intensive care unit at McMaster in Hamilton. She had to be driven two hours to London. That is the situation today in Hamilton. That is the situation across Ontario.

Again, what they've asked for is 12 to 14 dedicated beds that would be left as intensive care beds to serve the neonatal unit at McMaster. Remember, this is the government that shut down many of those services for kids in London, so many of those kids are taken to Hamilton, but we don't have the intensive care beds in the neonatal unit.

Again, talk about choices. Would I choose to give \$2.2 billion in tax cuts to corporations, or would I put that money into opening up 12 or 14 beds in McMaster when it comes to looking after kids in intensive care? The choice is pretty clear. The priority should be those hospital beds for those kids who are critically ill.

I spoke about kids who suffer from autism in this province. We have kids who have to wait six months, eight months, a year for service. You announced a program, but you limit it to kids who are over five. So anybody under five no longer gets services. We have waiting lists across the board. Parents in Hamilton have launched a \$75-million lawsuit against the government because it has not provided service to those kids who need those services.

Again, it's a question of choices. Would you choose a \$2.2-billion tax cut for corporations, or pump that money into services for those kids who need it?

I have outlined a number of examples that go right across the province. I talk about my own community of Hamilton, but certainly these same examples, these same choices have to be made day after day in every community in Ontario. This is again where I guess we differ in this House. I'm proud to say we differ. I would be happy to take the case to the people of Ontario to determine which choices Ontarians would make; to determine what the people of Ontario would decide is more important: to agree with the Mike Harris government and put \$2.2 billion into corporate tax cuts to make our rates 25% lower than the Americans, or would the people of Ontario choose to make sure that their schools were working properly, that those schools weren't leaking and that those boilers were working and that there were smaller classrooms, more computers and more textbooks?

I would be happy to take that case to the people of Ontario and give them the option; give them the option of a \$2.2-billion tax cut or putting that money into education. I'd be happy to take the case to the people of Ontario and say, "Would you make a choice?" Ask the people of Ontario, "Would you put the \$2.2 billion into a corporate tax cut, or would you make sure that when your kid is sick in the middle of the night and you take them to the emergency room, it's there, it's open and someone will be there to look after that child? Or if your father or husband or wife is dying, that there's a bed available in a palliative care unit across Ontario? Let's give people those choices. Those are the kinds of choices Ontarians need to make. We'll make the case and we'll continue to make the case.

We're not here to fight with the federal government; we're here to make sure that Ontarians hold the government accountable, that it has its priorities all mixed up. This government doesn't understand what is important to Ontarians. And yes, do you know what? Those banks, their corporate friends, the people who go to their dinners, the big banks of this province, will benefit tremendously by the corporate tax cut that is 25%. But that is based on previous profits. How does that help the economy today or tomorrow? It doesn't.

The reality is that this is a one-trick pony. This government understands nothing else. They don't understand

the new reality after September 11. They don't understand that Ontarians are refocusing on what is important to us, and hard-core front-line services are the priorities of most Ontarians. They are not the priority of this government. They continue to be obsessed with tax cuts at all costs, and there's a significant cost that comes with that. This corporate tax cut is a glaring example of a government that's out of touch, a government that doesn't understand Ontarians, a government that doesn't understand the priorities and a government that frankly is on its way out.

The Acting Speaker: Mr O'Toole has moved third reading of Bill 127. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), Gary Stewart has requested that Bill 127, An Act to implement measures contained in the Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government, be deferred until December 5, 2001. So be it.

It being almost 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1757.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

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

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

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

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

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling, Gerard Kennedy,
Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer
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Julia Munro, Richard Patten
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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Sources de carburants de remplacement**

Chair / Président: Doug Galt
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Marie Bountrogianni
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Galt, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,
John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Ernie Parsons
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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