



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 12 December 2001

Mercredi 12 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**

Wednesday 12 December 2001

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 12 décembre 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Yesterday the SPCA had to rescue another 41 dogs from a puppy mill near Wingham, Ontario. Again the burden falls on the SPCA and all the volunteers who help with animal rescue. By tolerating and refusing to shut down over 400 puppy mills that operate in Ontario, this government allows this industry to profit at the expense of cash-strapped, overworked animal protection workers who can't keep up. By refusing to act and not passing strong legislation that would strengthen the powers of the SPCA, this government basically tolerates puppy mills.

This government should be held responsible for all the added veterinary, shelter and court costs incurred by these SPCAs and humane societies, not to mention that it should be held responsible for the ongoing abuse of animals that continues to plague this province like an epidemic while it makes excuses and ignores the plight of defenceless animals and unsuspecting consumers.

At this time of year more than ever, I encourage caring people across the province to give generously to their local SPCA, to their local humane society, to their local animal rescue group. And please, before you buy a pet from a pet store, go and bring home a pet from your local shelter rather than buying one from a pet store where 90% of the animals come from puppy mills.

ELECTIONS IN PERTH

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise to congratulate the newly elected warden of Perth county and the re-elected warden of Middlesex county.

Perth county held its warden's election last Wednesday, December 5. Ed Hollinger, deputy mayor of North Perth, was elected to succeed Vince Judge, mayor of the same municipality.

Some years ago I played ball with Warden Hollinger, and more recently he was a member of Listowel council when I was mayor. Knowing Ed as well as I do, I'm confident Perth county council has selected a very capable person for the job.

At this time, I also want to thank the outgoing warden, Vince Judge, for his service.

Then last Thursday, December 6, Al Edmunston, the deputy mayor of Middlesex Centre, was re-elected as warden of Middlesex county. I've enjoyed working with Warden Edmunston over the past year and I know the residents of Middlesex will benefit from the experience he brings to the job.

Both gentlemen have a great deal of experience in local government and will work hard to protect and promote the interests of the people they serve. Undoubtedly we'll lock horns on some issues—that's the nature of the business—but today I want to express my respect for both wardens and congratulate them on their successful elections. I look forward to working with them both.

While I'm speaking about a commitment to public service, at this time I want to compliment the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, for his commitment to Ontario over the last many years.

MFP FINANCIAL SERVICES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I have continually reminded the Chair of Management Board that Brock University had contracts with MFP Financial and had them revised; that the region of Waterloo is suing MFP Financial; that the city of Windsor yanked a \$2-million contract from MFP Financial; that the city of Windsor is conducting a forensic audit of its dealings with MFP Financial; that the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority can't trust the contracts with MFP Financial and they're having them audited; that the Union Water System in my riding is having their contracts with MFP Financial audited; and that now the city of Toronto is going through the same process. All the minister can say, all the Chair of Management Board can say is, "We have no legal disputes between them and any of our government ministries at this point in time."

Minister, where there's smoke there is usually fire, and we can't afford to let the flame of financial mismanagement continue to burn. I'm recommending that the Chair of Management Board ask the auditor to review the contracts—that's all. Minister, the warning sign is there. This swamp is full of alligators. Your boat's in the middle of it. You'd better check it for leaks.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Mr Santa Claus—or should I say Mr Speaker?—I want to congratulate you on the apparel that you wore this afternoon coming into the Legislature. In the spirit of that, I want to let members know, and also the people in the riding of Timmins-James Bay, that we're going to be holding our Christmas open house on Wednesday, December 19, in Timmins between 2 o'clock and 6 o'clock in the afternoon. If you're in the city of Timmins and you want to drop by and you want to come in for a glass of Christmas cheer, please come in.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: House leader, down. Down, House leader, down.

Also, for those in the Kapuskasing or Hearst area, we're inviting you to be there on December 18 between 2 and 6 o'clock at night.

It's a good time for people to drop by the constituency offices, on the 18th in Kapuskasing and on the 19th in Timmins, to come together to celebrate the time of the year, to be able to, yes, share in a glass of Christmas cheer that is specially made by myself, by my tiny little feet as I walked on the grapes in the fall. We invite everybody to come over.

To our House leader, I know you're going to enjoy Christmas again this year, and we're going to invite you to come back to the Legislature so you can be here on December 25 with your friend Mr Bradley, celebrating this time of the year as you're here to debate all the important business before the House on that particular day.

SCARBOROUGH HOSPITAL FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Last night I had the honour of attending the Scarborough Hospital festival of lights. This is a joyous festival that was started on Monday at the Grace Division in Agincourt and on Tuesday at the General Division in my riding of Scarborough Centre.

The festival helps us to rejoice in the spirit of Christmas, Diwali, Ramadan, and Kwanza with the Caring Trees lighting ceremony, music, multicultural displays, food and refreshments, which was very exciting for all those who attended.

The lighting of the spectacular outdoor Caring Tree signifies the launch of the Scarborough Hospital Foundation's Caring Tree fundraising campaign, which I should add raised over \$115,000 in the first month. It celebrates the caring within their organization and throughout the community and is symbolized by the lights on the Caring Trees.

If any member or people watching this at home would wish to purchase lights in the name of someone special, or in memoriam, they can call or visit the foundation office of the Scarborough Hospital at the Grace Division, 416-495-2505, or the General Division, 416-431-8130.

While I'm on my feet I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a very special friend in the gallery this afternoon. That's Harry Danford, former member for Hastings-Peterborough.

1340

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I rise today to bring to the House serious concern in regard to the status of women's shelters and shelters for abused women in the city of Hamilton. This issue is not new to us. My colleague the member from Hamilton Mountain, Marie Bountrogianni, has raised this a number of times, as other members of our party have as well.

We have a situation in Hamilton that's absolutely shocking. Between the months of January and October of this year over 900 women were turned away from shelters in the city of Hamilton. In the month of September over 60 women were placed in hotels and motels because there was no space. This government has shown a callous disregard for the safety and well-being of abused women in Ontario. They make announcement after announcement without delivering. Clearly Ontarians have to understand this is a very serious situation.

A woman makes a difficult decision to flee her home, often with her children, goes to a shelter, gets turned away and is often faced with being back in a more abusive, more difficult, more dangerous situation. We've had announcement after announcement. We've had cuts that go back to 1995. The reality is that today in Ontario, in one community, in one city, in nine months 900 women were turned away from shelters because there was no room. Where do these women turn? Where is there to go?

This government stands up, makes the announcement, but has not delivered the beds, has not delivered the funding. It's a disgraceful situation in Ontario how our women are treated at the hands of this government. They don't learn; they don't get it; they don't understand how serious it is. I hope they come to their senses. This is a serious, dangerous situation for women. This government better get the message loud and clear.

PREMIER'S LEADERSHIP

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): Tomorrow marks a historic day in the history of Ontario. Barring any unforeseen developments, it will be the last day that our Premier, Mike Harris, will stand in this Legislature as leader of this great province.

This is an end to an important chapter in the history of Ontario, a chapter in which the vision of one man changed the face of provincial politics—a change for the better. As people say, Mike Harris is the best thing to happen to Ontario and to all the people we serve who sent us here.

Never before has a Premier taken on so many challenges that have led to such significant changes. Mike

yanked us out of an economic tailspin and put us back on track for job creation, debt reduction and economic recovery. Ideas promoted by Harris that are now widely embraced were once considered extreme, in 1995. Mike was right, his critics were wrong and the people of Ontario agreed with him twice, by twice voting in a Harris majority government.

Restructuring helped to create smaller, leaner and more efficient governments, both at the provincial and municipal levels. For example, in my riding, Haldimand and Norfolk residents have now been given their counties back.

I've said it before and I'll say it again—I think my staff in the gallery would agree with this—Harris is the best thing to happen to Ontario in decades.

VISITORS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm pleased to have with me today, paying a Christmas visit, in the members' west gallery a young man, Dan Rowntree, who was my former association chairperson, my former campaign manager and now a budding young lawyer on Bay Street.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today is to every member on the government side of the House. Today is a day you should ask yourself, why did you run for office? Was it to play a game called politics or was it to help the citizens of this province?

In Ontario we have 3,000 citizens who are losing their eyesight because of wet macular degeneration. These are seniors; these are war veterans. Seven of the provinces in Canada fund the treatment for that. It is curable. Your government will not. By simply not making a decision you are in fact making a decision to sentence these 3,000 people to blindness.

You have money for health care ads, but you don't have money for health care. The priorities, as an individual, are something you need to reassess. You have the opportunity now to do the right thing. You have a unique opportunity to make a difference in this province.

We know what your health minister believes and we know what he is doing—nothing. You, as individuals, can make the difference. Tell the minister, tell your neighbours, tell the media where you stand on the funding of macular degeneration. Meet with the individuals who are about to lose the opportunity to see their grandchildren and tell them that you will not fund it like the other provinces—the other provinces that get the same money from Ottawa as this province—and that you will not make a decision.

You truly have a unique opportunity. Do the right thing now. Save your neighbours', your friends' and your relatives' eyesight while you can.

BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey): I had the pleasure of visiting St Mary's Catholic school in Mount Forest to see their breakfast program for students. When I arrived I found six enthusiastic volunteers busy at work preparing a hot breakfast consisting of pizza buns, yoghurt, fruit, juice and milk.

The original intent of this program was to feed 40 to 45 children five days per week. However, in a school of 225 students, they are now feeding an impressive 80 to 100 kids per day. Research has demonstrated that there's a clear link between good nutrition, school performance and behaviour. Kids who don't eat a good breakfast have difficulty learning. They're tired, have a short attention span and have great difficulty solving problems.

Catherine Gorman, a dedicated parent volunteer, coordinates this program at St Mary Catholic school. She became involved after the school council announced they felt there was a definite need for a breakfast program in their community. The program, which is run entirely on donations and volunteers, serves up a combination of hot and cold breakfasts.

The goal of the St Mary's breakfast program is to serve a nutritious breakfast to help students get a positive start to their school day. A well-fed student translates into one who will have a more productive learning day. Many generous donations of products, money and time have helped to make this program a vital part of the school community.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the 18th report of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr25, An Act respecting Nipissing University.

Your committee begs to report the following bills as amended:

Bill Pr21, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa

Bill Pr24, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 125, An Act to improve the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities and to make related amendments to other Acts.

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: Mr Beaubien has moved the adoption of a report from the standing committee on finance and economic affairs regarding Bill 125.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

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

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 39.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Wednesday, November 21, 2001, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS
BROKERS ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LE COURTAGE
COMMERCIAL ET IMMOBILIER

Mr Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to revise the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act and to amend other Acts administered by the same Ministry / Projet de loi 152, Loi révisant la Loi sur le courtage commercial et immobilier et modifiant d'autres lois dont l'application relève du même ministère.

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

The minister for a short statement?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): This bill replaces the current Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, which hasn't been amended for decades. After much consultation, we bring forward today a bill that will (1) increase consumer protection; (2) eliminate red tape and other obstacles to market and allow innovation in the marketplace; and (3) provide a flexible regulatory framework that can be readily adapted to future consumer needs in a changing marketplace.

This is a good bill. I hope that members will look at it, and I hope to have an open debate about it.

SAFETY IN HIGHWAY
CONSTRUCTION ZONES STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SÉCURITÉ
DANS LES ZONES DE CONSTRUCTION
DE LA VOIE PUBLIQUE

Mr Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to improve safety in highway construction zones by amending various Acts to implement the recommendations from the inquest into the death of Dick Van Rooyen / Projet de loi 153, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité dans les zones de construction de la voie publique en modifiant diverses lois pour mettre en oeuvre les recommandations faisant suite à l'enquête sur le décès de Dick Van Rooyen.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): Because of my interest in transportation safety, I'm very pleased to introduce a bill that will specifically enhance the safety

of Ontario highway workers, and therefore the public. My bill will implement recommendations made by the coroner's jury as a result of the inquest into the death of Dick Van Rooyen.

LAND TRANSFER TAX
AMENDMENT ACT, 2001
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES DROITS
DE CESSION IMMOBILIÈRE

Mr Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Land Transfer Tax Act / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits de cession immobilière.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This bill amends the Land Transfer Tax Act to extend the tax rebate that is payable on purchases of newly constructed homes to purchases of resale homes as well.

1400

SUSTAINABLE WATER AND
SEWAGE SYSTEMS ACT, 2001
LOI DE 2001 SUR LA DURABILITÉ
DES RÉSEAUX D'EAU ET D'ÉGOUTS

Mr Hodgson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act respecting the cost of water and waste water services / Projet de loi 155, Loi concernant le coût des services d'approvisionnement en eau et des services relatifs aux eaux usées.

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

The minister for a short statement?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): This is enabling legislation to try to get a better handle on the costs associated with water and all the operating costs associated with that, as well as sewage systems that are regulated. It's to improve the quality of our water in this province.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT
AMENDMENT ACT
(NOISE REMEDIATION), 2001
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT
DES VOIES PUBLIQUES
ET DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN
(RÉDUCTION DU BRUIT)

Mr Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to noise

remediation / Projet de loi 156, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun afin de réduire le bruit.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): This bill amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to require that the ministry assess noise levels on highways after their construction, extension or alteration. Where the noise level exceeds the acceptable levels by five decibels or more, the minister is obliged to take all necessary steps to reduce the noise to an acceptable level within three years. This bill also requires that the minister establish and publish standards for acceptable noise levels for the operation of highways.

This bill complements the extensive work and lobbying that residents in my community of Don Valley East have been doing to remediate the noise increases that have resulted from road repairs and other work on Highway 401, Highway 404 and the Don Valley Parkway, which intersect in the heart of the riding. They've been frustrated by the Ministry of Transportation, who have thrown up their hands when presented with their concerns, saying they have no mandate to solve these problems. With this bill, I know that we'll give it to them.

CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE
IN LIFELONG LEARNING ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 CRÉANT
UN CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE
POUR L'APPRENTISSAGE PERMANENT

Mrs Cunningham moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 157, An Act to amend the Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act / Projet de loi 157, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Office de la télécommunication éducative de l'Ontario.

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

The minister for a short statement?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): The purpose of this bill is to expand the range of flexible, high-quality learning programs offered to Ontario students of all ages. Our goal is to ensure that Ontarians, no matter where they live in our province, have opportunities throughout their lives to gain access to high-quality, relevant learning programs where and when they are needed.

The centre of excellence that will be established if this bill is passed by the Legislature will align the content expertise in elementary and secondary distance education programs provided by the Independent Learning Centre and the new media expertise available at the Ontario Educational Communications Authority.

The centre would be a first step in responding to a key recommendation outlined in the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board report, A Road Map to Prosperity, which called for a commitment to lifelong learning through the creation of a distance education network in Ontario. It would also be a further step in fulfilling our government's commitment to give every willing and qualified student access to an education so that they may later succeed in their chosen field.

CONSUMER REPORTING
AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS
CONCERNANT LE CONSOMMATEUR

Mr Cordiano moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 158, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act / Projet de loi 158, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): This bill addresses inadequacies in consumer credit reporting legislation. It provides consumers with greater protection, first by increasing the accountability of credit reporting agencies; second, by providing consumers better access to information that might be used against them; and, finally, by ensuring that consumers are not penalized every time a credit check is conducted.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(PASSENGER VEHICLES), 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(VÉHICULES SERVANT
AU TRANSPORT DE PASSAGERS)

Mr Gill moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to passenger vehicles / Projet de loi 159, Loi modifiant le Code de la route à l'égard des véhicules servant au transport de passagers.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Illegal taxi, limousine and minibus operators operate from the airport, from Union Station and from other places. These illegal vehicles are known as "scoopers." These scoopers pick up passengers at the airport without taxi licences, without insurance and without regard for their passengers. This bill would protect the public and combat this lawless behaviour.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA PROTECTION
DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

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

Bill 160, An Act to regulate the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and biosolids / Projet de loi 160, Loi réglementant l'épandage et le stockage des boues d'épuration et des matières sèches biologiques.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): This bill, if passed, would provide for the regulation of the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and other biosolids. The environmental impact of the use, spreading and storage of paper sludge and biosolids has not only been of concern to my constituents in Durham but it has been raised in the House this past week. I have worked with the municipal and regional levels of government in Durham, along with the group Protect the Ridges in Durham, and this issue has not been solved in a year and a half.

The real concern of my constituents is the reason I represent this issue here in the House today. Paper sludge, SoundSorb and biosolids have environmental impacts that must be analyzed, monitored and controlled by the Ministry of the Environment through the Environmental Protection Act.

ABOLITION OF THE ONTARIO
MUNICIPAL BOARD ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ABOLITION
DE LA COMMISSION DES AFFAIRES
MUNICIPALES DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act to restore local control over planning by involving citizens and ensuring decisions are made by democratically elected officials / Projet de loi 161, Loi rétablissant un contrôle local de l'aménagement du territoire par la participation des citoyens et veillant à la prise des décisions par des représentants élus démocratiquement.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): This bill provides that the government of Ontario has a duty to strengthen planning in the province and should exercise that duty by ensuring there is local control over planning decisions and by considering the abolition of the Ontario Municipal Board, which is unelected, unaccountable and totally out of control, and bringing back local democracy and local say over planning, taking it away from the Ontario Municipal Board.

1410

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin motions, we have in the east members' gallery Mr Doug Rollins, the member for Quinte in the 36th Parliament, and Mr Harry Danford, the member for Hastings-Peterborough in the 36th Parliament. Please join me in welcoming our colleagues.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to introduce a motion that would extend the calendar of the Legislature to include next week and January to consider all of the important government bills that were introduced today.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): This past spring, in 21 steps into the 21st century, we presented our plan to keep Ontario strong, to protect the gains of the past and to prepare Ontario for new challenges. It is a detailed, comprehensive plan, but a plan with a simple message: government exists to serve the people, to create the conditions that will improve the lives of all people. This message is the foundation of our 21-step plan for this session.

It is a driving force behind everything we've worked so hard to achieve for six and half years, and it is the reason that I entered politics. Today, I will report on the progress we've made and the promises that we've kept.

Earlier this year, the North American economy entered a cycle of slower growth. The terrible events of September 11 made the situation much more serious here in Ontario and all around the world. Most private sector forecasters now expect only marginal economic growth this year. Although they predict much stronger growth in the future, it is clear that we must prepare for the serious fiscal challenge that we all face for 2002-03.

It would be irresponsible to spend money we don't have. The people of Ontario know that and we know that. We continue to demonstrate the same resolve, the same determination and the same fiscal responsibility that we always have. We will live within our means, we will not mortgage our children's future and we will not run a deficit.

Tough choices and strong leadership are needed today more than ever: tough choices to protect the progress that we've made; tough choices to keep government spending in line with lower revenues; and tough choices to ensure

that Ontario emerges from this economic cycle stronger and even more prosperous than ever.

I've always believed that the best way to improve the lives of the people of Ontario is to strengthen the economy. A strong economy creates jobs so hard-working people can provide for their families. A strong economy gives government the resources it needs so that it can invest in priorities like health care and education and community safety.

The first step of our plan is to remove barriers to jobs and investment and growth, and there is perhaps no greater barrier than high taxes. This fall we accelerated our promised cuts to personal income taxes, to corporate income taxes and to capital taxes that were scheduled to come into effect on January 1, 2002. When our personal income tax cuts are complete, a family of four with a combined income of \$60,000 from two earners will have \$2,345 more each and every year than without our tax cuts. This is money that can be invested or used for new appliances or a family vacation or whatever they choose to do with their money. This money belongs to Ontario families; it does not belong to the Ontario government.

On January 1, 2003, new tax cuts are scheduled to come into effect. These will include cuts to personal, small-business and corporate taxes. Although the cost to government of the next step—in the fiscal year 2002-03—of the corporate tax cuts is only \$20 million in the next fiscal year, it sends an important signal to job-creating companies that we will continue to make Ontario a competitive tax jurisdiction, and that they can invest and can hire even more employees with confidence.

We've always believed that government ownership of commercial businesses is not in the best interests of taxpayers. We decided long ago that it was time for a new strategy for Ontario's electricity sector, a strategy that would give customers more choice, guarantee a safe, reliable supply of electricity, protect the environment and encourage innovation.

According to the Independent Electricity Market Operator and the Ontario Energy Board, the strategy is indeed working. As we promised, the market will be opened to competition this spring. We're planning to announce the exact date of market opening before Christmas.

We have a bold, historic plan to encourage investment in Ontario and increase efficiency in the energy sector. As part of this plan, today I am pleased to announce that we have instructed SuperBuild to privatize Hydro One. This will be accomplished through an initial public offering, or IPO. Later today the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Finance and I will be announcing more details. Through the Ontario Energy Board, we will continue to provide strong regulation of the energy sector to ensure that the market is fair and open and that customers receive the benefits of competition.

The old Hydro monopoly left a legacy of \$21 billion in stranded debt. That debt needs to be paid down. It is the responsible thing to do for a government, for the rate-payers and for the future of electricity growth and invest-

ment in this province. We have committed that all proceeds from the sale will remain in the electricity sector and will accelerate the paydown of that stranded debt.

We've kept the promise we made in step 2 of our plan by making the largest debt reduction in Ontario's history: \$3.1 billion in the last fiscal year. For the third year in a row, we presented a balanced budget.

I'm very proud of what our government has accomplished, particularly when it comes to balancing the need to protect Ontario's natural resources with the need to encourage future growth and create jobs.

We have introduced legislation that would, if passed, create the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp to help ensure that our vision for the waterfront of Toronto, our capital city, is realized.

1420

We're developing a Smart Growth vision and implementing Smart Growth panels that will promote and manage growth in ways that will strengthen the economy, build strong communities and create a healthy environment.

As part of step 9, we promised legislation to make it easier to clean up abandoned or contaminated land known as brownfields. On October 31 we passed that legislation.

We promised a long-term plan to protect the Oak Ridges moraine, and on November 1 we kept that promise, bringing the total amount of land that we've protected since 1995 to more than three million hectares or four million football fields.

Today we introduced legislation that would help ensure that Ontario's water services are safe and sustainable for future generations. If passed, this legislation would ensure that municipalities have the resources they need to ensure that their water and sewer infrastructure is modern and well maintained. This is another step in Operation Clean Water, our government's comprehensive action plan to improve water quality and delivery in Ontario.

We're also planning for Ontario's future transportation needs. To reduce gridlock and protect our environment, we announced our \$9-billion transit plan on September 27. We have kept our promise. So have the municipalities kept their promise. Now it's Ottawa's turn to honour their promise.

I believe that all Ontario children deserve the best quality start in life and a quality education that gives them the skills they need to succeed in a job and to succeed in life. Starting next year, parents will have more choice when it comes to their children's education. Parents who send their children to independent schools will be eligible for a tax credit of up to \$700, which will reach a maximum of 50% of tuition, or \$3,500, by 2006.

As promised, this fall we launched our first annual education survey, asking every parent in the province to tell us what we can do to further improve Ontario's education system. We introduced legislation that would establish a qualifying test for new teachers. If passed, it would also set new province-wide performance standards and help principals to do regular, fair and consistent performance appraisals of teachers' classroom skills. These

measures are vital to ensuring that Ontario's teachers have the up-to-date skills they need to help our students succeed.

This government's commitment to Ontario's health care system is unparalleled. Since 1995 we have increased health care spending by more than \$6 billion. This year alone we will spend more than \$23.7 billion.

To ensure that Ontario families have access to professional health advice and information, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we have expanded Telehealth Ontario, a service we began in 1999, to every community across Ontario, just as we promised. Now parents who wake up in the middle of the night with a sick child can speak to a registered nurse, any day, any time.

To improve the recruitment of physicians to undersupplied areas of the province, we have increased medical training opportunities in these communities. This includes the creation of a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school, the first new medical school in Ontario in 30 years. And we're creating two new rural regional training networks, in southwestern and south central Ontario. We're increasing enrolment in medical schools by 30% compared with 1999 levels and we're expanding our training program for doctors who are educated abroad. We've also launched a program to assess foreign-trained doctors and enable them to practise in Ontario. In return, they will commit to practising in the underserved communities.

Steps 15 and 16 of our plan relate to improving Ontario's health care system. That requires leadership, leadership at the provincial level and leadership at the federal level. We understand that, but apparently Ottawa does not. Since 1995, 90% of Ontario's new spending, or \$6 billion, has gone to health care. But once again, in Monday's budget, the federal government failed to keep its health care promise to the people of Canada. It failed to make health care its number one funding priority. It failed to listen to Canadians from coast to coast who have said loud and clear that health care is their number one priority. Instead, the federal Liberals spent billions and didn't commit a single penny of new funding for health care: no national home care plan, as they promised, no national pharmacare plan, as they promised, and not one new cent for the provinces to provide these programs that they promised and failed to deliver on.

The events of September 11 reminded us that we must never take the safety and the security of Ontario's families for granted. Following the events of that terrible day, we acted swiftly and decisively to protect the people of Ontario. We appointed two new security advisers, retired Major-General Lewis MacKenzie and former RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster, who are providing strategic advice on Ontario's emergency readiness. We announced new training facilities for our police, firefighters and ambulance personnel. We'll invest more than \$30 million in counterterrorism and emergency management measures. We will not let the terrorists win by jeopardizing the safety or the prosperity of Ontario's families.

When I became Premier, I had very high hopes for the people of Ontario. I hoped for more jobs, more people off of welfare, more efficient government, more students who could read, write and do math, more parks, more long-term-care beds, more help for new parents. Many of these hopes have been realized in the last six and a half years.

But these accomplishments do not belong to us alone. These accomplishments belong to the people of Ontario. They belong to the entrepreneurs who seized opportunities and created all those new jobs. They belong to the parents who joined parent councils, the teachers who tackled the new curriculum and inspired their students to achieve even more. They belong to the more than 600,000 welfare recipients who turned their lives around. They belong to the doctors and the nurses who worked long hours to provide excellent care.

Like people all across Ontario, we still have high hopes for the future. Like we have for the last six and a half years, we'll keep working hard to create an even brighter future for all of our citizens, to make the tough decisions that will secure the gains we've made together. And like we have from that very first day in 1995, we will keep our promises to the people of Ontario.

1430

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I really appreciated the Premier's revisionist review of the past year, but I think it's time for a bit of a reality check. Let's just take a moment to take stock and see just where we are in Ontario after another year of Tory government.

First of all, deficits are actually making a comeback in Ontario; the education system is failing our children; health care is in need of reform and more funding, but this government refuses to make it a priority; and the environment has been ravaged and this government refuses to accept any amount of responsibility for what happened in connection with the Walkerton tragedy.

Let's just start for a moment and take a look at the government finances. I think a very important question that Ontario's families are asking themselves today is, after six and a half years of unprecedented economic boom, six years of uninterrupted growth, something that hasn't happened since the Second World War, how can it be that after this we're staring into the face of a \$5-billion deficit? I'll tell you why. This government has grossly mismanaged the provincial finances. They have added in excess of \$20 billion to the debt. They borrowed \$10 billion for a tax cut that is costing us \$800 million a year in interest payments. This government squandered a rare opportunity to put us into a position so that we might be able to weather a recession. Now the government is saying, once again, that working families will have to pay the price of their mismanagement. This is going to mean more cuts to health care, more cuts to education, less protection for the environment, more tuition fees for our kids and more and more user fees. That is this government's plan as a result of their gross mismanagement of the government's finances.

Let's take a look at where we are when it comes to education after six and a half painful years: one half of our children are failing to meet the basic standard in reading, writing and mathematics; one third of our grade 10 students are failing the literacy test; one quarter of our grade 9 students were unable to complete the basic course load; we have crowded classrooms; we have a shortage of textbooks; we have families who are involved in fundraising for basic supplies at school, including textbooks; we have 35,000 children who have special learning needs which are going unmet because they simply can't get their first psychological assessment; we have, of course, demoralized teachers who have been used as political punching bags for the last six and a half years. And the plan to deal with all of this crisis created by this government? Well, the plan involves putting a billion dollars into private schools.

I can tell you that we have another plan when it comes to supporting public education. We think we should have smaller classes; we believe in public school choice; we believe in choice within the public system; we believe in turnaround teams; and we believe in lighthouse schools. That would be our priority when it comes to public education.

When it comes to the matter of health care, I'm not sure I could tell any story more compelling, more telling, than the story I told yesterday about Mrs Marie Thurston. This is a woman, 72 years of age, widowed 28 years, who raised three children on her own and worked day in and day out as a store clerk in a small Ontario community. She's gone blind in her left eye. She's losing sight in her right eye. There's a treatment that's available—that's the good news. It turns out it's available in seven other Canadian provinces. In this province, our Ontario, after six and a half years we apparently have enough money for another \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts, we have enough money for half a billion dollars in private schools, we have a quarter of a billion dollars to spend on partisan political advertising, but in this Ontario, yes, in Mike Harris's Ontario—so that we don't get caught up in this revisionist perspective of what this man has really been all about during the last six and a half years—in this man's Ontario we don't have money for Visudyne, the treatment that is necessary to help save Mrs Thurston's sight.

That is the legacy of this government. Let's not lose sight of Mrs Thurston and others like her who have been counting on this government for the last six and a half years to protect their interests and to defend their needs and the needs of their families.

This government has let working families down. They haven't protected their schools, they've attacked their schools, and they've now abandoned public education and said, "Go to private schools." They haven't defended health care. Now we've got the man who's seeking the job of Premier saying, "I'm going to take another half-billion dollars out of the health care budget."

This is a government that has refused to stand up for working families. I can tell you, we are looking forward to taking on that responsibility.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want to respond to—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Hamilton East, come to order, please.

Set the clock back, if you could, to five minutes. Thank you.

Sorry for the interruption. The leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: The Premier has said that it would be irresponsible to spend money we don't have. Perhaps the Premier can tell the people across Ontario this: how is your government going to give away \$2.4 billion in corporate tax cuts this year, another billion dollars in personal income tax reductions to the well-off, and \$300 million in tax breaks for private schools when you yourself admit you don't have the money?

To find the money to finance that, as we all know, you're now going to cut more out of the education system, you're going to cut more out of environmental protection, and you're going to deregulate and push up tuition fees for those students who want to go to university.

What we have is not an agenda that is helping people. What we have is an agenda that repeatedly has made available tax cuts to corporations, no matter what their profit level, tax cuts to the well-off and tax breaks for your special interest friends, while the environment of this province is put at risk every day, with the reminder of that from Walkerton and the reminder from the Provincial Auditor's report that said even food safety in this province is now at risk because of cuts and reductions and privatization. There is the plight of municipalities, which have no idea how they're going to pay for the cost of services that have been downloaded by your government, and meanwhile they have no new revenue. Finally, there are the poorest in this province, who now face an affordable housing crisis, not just in Toronto but in Ottawa, in Hamilton, in London, even in small cities like Peterborough and Guelph.

This is a story about a government that has repeatedly helped the well-off and the corporate friends, the people who don't need help, at the expense of the services and the public assets that matter to every person across this province.

I want to spend a few minutes on the privatization of Hydro. I want to say very clearly to people across this province that what the sell-off of our Hydro system means is this: electricity that has been produced in Ontario and that in the past was sold at cost is now overwhelmingly going to be exported to the United States, where corporations are prepared to pay twice the price we have paid in Ontario. What that means for Ontario's industries and what it means for Ontario's consumers is this: we will now be paying New York prices or Boston

prices, twice what we've been paying now, or we will not have access to our own electricity.

If you work in a steel mill, imagine what it's like when the electricity bill for that steel mill goes up by 100%, yet you don't get any more for the price of the steel; or if you work in a pulp and paper mill, imagine what it means when the price goes up by 100%, but you don't get any more for the pulp and paper; or if you're an ordinary consumer and you've been paying \$1,000 or \$1,500 a year for electricity and suddenly you get the bill in the next year, the next two years that says you're paying \$3,000. All of this government's hogwash about tax cuts is not going to help you pay the electricity bill, and for people who lose their jobs as a result of this, how do you get a tax cut when you don't have a job? That is going to be, and that is already, the reality for too many people.

As we saw here today, it is not just the privatization of our electricity system that's going to happen; this government has introduced legislation that will permit it to privatize our municipal water and sewer facilities as well. People need to know that this is not a new experiment; this was done in Great Britain. Once the water systems were privatized, the private companies that became the new owners automatically pushed up the rates by 100%, 150%. People who lived in lower-income or modest-income neighbourhoods suddenly found that they were not getting quality drinking water. In fact, the British Medical Association, after the privatization of water systems in Britain, routinely every year wrote letters to the then Conservative government pointing out that since the privatization of water had happened, drinking water had become the number one source of infectious disease and the number one source of public health problems in Great Britain.

This government is all about private provision, but people had better understand that the privatization of water, of electricity, of schools and health care is going to cost all of us a lot more. It always has, it always does and it always will.

DEFERRED VOTES

QUALITY IN THE CLASSROOM ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA QUALITÉ DANS LES SALLES DE CLASSE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote quality in the classroom / *Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir la qualité dans les salles de classe.*

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1442 to 1447.

The Speaker: Could the members take their seats for the vote, please.

Mr Dunlop has moved third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote quality in the classroom.

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

Ayes

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

The Speaker: All those 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	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony	Sorbara, Greg

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 52; the nays are 39.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

VISITORS

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask you and all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me today in welcoming three guests who have travelled from the town of Greenstone to be with us today. They are Mayor Charlie Primeau, Councillor Gord Williams and the chief administrative officer, Roy Sinclair.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It's not a point of order, just as if I were to introduce my mayor, who's in the members' gallery, Ann Mulvale from Oakville.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I too would like to welcome two guests from my riding, Mr Bruno Mettel and Mr Leo Mettel.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek the unanimous consent of the House to call forward private member's motion number 19, which is a non-partisan joint resolution for all members, regardless of party, on the condition that the Burmese people have related on their human rights and democracy. I believe there is a member of each party who's prepared to speak to this, and I would recommend that up to five minutes be given to each of those members.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard a no.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to introduce everybody in the gallery who hasn't been introduced so far.

The Speaker: That probably doesn't leave too many folks.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Finance. This morning the cabinet met once again to consider your plans for sending half a billion public dollars into private schools. We believe your private school voucher is a huge mistake. We believe it's going to cause still more harm to public education. Let me be very clear: as Premier, I will scrap your private school tax credit. I choose to use that money in public education.

Minister, how can you possibly justify giving half a billion dollars to private schools, when our province faces such tremendous needs in public education?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I'm interested that the member opposite is opposed to the equity-in-education tax credit. Mr Sorbara of his party, who sits in the front row over there, apparently supports it. I'm sure that eventually the Liberals on the other side of the House, at least by election time, will sort out who believes in what and let the people of Ontario know whether they should believe Mr McGuinty from Ottawa or Mr Sorbara from Vaughan-King-Aurora. The people of Ontario can try to figure out what the position of the Liberal Party of Ontario is on that issue.

We believe in fairness. We believe in choice. We believe that if parents choose to spend on all their property taxes, to pay their taxes, to pay their income taxes, to fully fund the public system, then if they choose to go into their pockets and mainly for religious or cultural reasons choose, pursuant to their values, to send their children to an alternative school, to a private school, then they're entitled to receive some credit for doing that. That, we think, is reasonable. That, we think, is parental choice. The funding—

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

Mr McGuinty: Minister, I can tell you that I have been crystal clear throughout on this issue, unlike the Minister of Education and unlike the Premier, who have performed flip-flops of Olympian proportions on this matter.

If you want to talk about choice, then let's talk about the choice that 97% of Ontario parents would like to make. They want to choose strong public education. They choose having enough textbooks in the classroom for their kids. They choose having classrooms that aren't overcrowded. They choose having teachers who feel valued, because they do a better job for their kids. That's the kind of choice that Ontario parents want to make. So I ask you again, on behalf of the 97% of Ontarians who are choosing public education, notwithstanding your consistent and relentless attacks on it during the last six and a half years, I ask on behalf of them, why are you taking half a billion dollars and putting it into private schools?

Hon Mr Flaherty: Let me help the member opposite with his arithmetic, if you'd like to look at it another way. The maximum amount of the tax credit five years out will be \$3,500 per annum. The average cost of educating students in our school system is \$6,000 to \$7,000 per annum. If we take all of the children who are in private school today and move them into our public school systems—he can do the arithmetic. What does he think that will cost the taxpayers of Ontario?

Mr McGuinty: I'm not sure what that was, but it was hardly a rational, intelligent and logical defence of the policy which he so embraces. I can understand why he wants to back away from it. Let's just put this on the record once and for all. This government has, for the past six and a half years, attacked public education, undermined confidence in public education, used teachers as political punching bags, and our kids have paid the price.

What you're doing now through this private school tax credit is saying, "Listen, we give up on public education. We're inviting you now, parents of Ontario, to abandon public education." I'm telling Ontario parents that we're on their side. We're on the side of public education. We'll continue to fight for public education. We're going to scrap your private school tax credit.

I ask you once again, Minister: understanding the state of public education as it is, understanding what you have done to public education, keeping in mind the sage wisdom that came forth from the Minister of Education and the Premier himself before when they said this would be a bad thing for public education, knowing all of that, how can you still insist on taking half a billion dollars and putting it into private schools?

Hon Mr Flaherty: Just as in health care funding, Mr McGuinty is out of step with Canadians. The majority of Canadian people—in Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia—have access to private school funding. That's a majority of Canadians. With this initiative by the Ontario government, now more than 90% of Canadian families will have access to some kind

of support when they send their children to an alternate school. That's the majority view in Canada.

It's also the majority view in Canada—in fact, it's the united view across Canada—that you're wrong and the federal Liberals are wrong in your failure to fund health care adequately across the country. You're wrong in two important areas: education and health care, the two fundamental areas to the people of Canada. We believe in freedom, we believe in choice, we believe in fairness to all parents—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the associate minister of health. I want to return to a very important issue, a matter I raised yesterday in this Legislature in connection with Mrs Marie Thurston. Today we are joined in the gallery by 12 members of Ontario families who are here because they or someone they love are going blind. They're here because you won't fund the treatment that is funded in seven other provinces. Can you tell me, Madam Minister, and more specifically tell Ontario families and these 12 people today, why saving their vision is not a priority for this government?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): Let me say that, of course, any health care in the province of Ontario is a priority of this government. Our government understands the concerns of people and families who are living with macular degeneration and the struggles they face. That's why this government has asked the Ministry of Health to look into what we can do, to investigate options to make this treatment available. The treatment is complex, as everyone in this House knows. It involves physician supervision, it involves laser therapy, it involves drugs. We're looking at the efficacy of the drugs, we're looking at the human resources we have in the province. We continue to work for the people of Ontario to ensure they get quality care. That's our goal and we're going to continue to do that.

1500

Mr McGuinty: This is the government that was going to get rid of red tape. This is the government that can react in a split second when it comes to attacking the federal government and putting out ads in newspapers right across the province. This drug has been approved by Health Canada. It was approved by your own expert drug panel. We're talking here about an issue of fundamental importance. It means everything to these people in their daily lives. We're talking about a simple treatment that is funded by seven other provinces that all share the same federal government.

I ask you, Madam Minister, why is it that in this Ontario, in Mike Harris's Ontario, we don't have money to fund this treatment to save our parents and grandparents from going blind, but we've got \$2.2 billion for tax cuts?

Hon Mrs Johns: The member opposite knows this government has invested more dollars in health care than any other government. We provide more services than any other government. We continue to ensure that the people—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order, please. Sorry, associate minister of health.

Hon Mrs Johns: We care about the people of Ontario, especially the seniors of Ontario. That's why we have continued to put 90% of the dollars we've invested in the province into health care. That's why this government, led by Mike Harris, is asking the Ministry of Health to look at this again. As I said before, the treatment is complex. It involves physician supervision and laser therapy. It involves drugs. We're looking at it to ensure we can provide the people of Ontario with the care they need, because in Ontario—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, I want to introduce you to these people so you'll understand who it is you are affecting by your refusal to fund a treatment that is funded in seven other provinces. We have here Mrs Robinson, Mr Bater, Mrs Andrews, Mrs Evens, Mrs Johns, Mrs Alliance, Mr Goldberg and Mrs Kefler. These people are either losing their sight or someone they love is losing their sight.

Seeing in Ontario should not be some kind of option that you may or may not decide to elect, depending on how you feel at the time. These people can only look to you. They can't afford the treatment. If they could afford the treatment on their own, they'd go get it and they'd have it done. But they can't afford the treatment, so they're looking to you in government. They have had nothing to do with government in the past. They are here today because they need your help. They're asking you to fund this treatment. All I'm doing is putting this case before you.

Premier, you have an opportunity now. This is an important part of your legacy. You could decide that you're going to fund this treatment. Your minister has refused to do so. The associate minister has not made any positive remarks at all. It's now up to you. I ask you, Premier, to do the right thing and fund this treatment.

Hon Mrs Johns: I can't stress enough that this province is continuing to invest in as many health services as we can. Like every government across every province, we are trying to invest money as quickly as we can in the health care system. Let me say that in communities such as mine, when there is a problem that isn't covered yet by OHIP, my community comes to the aid of these people and helps people, to ensure they get the money they need, such as my Rotary Club or my Lions Club. I'm happy to work with these people to ensure that happens.

Let me say again that it's the goal of this government to work with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to ensure we get everyone involved so that we can provide—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry, associate minister of health. The member for Sudbury, come to order, please.

Hon Mrs Johns: This government is investigating this with the Ministry of Health. We're working with health professionals across the province. We're looking at the efficacy of the drug. We're looking to see the validity of the laser therapy. We care about—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. You've indicated today that your government is going to privatize Hydro One through an initial public offering. In other words, you're going to turn it into a completely privatized company.

One of the financial advisers to Hydro has said that this privatization of Hydro would allow the company to become a significant electricity exporter, that the focus of Hydro One would be to take electricity produced in Ontario and export it into states in the United States. If that is the model that your government has chosen—to export power to New York state, to export power to Boston, to Chicago, to Detroit—you must recognize that the power rates in those jurisdictions are much higher than they are in Ontario. You must recognize that if the goal is now to sell our power into those markets, then Ontario consumers are going to be told, “You either pay the same price that they're paying in New York or Boston, or we're simply going to export more power there and make less electricity available here.” Are you prepared to tell the consumers of Ontario now that that's what your strategy means?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Let me just make sure the member understands a couple of things. First of all, Hydro One doesn't sell power. Hydro One is not in the business of selling power. Hydro One for the most part, and the part that I think most are referring to with the IPO, is a transmission company, and through this IPO, instead of it being a government monopoly, it will be a private sector monopoly. As such, it will be fully regulated by the Ontario Energy Board and by the IMO, which both have a mandate to not only protect Ontarians on rates but to protect Ontarians on supply. Let me assure you that Hydro One does not generate and does not sell electricity and therefore is unlikely to be applying for an export licence to do so.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you can argue with the vice-president for communications at the company, who has said that the mode you have chosen to privatize, through an IPO, means very clearly that they are going to become an export-focused company. The same financial adviser, Stanley Hartt, has said, “Companies will not make an investment in Ontario power or risk ownership if they can't export the energy to the United States,” and that's why he is in favour of the route you have chosen.

So all the financial advisers to Hydro One have been saying that this is an export-oriented concept, that it is about taking Ontario electricity and transmitting it to the

United States and selling it there. If that is the case, you must acknowledge that Ontario prices are going to rise to the level they're at in New York. If all the financial advisers to Hydro One, all those people who have been in the business pages of the *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and the *Star*, are saying this and are saying that's going to be the net result, will you at least now admit to the consumers of Ontario that that's going to be the case?

Hon Mr Harris: As I tried to explain to the member, who doesn't seem to understand the electricity industry, Hydro One does not generate or have power to sell, so they will not be selling and exporting power. There would be no reason for them to get an export licence. I can tell you, those who might have power to sell and wish to sell to markets other than Ontario would first of all have to apply for an export licence, which is controlled by the federal government. I assume that would not be granted unless domestic needs are met. Secondly, it would have to get the approval of the IMO, which has a mandate to make sure that we are able to get electricity to Ontarians. Third, it would have to have the approval of the Ontario Energy Board, which has a mandate to ensure that the price is competitive here in Ontario.

So for the second time, I can guarantee you that Hydro One will not be exporting electricity. That's not their business.

1510

Mr Hampton: Premier, this is another financial commentator, who says, "The other option, the not-for-profit option which would have maintained control here in Ontario, would have prevented Hydro One from building the transmission corridors to the United States and exporting electricity. It would have boxed Ontario's electricity into Ontario. This would help preserve the made-in-Ontario price, now lower than those found in neighbouring American states, which would be good for Ontario's industry and Ontario consumers."

Premier, if all the financial advisers to Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation and all the financial commentators are saying this is all about taking electricity produced in Ontario, selling it in the United States at a much higher price, and Ontario consumers will either have to pay that much higher price or simply do without their electricity, if they all admit that's the game, why can't you be honest about it and admit that's the strategy, that's the concept and that's what's going to happen?

Hon Mr Harris: The member does not seem to be aware that the mandate of the IMO—and there would have to be an application by a government monopoly or by a private sector monopoly for any new transmission that is built—and the job of the IMO is to ensure the best interests of Ontarians are looked after. That's the same whether it's a government monopoly or a private sector monopoly. There is an interest among the government monopoly—as you know, when you were in office, when the Liberals were in office, and now when we are in office, if we had surplus power, we would want to export it and sell it and make a profit so that we could keep the cost lower here in Ontario.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Education. Today your government decided that you are going to extend public funding to private schools and you decided on the level of financing. Can you tell the people of Ontario how this can happen at a time when there are 37,000 special-needs students in the public education system in Ontario who are not funded under the education funding formula, how you can say to those 37,000 students who are not funded for special education that they don't matter, but at the same time you're going to make available \$300 million to support private schools in Ontario?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I'd be quite happy to provide the honourable member with a briefing on how we fund education, but special-needs children are indeed covered under how we fund education. There is an increase in financial supports for those students, as there should be, because they need those supports. The honourable member is in error. They are indeed funded.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you might want to provide that explanation, for example, to the Keewatin-Patricia board, where the special-ed assistants right now are out on strike because the board has said to them that they simply do not have the money, that they are not funded under the education funding formula such that every child who needs special education can in fact be funded for it. Or you might want to talk to the Rainy River District School Board, which wrote to you earlier and pointed out the same thing, or the Thunder Bay board or a number of boards across the province that point out they simply do not receive the money through the education funding formula that allows them to fully cover the needs of special-ed students.

At the same time, your government is going to make available \$300 million in taxpayers' money to private schools. That's the issue. How can you underfund those students who need help the most, who need assistance the most, who deserve your help, and at the same time extend funding to private schools to the tune of \$300 million a year? Explain that to their parents.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Not one cent of public education money is being used for anything else. Let's be very clear about that. Second, funding for public education is a priority for this government. It is why we are spending \$13.8 billion, more than the honourable member's government was spending when they were in power, increases above and beyond enrolment. Last year there were increases of over \$300 million. This year we have increases of over \$300 million, of \$360 million. So we have continued to invest new monies in public education because it is indeed a priority.

As I said, I'd be very happy to provide the honourable member with details and information about how school boards are indeed funded for special-needs services for children. There's been a 17% increase in the level of that funding, but we're also in the process of putting stan-

dards in place because what we are finding when we hear from parents is that the services that boards are providing are varying from student to student—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up. A point of order? Stop the clock. Very quickly, because I'm going to be very quick, please.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Minister of Energy is supposed to be here. We were told he would be here and our question is for the Minister of Energy.

The Speaker: We'll stop the clock. He is here.
Interjections.

The Speaker: Easy, folks. People do go out a little bit. We'll find him. Here he is. Everything's all settled.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, today we learned for the first time in this Legislature of your government's plans to privatize Hydro One through an initial public offering. I want to go back to something said in this Legislature in 1993 by one Mike Harris. He said, "We would like this assurance that before there is any proposal to fire-sale agencies or divisions of Ontario Hydro, there will be a full debate in this Legislature and full disclosure so that we can ensure that it's not just a fire sale to try and grab some dollars to shore up your treasury, but that in fact it's in the interests of Ontarians."

I think that the Premier then made eminent good sense; I think we should have a full debate. I think Ontarians should have a full understanding of exactly what your plans are. I'm wondering, Minister, why it is that you are depriving us of the opportunity to have a full debate over this initial public offering.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): I feel sorry for the honourable member. He's missed the debate over the last four or five years in this province.

We on this side of the House have been actively involved in making good changes to the electricity system to protect consumers, to make sure we never rack up that debt that your party and the NDP did nothing about when you were in office, and to make sure we don't become a California, where there's not enough supply.

After the mismanagement over the years of the old Ontario Hydro and the old monopoly, we certainly can't go out and borrow money any more. We owe \$38 billion from that old monopoly, so we have to welcome in the private sector to help us build new generating plants and new wires in the province. It makes eminent sense to everyone. I hope it makes sense to the honourable member.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, there has been no debate in this Legislature about the future of Hydro One and it would be wrong for you to say otherwise. There has been no such debate in this Legislature or before a committee. We learned more recently through speculation in the newspapers about some consideration for future plans for

Hydro One. This represents a very important and fundamental change in terms of how we deal with the wires in Ontario. You know, Minister, how fundamental a change this is. You know this represents a decided departure from what we've had in the past. All I'm asking for is the opportunity to bring Ontarians into the loop so that we might debate this thoroughly in this Legislature. That's what Mike Harris said back in 1993. He was right then and I am right now, and you know it. Why can't we have this debate in this Legislature?

Hon Mr Wilson: Mike Harris made a commitment in 1993 and he fulfilled that commitment in 1995 when we started this process. You may recall that there was a white paper put out some four years ago which spelled out the government's intentions to restructure the electricity sector. Just prior to that, Mr Speaker, in case he only listens to Liberals or something, five years ago the Honourable Donald Macdonald, the former federal Liberal finance minister, did a royal commission which led to the development of the white paper. Actually, Donald Macdonald wanted to divide up the old Ontario Hydro into small little bits and sell it off immediately.

We've taken five years to do it right and to protect the people of Ontario and to make sure that we have a wonderful future for jobs, the lowest possible electricity rates and no more boondoggles like \$38 billion worth of debt, which is unconscionable for any government to leave behind and which mortgages the future. We have a plan. It has been out there since Donald Macdonald five years ago, the white paper four years ago, and there's been lots of debate.

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

1520

REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. I was pleased earlier today that you introduced a bill proposing changes to the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. I can't miss this opportunity to mention that consumer protection is a top priority for you—I know that personally—for this government and certainly for Brett Puckrin from the Durham Region Real Estate Board as well as Cail Maclean, Ted McCracken, among many who are very interested in consumer protection. However, I think there has been a lot of debate regarding lawyers and their role in selling real estate. Minister, can you tell us if in fact lawyers can sell real estate in the province of Ontario?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I think it's important to get this particular part of this relationship out into the public. Presently, there are two parties involved in the sale of real estate. There is the profession of lawyers and there is the real estate industry.

The real estate industry, run by brokers and the people who work for the brokers, shows the property, usually

draws up the agreement and follows a number of rules to which there are, under this new act, significantly increased penalties. The lawyers close the transaction, they look at the title and that kind of thing. But outside of that, too, lawyers have the ability to buy or sell real estate if a client walks into their office and says, "I want you to act on my behalf."

So this act doesn't really change the historic relationship between the real estate brokers and our legal profession.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you for that response, Minister. I know a great deal of consultation has gone into the development of this legislation, and I'm sure the legal community has had time to express their concerns with you personally.

I've heard from the legal community as well, and they have told me they have always been able to sell real estate. They're concerned that under this new legislation they would be unable to operate as real estate agents unless of course they're registered. Minister, how would you respond to their concerns as legal professionals selling real estate in this province?

Hon Mr Sterling: There is a small number of lawyers in Ontario who wanted to not only act on behalf of clients or act in terms of buying and selling real estate which was incidental to their principal cause for dealing with a client but wanted to also act as a broker at the same time.

Under the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, there are a number of protections for the consumer that are not there with regard to the legal profession. So therefore we believe that if a lawyer would like to sell real estate as a broker, they should become a broker as well as becoming a lawyer. There's nothing to prevent that from happening.

I want to make it clear that this act allows a lawyer to buy and sell property on behalf of a client as long as it's incidental to his legal business, which has really been the historic case here in Ontario with regard to the legal profession.

HOUSING POLICY

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Premier. It is with respect to a private bill—not a private member's bill but a private bill—brought by the city of Toronto which I have sponsored before the private bills committee.

The bill received unanimous support from city council two years ago. That was the democratic way. It then was the subject of negotiations between the city and the Ministry of Housing for some two years. It went to the private bills committee. There was a full debate, as much debate if not more than every other private bill that is before this House. The Ministry of Housing indicated that it did not oppose the bill. It passed the private bills committee. It then joined all other private bills on the order paper that will be coming up on the last day that this House is in session.

We now learn, Premier, that you have decided to send this bill to the gallows, to bury it. Who gave you this presidential veto? Who gave you this divine right of decree that vetoes the democratic process of this Legislative Assembly?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the minister can respond.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Let me first point out that before the member of the opposition starts going on about divine decree, he should take a look at his own record on this. This is a private bill which will have big impacts right across the whole province. Quite frankly, it does a disservice to this Legislature to try to bring a bill of this magnitude in and pass it without any debate in this Legislature.

I would encourage you to bring forward next spring, on behalf of the McGuinty Liberals, your housing policy in a private member's bill calling for what you'd like to see done around the demolitions.

Mr Bryant: That is a crock. He knows it, I know it and everybody in this House knows it. Ms Mushinski brought in a private bill on behalf of the city of Toronto that covered very similar issues. It had the same amount of hearings and it passed. Why have we got one set of rules for Tory bills and then one set of rules for the other bills? I say to all members of this House, how long is this going to last? When is this one-person rule going to stop? How long are we going to have a legislative system that everybody thinks is a charade?

It passed through the Legislative Assembly. The Minister of Housing's representative, the parliamentary assistant, said that they do not oppose the bill. They had an opportunity at that point to raise these objections and they didn't. This is a poke in the eye to the people of Toronto. This is a pernicious poke in the eye to the city council of Toronto. This is a despotic corruption of our democratic process and I say—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. You need to withdraw the word "corruption," please.

Mr Bryant: Withdrawn.

I say to the housing minister, why did your ministry say last week that it didn't oppose this bill, with no objections whatsoever at the time, and today—

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon Mr Hodgson: If you want me to carry on and be an actor, I'm not. I got elected to try to represent the people of this province and I've been given the honour of being the minister. I think this bill has ramifications that should be debated. Why are you afraid of open debate on your ideas and the McGuinty policy on housing before this House? I understand there are three private bills that will have an impact on public policy that you don't want to debate in an open forum in this Legislature by bringing forward your own bill. We're not saying we're opposed to it today or in favour. We think this bill needs debate. Why are you afraid of debate in this Legislature?

HIGHWAY 8

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a question for the Minister of Transportation.

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, I know you don't want it. This is my favourite subject.

The people of Kitchener and the surrounding area have had a lot of frustrating concern about the lengthy delay surrounding the upgrading of Highway 8 coming into Kitchener from Highway 401. Kitchener is one of the fastest-growing communities in Ontario. It is one of the most important economic units in the province of Ontario. The congestion is a significant concern and it's putting many drivers at risk of serious accidents. Minister, how much longer do we have to wait for the widening of Highway 8?

The project was scheduled for construction this year, but was delayed due to an Ontario Municipal Board hearing. With that cleared and the project on high priority, how much more time do the citizens of my community have to wait, knowing that the congestion will not soon go away?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): As my colleague is well aware, phase one of the improvements to the Kitchener-Waterloo Expressway was completed last summer. My ministry has been working hard to complete the second phase of this project, which is the widening of a section of Highway 8 and the reconstruction of the Highway 8 and Kitchener-Waterloo Expressway interchange. In preparation for phase two, we have completed the project design, we have completed extensive utility relocations and we have obtained environmental clearances.

My ministry recognizes this project as a priority and I'm pleased to report that it is proceeding through the appropriate processes. I'm optimistic that final approval will be forthcoming.

Mr Wettlaufer: Well, Minister, the construction wasn't completed last summer on phase one; it was completed the summer before. Phase two was supposed to be totally completed this past summer and it hasn't happened. So I'm still looking for an explanation on what will be done and when it will be done.

Hon Mr Clark: I thank the member for the question. My ministry is aware of the issue and the member knows that. We're now working to address the situation. The latest contract will be followed by further projects in a four-phase multi-year program. These projects will improve the level of safety by widening the highway from four lanes to eight, installing median barriers, building wider paved shoulders, reconstructing the Highway 8 and Kitchener-Waterloo Expressway interchange and improving the Fairway Road interchange.

I'm confident that these changes will reduce congestion, and we'll be getting on with the job as soon as possible.

Mr Wettlaufer: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to have a late show.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member can file the appropriate documents with the table.

1530

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): A question to the Premier: Bill 77 will for the first time in over 70 years guarantee adults adopted in Ontario and their birth parents a right afforded to all other Ontarians. Bill 77 will end the legal discrimination against adult adoptees by giving them equal rights of access to their own original statements of birth. The bill has now gone through public hearings and the amended bill is on the order paper today. My question is, do you support the right of adult adoptees and their birth parents to have access to information about themselves?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I think the minister can respond.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I certainly understand, as I know members on all sides of this House understand, that people wishing to access their adoption records face many hurdles in Ontario. This is an issue that concerns a good number of constituents in all parts of the province. I've supported more discussion on this important issue and I see many merits in the proposal the member brings forward.

We certainly were supportive of the bill going through second reading so that it could go to committee hearings and get some further input. Some have brought forward some concerns with respect to privacy, most notably the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and there are some concerns among some members of this Legislature on all sides of the House. They've input suggestions we're giving thought to.

Ms Churley: Minister, the bill is on the order paper today. This bill, as you know, is about human rights. It's about stopping the shame and secrecy around adoption. It's about healing pain and suffering and it's about people's health and well-being. You know legislation like this is in place in jurisdictions all across the world, including places in Canada. You know I dealt with the privacy concerns by the contact veto in my bill. You know that the majority of legislators in this place support this bill and that the majority of people support this bill. The bill is before us today. You can heed the majority today and allow this bill to go ahead and be voted on. Minister, the time has come. Will you agree today to pass this bill?

Hon Mr Baird: It's not for me as one member of this Legislature to determine what bills pass and what bills don't pass. I know there will be ongoing discussions, as there always are in every session of the Ontario Legislature, with respect to what bills are called for reading and in terms of what debate would be available. I know this is a very difficult issue. I congratulate the member opposite for her strong leadership in this regard. It's not

one, I know, where I know she has taken on a partisan aspect.

The member opposite said this bill is used in other jurisdictions. In fact, in Newfoundland it's before the Legislature. In fact, in British Columbia they don't have a contact veto; they have an information veto, which is something quite different from what her bill contemplates.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier. We're in our final hours of an opportunity to ask you about Ipperwash. You are aware, Premier, of the serious questions that have been raised about Ipperwash and your personal role in the events. While a civil case is proceeding, it will not answer the key questions the public have. Until a public inquiry is held, this will remain a wound on Ontario that won't heal. Your successor is going to face an extremely difficult situation. The demands for a public inquiry will not quit.

Your legal bills alone in the civil case will be well over \$1 million, and Mr Runciman and Mr Hodgson will be facing similar legal bills. A civil case increasingly will be proven to not provide the answers the public wants. In your final hours, Premier, will you do the appropriate thing and agree to call a public inquiry into the events surrounding Ipperwash?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): As you know, I've responded to this question on many occasions. You know I am one who is anxious to make sure that the public and the George family have access to the truth and the whole truth in these matters. We have the case, as you know, right now. I want to tell you that I appreciated the opportunity to be able to put forward my side, to reiterate for the record, as I've said all along, that there was no interference into the command decisions, confirmed some time ago through the court documents from OPP officers, including those of the former commissioner and the incident commander.

This court case is proceeding. There are many other people involved besides myself. It certainly remains the position of this government that it should proceed. If at the end of that there are still questions that are unanswered, then that would be the appropriate time for us to take a look at that.

Mr Phillips: I'll have the page send over to the Premier the questions that will not be answered in the civil case. You know the George family has been writing to you and has said they would drop the civil case in a moment if you would agree to a public inquiry. We will only find out the truth through a public inquiry.

I say again to you, Premier, that serious questions about your personal involvement—and other ministers'—have been raised, with considerable evidence. The questions I've sent over to you today are not going to be answered in a civil case. Time will go on and taxpayers' money will be spent and, in the end, if you persist in

insisting on not having a public inquiry, when the civil case is over, the exact same demand will be forthcoming for a public inquiry to answer the essential questions. But millions of dollars of taxpayers' money will be spent in the interim without getting at the answers.

Premier, the only way we will get at the answers is with a public inquiry. You're the one who can make that decision now. It should not be left to your successor, because I assure you that the public will demand it from your successor. So I say to you, Premier, will you do the appropriate thing before you step down as Premier and call a public inquiry to ensure that the truth comes out about Ipperwash?

Hon Mr Harris: The member will know that the questions the George family wishes answers to are the very questions in the matter of the court case. I don't know why you don't have confidence in the judge. I don't know why you don't have confidence in our court system. I can tell you that I did the appropriate thing in September, I continue to do the appropriate thing now and I'll continue, as will my successor, to do absolutely the appropriate thing.

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. I had the pleasure of participating in the debate on the Waste Diversion Act, Bill 90, which you introduced on June 26 of this year. Unfortunately, during the more than seven hours of debate on this bill, both the Liberals and the NDP repeatedly tabled motions in this House that delayed the debate and during that time didn't even take the opportunity to speak to the contents of that bill.

Minister, I ask you to take the time now to explain to members of the opposition why it's important to pass this bill in this session.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): You're just putting on a show for the people there and there.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member for St Catharines, please come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock, please. Member for St Catharines, please come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Hamilton, last warning or you're going to be thrown out. Come to order in here. We're at the end of the session. We're not going to carry on like that.

Sorry for the interruption. Minister of the Environment.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): Bill 90 is a very important bill. It is a bill that has very strong support from all of the stakeholders in this province. It is a bill that for the first time in the history of this province will enable industry and municipalities to partner in creating a sustainable waste diversion system. It provides the tools to ensure that we can surpass our goal of 50% waste reduction. It provides the financial

resources to help the municipalities achieve that goal. More importantly, it will enable us to further make sure that we divert dangerous materials such as scrap tires, used oil and household special waste that can seriously harm our environment if not properly managed.

1540

Mr Klees: It sounds as though a lot of people would stand to lose if we don't pass this bill in this session. It sounds also, from the reaction of the opposition, as though they don't like the fact that we've exposed their delaying tactics on this bill. I would like to know, what are the stakeholders saying about these delaying tactics? What are the stakeholders saying about how important it is to pass this bill?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Tomorrow it is my plan to ask for unanimous support to pass Bill 90 so that we can get on with substantially increasing waste reduction in the province. As I said before, there is very strong support from all stakeholders—the business community, the municipalities. They are all very supportive. I'd like to recognize the president of AMO, Ann Mulvale, Howard Moscoe, Tim Moore, John Hanson, Michael Pratt; there are many stakeholders here. I hope that tomorrow we will all put politics aside and I hope we will do what is in the best interests of the people in this province and pass Bill 90 in order that we can protect our environment.

HIGHWAY FUNDING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Transportation, and it concerns his capital budget. Not surprisingly, in recent days we have heard from the Chair of Management Board that due to the economic downturn, provincial government revenues are going to be less than expected for the coming year.

My question to you, Minister, is simply this. The 2001 Ontario provincial budget tells the people of Ontario and this Legislature that you plan to spend \$673 million on highway capital projects in southern Ontario. Can you stand in your place today and tell this Legislature that the forthcoming provincial government restraint program will in no way impair the \$673 million of highway capital that you had intended to spend in Ontario in the fiscal year 2001-02?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): I thank the honourable member for the question. We're on target with my budget. We're on target for our capital expenditures.

I would remind the member that since we were elected we've spent \$6.5 billion on highway improvements in capital. It's a record across the province, by far. We are extremely pleased with the fact that at the present day our highways are at a 92% optimal state of repair, which far exceeds anything the opposition parties have ever accomplished.

Mr Conway: Moments ago the member for Kitchener revealed a certain frustration about what is not happening with improvements to Highway 8. In my part of eastern

Ontario, in the upper Ottawa Valley, the very important improvements to Highway 17—the four-laning of that highway from west of Kanata to the town of Arnprior promised on the eve of the 1999 election to be completed by the fall of 2003—remain an exceptionally important priority for the business and general community.

We are just days away from hearing about a provincial government restraint program. You're pursuing a fiscal policy which is going to produce very significant consequences. You are determined to offer up a big corporate tax cut at a time when your revenues, according to the Chair of Management Board, are sliding by billions of dollars. The people of Arnprior, Renfrew, Pembroke and Renfrew county want to know today simply this: will the forthcoming provincial government restraint program in any way affect, delay or impair the completion of the four-laning of Highway 17 to Arnprior, promised by the Honourable Tony Clement two years ago for completion by the fall of 2003?

Hon Mr Clark: The Chair of Management Board would like to answer.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As I said earlier this month, we are looking to all ministries to review all their spending and come forward, to look at various things, whether it's expenditure controls, revenue streams or looking at privatization. The challenge will be to do this with a balanced approach to make sure we take care of all the needs of the people in this province.

I wanted to answer this question earlier in the week. I can refer back to this flyer. Our problem is simply the fact that health pressures are here in this province. Obviously the federal government is not funding health. It used to be 50-50 back in 1974 and now it's a mere 14 cents on the dollar. Despite this publication they have, Services for You, where they say health care is "our number one priority," it obviously is not.

HMCS HAIDA

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. My question is about HMCS Haida. You and I are both from Niagara. This is the tourism capital of Canada. We know a top-quality tourism destination when we see it. Most of us here have enjoyed visiting the Haida at Ontario Place, where it is certainly an impressive sight. Could you tell the House a little more about the significance of the Haida, and in particular its place in Canada's history and its future?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): I guess it was just a matter of time. To answer the member's question, the Haida is a Tribal class destroyer built for the Royal Canadian Navy and launched in 1942. In all, 27 of those ships were built, and they were built much stronger than other nations' ships to withstand our unique Arctic conditions.

The Haida's impressive war record includes escort duty on convoys to Russia, fighting German destroyers in

the English Channel in 1944, two tours of duty in the Korean War, and anti-submarine warfare during the Cold War. The Haida was decommissioned in 1963 and found its home at Ontario Place, beginning in 1971.

No doubt the member is right. It is a significant tourism destination that's a testament to Canada's naval history and a place for generations of Canadians to learn about that as part of our proud role in military history.

Mr Maves: Minister, thank you for that answer, but frankly it's not good enough. I believe you ducked the question. I clearly asked you what the future of the Haida was. Given the importance of the Haida, we certainly want to ensure it is preserved and maintained as a museum for future generations of Canadians to enjoy. Minister, come clean today. Stand in your place and tell the House about your secret plans for the future of the Haida.

Hon Mr Hudak: There are no secret plans for the Haida. I want to get that on the record. All members of this House want to see a healthy future for the Haida. Because of its role in our national history, we agree with the federal government that it would make sense to have it housed under the federal umbrella of Parks Canada.

One suggestion we've worked on with the federal government and the Friends of HMCS Haida is to pursue the transfer of the Haida to Parks Canada which would move it to a new home in Hamilton harbour. My ministry has commissioned studies to see that, if this option were pursued, the Haida could have a safe journey to her new home. I must say, though, contrary to media reports and perhaps confusion from the member, no final agreement has been reached on this. We're still exploring options.

It would be helpful to have better communication from Parks Canada and from Minister Copp's office to see if this is a plan we want to go ahead with. Contrary to the Spectator article, no plan has taken place. But I think it's important for both levels of government to look at all options to ensure that the Haida can find safe harbour for generations to—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Thank you.

1550

HOUSING POLICY

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Housing. You answered a question from Mr Bryant earlier today. It was in response to his private member's bill. I have to say I did not find your answer very satisfactory. What has happened in this House since the year 1999? On December 8, 1999, two years ago this week, Rosario Marchese stood up in this House and put forward a private member's bill which dealt with exactly this issue. That bill, Bill 30, was dealt with by this House in the year 2000 and was defeated precisely on this issue.

The city of Toronto then came forward and unanimously requested the right to control demolition within the city of Toronto, a responsibility which they had, a responsibility which they exercised until 1999 with the

advent of the tenant control legislation. The city of Toronto is seeking to safeguard affordable homes within the city of Toronto, not in the other municipalities in this province. More than a dozen people showed up for the private member's bill to speak in support. Your own parliamentary assistant spoke passionately in support. He cited the 2.5 million people of this city and he cited the fact that it was the largest city and they knew what they were doing.

Minister, with a vacancy rate of 0.9% in Toronto, with no new housing having been built for five years, with soaring rent increases, why are you caving in and leaving thousands of families at risk of homelessness?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I think the member of the third party has already indicated that there is a proper procedure. His party already did that. They brought forward their housing policy, it was debated in this House, and that's what we're asking to happen with this. There are three private members' Pr bills that are coming forward that should have more debate. We're recommending that Mr Bryant from the Liberals bring forward the Dalton McGuinty housing policy on demolition and we have a full debate in this Legislature.

Mr Prue: Mr Minister, today I listened for 20 minutes while the Premier outlined his legacy and what he thought he was doing for the people of this province. On his last day in question period, with you sitting there beside him, are you going to let his legacy regarding this private bill be 1,114 tenant households who are going to lose their homes? Are you going to let his legacy be 2,400 homes that are going to be converted to condominiums? Are you going to let his legacy be one of housing failure?

Mr Minister, I am asking you to have the same passion as your parliamentary assistant and to stand there and say once and for all that you want to protect the homes of the people of the city of Toronto who are about to lose them, you want to do it now, and it's too late to wait for the spring for those 4,000 or 5,000 who are going to be on the street.

Hon Mr Hodgson: Mr Speaker, I realize that they're against full debate, but their party has already done that and I'm asking the Liberals to do the same—bring forward their housing policy and have a full debate.

But I find it ironic that you're talking about affordable housing when you were a member of a council that voted specifically to tax rental housing at 4.7 times that of residential. You voted for that. You're on the record, and that's part of the damage that we're trying to undo as a government to get more rental housing in this province.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is to the associate minister of health, and it's regarding her Bill 130, which is designed to muzzle those who would speak out on behalf of the frail elderly and those needing home care.

The St Catharines Standard says, "Cathy Chisholm, outspoken chief executive officer of Access Niagara, was recently forced out of her job, the Standard learned Monday."

Board chairman Ross Gillett "said he was 'diametrically opposed' to the new direction of the board"—and he has resigned. He said, "One of the concerns that people have is the opportunity for input from the clientele of CCACs would seem to have been reduced to almost nil under the new bill."

Minister, those who have been fired appear not to want to speak now about their firing or about the underfunding of community care access centres. Is one of the conditions that you have imposed on those who have been fired that they must, if they wish to get their severance, remain silent for a period of time and not speak out on behalf of the clientele, and isn't it becoming obvious with this firing and these resignations that the real purpose of Bill 130 is to muzzle anybody and everybody who is prepared to advocate on behalf of the frail elderly and others requiring home care?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]): In 1994, when I was thinking about politics, I got involved with a man named Mike Harris. This is the last week in the House for Mike Harris as Premier, and I want to say before I finish that I'm proud to have been part of the Mike Harris government and I'm proud of the work that Mike Harris did to make Ontario a better place for my children.

When it comes to community care access centres, we have every intention of taking many of the people who are on the board now and asking them to be reappointed to the new board. We have every intention of working with the communities to make sure there's strong community involvement on the new CCAC board.

We have a commitment to ensuring we have the best community services anywhere in Canada. Everyone in this House knows we're doing it without a national home care program; we're doing it without one cent from the federal government. We continue to invest. This area has increased by 72% on average across the province. It's the fastest-growing health care area, so I don't know how there could be criticism about it. It's a wonderful program that isn't offered in many other provinces across Canada, and we're going to make sure it's sustainable and offers great services to the people of Ontario.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of the Minister of Municipal Affairs' statements about Pr22 and his apparent desire to debate the legislation, I seek unanimous consent to introduce a motion that would allow the House to sit tonight for the purposes of debating Bill Pr22, a bill introduced by Mr Bryant.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard a no.

Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of the member for Oak Ridges' concerns about Bill 90, the government's waste diversion bill, I seek unanimous consent to have the House resume sitting next Monday

for the purposes of debating at second reading, to complete the debate on second and third reading of Bill 90, the government's waste diversion bill, and other government legislation. We in the official opposition are prepared to make sure that bill gets passed if it has proper debate time in the House.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard a no.

VISITORS

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize an individual who represents the greatest people in this country and of Jamaica, Consul General Stewart Stephenson, who is in the visitors' gallery today.

PETITIONS

HOME CARE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I want to thank Wanda Eurich for collecting the names on this petition because it's a very important petition for the associate minister of health to hear.

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

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

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

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

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

"(1) That the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to take control of policy-setting for home care services through rational, population-based health planning rather than simply by underfunding the system; and

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

"(3) That the Legislative Assembly make it necessary for the provincial government to notify the agencies it

funds of the amount of funding they will be given by the government in a fiscal year at least three months before the commencement of this fiscal year.”

I'm going to sign this petition because I agree with it and I'm going to give it to Andrew to bring to the table.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have hundreds of signatures on these petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and they read:

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

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

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

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

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

I will affix my signature to this petition.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the standing orders, we continue the time for petitions until it is finished.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there consent? There is no consent.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of the member for Peterborough, the Honourable Gary Stewart. He has received this from his constituents. I might add, I'm also presenting it on my own behalf from the teachers in my area of Durham. A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Because we, the undersigned, believe in our responsibility as teachers to maintain a high degree of professionalism; and

“Because such professionalism is best served when professional training is self-directed and based on teacher need, improves professional skills, improves student learning, is based on best practice accountability and is funded by the appropriate educational authority; and

“Because we oppose the government's teacher testing program and the College of Teachers' professional learning program because they do not meet the objectives of effective professional training,

“We, the undersigned, respectfully request that you repeal all clauses and references to professional learning from the Stability and Excellence in Education Act, 2001.”

I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 30(b), I am now required to call orders of the day, so I do call orders of the day.

1600

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2001

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2001

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

Bill 149, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the public service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2002 / Projet de loi 149, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2002.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Debate?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It is indeed my pleasure at this late stage of this House sitting and conducting business to be able to speak on behalf of the government. I'm here to speak about the proposed Supply Act, constituting the statutory authorization of the Legislature of the government's spending program for the year. I believe it is one of the most important bills passed in the Legislature as it has far-reaching implications for the people of this province.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Perhaps the initial speaker should put forth an agreement as to the distribution of time in terms of the respective caucuses, the government having made a commitment to relinquish a portion of their time so that other caucuses could have a sizer portion so that we could accommodate Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

The Acting Speaker: I'll allow a couple of minutes to get this sorted out.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, it was my understanding that we did have an agreement from all three parties to shorten the time so that we could be done for Her Honour at 5 o'clock. If we need a quick recess just to

confirm that with the Clerks for process, I'd be quite happy to do that.

The Acting Speaker: I'm at a loss, because the only way I can confirm any agreement is by unanimous consent.

Is there consent for a motion for the dividing of time? Agreed? Agreed.

The Chair recognizes the government House leader and Minister of Education.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I would like to move that the time on this particular debate—and I'm not going to get the wording quite right—be split equally among the three parties leading up to 5 o'clock. Is that correct with the table?

The Acting Speaker: Mrs Ecker has moved a motion, and it will go into the record word for word, but I don't have it.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Agreed? It is agreed.

The Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

Mr O'Toole: Obviously, that's a code message for "be brief."

Without spending authority, most payments to the broader public sector cannot be made. That includes nursing homes, hospitals, doctors, municipalities, general welfare recipients, children's aid societies and suppliers' accounts.

Let me remind you of the heroic efforts of the members of the broader public sector who serve not just the members of the Legislature but indeed the province of Ontario: the police and firefighters who risk their lives to help citizens in emergency situations; the teachers and professors who educate our youth and prepare them for a future of endless possibilities; the social workers who go the extra mile to help those who need special care; and of course the doctors and nurses and other health care providers and professionals who take care of us and our families, from newborns to the elderly.

As a responsible government, it is our duty to pass the proposed Supply Act as part of the legislative process. A responsible government must be fiscally accountable for investing in priority projects that ensure a high quality of life for our children. Under this government, the evidence is clear that it has been and continues to be a great place to live, to work and to raise our families.

In the next 14 years, the population of this province will have grown to almost 14 million people. The 14 million people are going to need new schools, hospitals, social services, homes, transit and roads. As our Premier said, "It's time for us to stop and ask ourselves some tough questions." He has always said that what we really need to examine is that we have a strong economy that can sustain a strong and high quality of life. What kind of life do we want for ourselves and our children five, 10, 15 years from now? Will we live in cities or in suburbs? Will we take transit or will we drive? Will the roads be tolled or will they be packed and congested? What about the quality of the environment, the air and water and soil?

What about the quality of our lives? As you see, we have so many tough questions to answer.

But we do have a strategy in place, called Smart Growth. Our strategy is to invest in the future, and it is built on three founding principles: first, strong communities for our families to put down roots, giving us a choice in how we live—in neighbourhoods, not just in subdivisions; second, a strong economy that has the solid foundation for continued growth, competitiveness and job creation; and third, a clean, healthy environment with clean air and water and the open spaces for which Ontario is well known.

I can't emphasize this more. Growth management is a solid investment in our collective futures, one this government is responsible for. We have invested in the priorities of the citizens of Ontario and will continue to do so.

Through SuperBuild, we will invest \$1.9 billion in the province's infrastructure in 2001-02. Some examples are: \$906 million in the provincial highway program for the major expansion of northern highways, assessing new highway corridors and the completion of course of Highway 407 east; \$48 million in post-secondary education for the facilities renewal program and the apprenticeship enhancement fund; \$127 million in the environment and natural resources, including contributions to Ontario's Living Legacy, the largest expansion of parks and protected areas in the history of this province; \$162 million in the justice sector, including the construction and renewal of many courthouse facilities and the completion of five adult correctional facilities; \$38 million in community and social services to support the most vulnerable, including the expansion of community spaces for people with developmental disabilities, and the improvement of women's shelters; \$200 million in hospitals to support their restructuring needs. This government is investing in the responsibilities of this community through Smart Growth and SuperBuild initiatives.

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We're also continuing to invest in our health care system, one of this government's top priorities and, we know, a concern for all Ontarians. While the opposition would have you believe that tax cuts will create a negative effect on the health care system, we have actually increased health care spending by \$6 billion since 1995. In fact, as of September 30, 2001, the health base operating spending is now \$23.7 billion, an increase of \$0.2 billion since the 2001 budget alone. This is an increase of more than 35% or, as I said before, \$6 billion from the NDP government spending level in 1994, which, by the way, was \$17.6 billion.

When our government first took office, health care spending was 38 cents of every program dollar in 1995-96. In 2001-02, 45 cents of every dollar of program spending by this government will go to health care. In 1999, the government promised to invest \$22.7 billion in health care by 2003-04. This target will be exceeded in 2001-02, two full years ahead of schedule. The demands increase daily.

While health care continues to be a top priority for Ontario, these increases in health care spending are no longer a viable alternative. The government is devoting an increased share of its spending capacity to Ontario's health care system. The only reduction has been on the part of the federal government. We've heard this debated. They're only spending 14 cents on every dollar. We all know the Canada Health Act in the late 1970s was a 50-50 shared agreement.

This government is devoting an increasing share of spending to improve health care in Ontario. In 2001-02, Ontario received \$60 million less in Canada health and social transfer—CHST—funding than it did in 1994-95. That means that the federal contribution is now only 14 cents on the dollar, as I said before. The federal government has not delivered on their red book promise. They haven't delivered on any promises, actually, to establish national pharmacare programs or home care programs.

Right now, the province spends \$1.8 billion on the Ontario drug program and \$1.2 billion on the community access centres. The cost of both of these programs will continue to increase in the coming years, as our population ages. A recent study has shown that intergovernmental collaboration is much less evident than was anticipated with the social union framework agreement, SUFA. According to Professor Alain Noel, who wrote the study, "It," meaning SUFA, "has paved the way for new policy instruments that not only provide greater flexibility and control for the federal government, but also lessen its commitments." The federal government has lessened its commitment to the people of Ontario by not providing adequate funding for health care.

While placed with the entire burden of health care, the province is also ensuring the security of the people of Ontario. Border security issues are also critical to our economy. One quarter of Ontario's output is exported to the United States, and many Ontario factories depend on just-in-time delivery to import parts. The free movement of goods and services across secure borders must be preserved.

The Premiers of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia have called for a North America-wide security perimeter. During the 2001 Ontario economic outlook, our finance minister, Jim Flaherty, challenged the federal government to commit to these initiatives. But while we wait for the commitment from the federal government, Ontario has moved forward in protecting the people of this great province. September 11 has made it clear that even the safe communities are fundamental for a strong economy, which is why our recent investment in Ontario security is more than \$30 million. Some of this funding will create an Ontario Provincial Police rapid response unit to combat terrorism threats, as well as anti-terrorism units to investigate and track down terrorism and its supporters; second, it will enable Emergency Measures Ontario to offer municipalities more help with community emergency planning; third, it will build anti-terrorism facilities for local police; and fourth, it will build an

emergency management training centre for firefighters and ambulance personnel.

Despite the current slowdown, Ontario's solid economic foundation will help us move forward with our initiatives, including increased spending on security, which in turn will also help stimulate the economy.

Let me leave you with a quote from Dr Sherry Cooper, the BMO Nesbitt Burns chief economist, who is commenting on increased security spending in the United States. She says:

"Government spending on defence, security and reconstruction will have a multiplier effect on the economy. And much of that government spending will have important spillover effects on technology spending. Enhanced capabilities in surveillance, identification, data storage and videoconferences are examples of the positive benefits likely arising from the thrust of government initiatives."

I certainly believe this holds true for Ontario, and thanks to the sound economic foundations of this province, our Premier, Mike Harris, and our finance minister, Jim Flaherty, this government is on the right track. We're helping the people of Ontario. We ask for your support on this motion today.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On behalf of the people of Don Valley East, it is a pleasure to address Bill 149, the supply bill. It's a spending bill. It outlines all the provincial government's spending priorities and, on the back page, in schedule A, it lists all of the various ministries through the estimates procedures, where they're planning on spending the taxpayers' dollars. It's very interesting some of the things that are contained within the estimates and within the spending program and policies of the Harris government, but also interesting is what's not contained within this particular bill.

Some of the interesting items that are not in here would be what my leader, Dalton McGuinty, has been fighting for for quite some time now, and has highlighted over the past two days. The procedure to cure macular degeneration, a procedure called Visudyne, is not found within the government's spending priorities. What is found here is \$2.5 billion of partisan government advertising. Not found in Bill 149 are things like my private member's bill, which I introduced today, detailing and outlining a procedure for the Ministry of Transportation to be able to cure the highway noise problem that affects Don Valley East residents who live along the Highway 404, Don Valley Parkway and Highway 401 corridors. But what is found in this legislation is \$2.2 billion of corporate tax cuts and \$500 million for a private school voucher system. These are the spending priorities, both on the revenue side and on the expenditure side, that you will find in the budget and in the budget year 2001-02.

It's instructive to see what priority the government places on various items, whether it be health care—I just heard the last speaker complaining, wailing, whining about how there's not enough money. Yet when you look at the actions of the government to accelerate tax cuts to the tune of \$175 million, precisely the amount of money

that community care access centres—the North York Community Care Access Centre, by the way, is one of the worst hit in the province. They are short; they are falling into a deficit position. The government has decided they have enough money to be able to accelerate those tax cuts, to pay for partisan government advertising, to pay for the Premier's legal defence to fight the George family surrounding the events that happened at Ipperwash Provincial Park.

It's very instructive what is a priority for the government and what is not. Clearly the priorities are the Premier, his wealthy friends, the elite in this province—not working families, not people who are losing their sight and going blind, not the residents of Don Valley East who have to put up with the day-to-day noise and troublesome aspects of highway construction and alteration. These are the spending priorities of the government.

If I have a message to the members of this Legislature and to the people of Ontario, in particular in Don Valley East, it is that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have a plan. We have a plan for working families. Our plan for working families is not the priorities of the Harris government. It's not for the top 5%, for the wealthy, for the elite, for the Premier's legal defence, for the government's partisan political advertising scheme. It's not for their irresponsible tax cuts.

It's for health care services that families in Ontario can count on. It's for public school education, not private school education. It's for safe communities. It's for clean drinking water, clean air to breathe, safe food to eat. Those are the priorities of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party.

I'm proud to reject and say no to Bill 149, to the Harris government and all they stand for, and to say yes to Dalton McGuinty and Ontario's working families.

1620

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): In the short time I have here this afternoon, the 10 minutes on this supply motion, I want to lay out very clearly the two different visions of Ontario unfolding before us in this place this day.

We have the Tory proposal, which is very simple and not hard to understand. Then you have a proposal put forward by the New Democratic Party that speaks about government taking leadership, getting involved, living up to its responsibility and being accountable to people for their faith and trust at the polls at election time.

This government has a proposal that suggests it's OK to spend public money to give tax breaks very directly to the corporate sector of this province and some of their wealthier friends. They believe that in doing that it will recession-proof the province and create economic prosperity and good times for everybody who calls Ontario home. We know now, six years after this government has had the reins, that in fact that's not working, that tax breaks do not create jobs, that tax breaks do not protect a jurisdiction from recession, that tax breaks simply give public money away.

This province has the capacity to provide services to people in a way probably no other jurisdiction in the world has, but this government has frittered that away. We have the capacity to raise public money in a way that reflects the very healthy economy we normally have in this province, particularly if we have a balanced understanding of the contribution that both the public and the private sectors give to the people and communities of this province, if we would only give the leadership and provide the level playing field.

This government believes it is more important to make sure their corporate friends and wealthy benefactors are looked after, and that in looking after them, they will in turn look after the rest of us. The debate is over as far as I'm concerned. We have now officially heard from all those people who are looked upon with some confidence to know that we have a recession coming at us, yet this government has no proposal, no plan on the table except to move forward aggressively and confidently with more tax breaks.

We're looking at having to cut \$5 billion out of the budget of the government. That means \$5 billion will come out of programs like education, health care, social services and the protection of the environment in this province. That's so we can afford to provide \$5 billion worth of corporate tax breaks out there to people in this province who will not have to worry, themselves, personally, about their health care or education for their children or social services or the protection of the environment.

I think that's wrong. I don't think that's in keeping with the notion and the understanding people have of this province and what it is we should be doing together, collectively, to make sure that we all benefit and that we can all participate.

I juxtapose that approach, that very narrow, tax-cutting agenda that has seen the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, under the leadership of this government, reduce its ability, its capacity to respond, to act and to give leadership in communities where major industries are going down and stress is high—there's a tremendous level of expectation in people that their government will come in and be a partner with them and be helpful in restructuring and righting their economic circumstances.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, which is normally the ministry that's looked to for that kind of leadership and investment, has reduced its capacity, has reduced its budget, from 1995 to today, from over \$300 million to under \$100 million. As a matter of fact, in that ministry alone, which was looked upon in so many instances—I remember back in 1990-95, in my own community in particular—for capital investment, for partnering with the community to develop capital projects, to work with industry on capital investment so that they might position themselves to take advantage of any opportunity out there in an economy that still struggles to gain some life, to take advantage of new opportunities and to give people already struggling to innovate or

invest in new technology the support they need. Alas, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade now has absolutely no money—zero, nada—in their budget for capital investment.

Interjection.

Mr Martin: No money, Minister of Community and Social Services, for capital investment within the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. As a matter of fact, it said that this government is spending less money on capital projects in 20 years in this province.

We, as a party, are putting forward what I think is a very innovative, aggressive and confident proposal of things we could do. Everybody knows what they are, because we've been talking about them here for quite some time. We're proposing a sales tax cut, which we think will go a long distance toward encouraging people to get out there and spend some money and, in spending that money, stimulate the economy. We're suggesting that communities have developed projects around the SuperBuild fund that we've heard so much about, which has been on the table for at least a year and a half now, and have come forward thinking that the government was being serious about that fund, but we are still waiting and have nothing. As a matter of fact, it seems that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is announcing new programs through the heritage fund every other week, when in fact they can't even get the programs they've already got in place out the door. I think you would have to excuse people who get a little cynical where this government is concerned.

So we're saying to the government, get the SuperBuild money out the door. Help those communities that will be affected by that. Flow that money so that local economies can feel confident this Christmas that there's money around, that it's OK to spend and that the future will indeed be bright once we get through these few rough months.

We're asking the government to put in place community adjustment funds that will help troubled communities and laid-off workers. The same as we did in the early 1990s when we were hit with a recession as government, we're asking this government to put in place programs that communities and businesses can access to help them through these very difficult times. We're saying, stop the privatization of Hydro, because when we look at other jurisdictions where that has been done, we know that all that results is higher energy costs, which will kill business and kill industry.

Last but not least, we're asking this government to please, in these times of great difficulty for workers out there, those workers who have jobs, who are working part-time, who are working in contract positions and who need a little help and stimulus, raise the minimum wage.

Do that and you will position this province to at least have some potential, some capacity, to work its way through these very difficult times that are ahead, to see a light at the end of the tunnel and be a partner in developing a new Ontario that believes we all have a responsibility to help each other, that government has a

responsibility to lead, to be involved and to invest in communities, and move away from this obsession with tax breaks for corporations and wealthy individuals.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I'm certainly pleased to have the chance to rise and speak to Bill 149, the Supply Act. This legislation, while routine, is important because it allows the government of the day to authorize the expenditures of certain funds to meet the payroll of the public service and to provide the services and supports that we do with the Ontario government.

One of our responsibilities as MPPs is to go back to our constituencies, listen and learn and bring what we learn back to debates and discussions here at Queen's Park. Recently during constituency week, in my community we had a number of town hall meetings in Metcalfe and Manotick, and the undoubted priority issue for the people in Nepean-Carleton continues to be health care, preserving and enhancing the important health care system we've built up in recent years.

I heard a lot of concerns in my constituency about the Ottawa Hospital, and that's something our government has been working very hard on in the past six months. Back in June, we announced the intention to appoint a supervisor, and we appointed someone of great integrity and experience working not just in the area of provincial government, but more closely with respect to health care and hospitals, Dennis Timbrell, to come in and look at what we could do to deal with what was one of the biggest challenges faced in any public sector organization other than the former Ontario Hydro.

1630

The Ottawa Hospital, at the time of Mr Timbrell's appointment, had the biggest public sector deficit of any public sector body in Ontario. Under his leadership, they're beginning to turn the hospital around. With that renewed confidence, we were prepared as a government, and this bill will permit it, to come forward with an additional \$47 million of base funding increase.

That \$47 million, Mr Speaker, to put it into context for you and your constituents in Stratford and for my constituents in Nepean-Carleton, is the biggest base budget increase any hospital had ever received in Canadian history, I understand. I was certainly pleased to work with my colleague the Minister of Health, Tony Clement, on that important initiative.

The supervisor, Dennis Timbrell, I should put on the record, is doing an absolutely outstanding job for everyone in Ottawa-Carleton and in eastern Ontario, and is close to being able to announce a plan where they'll be able to balance the budget and secure the long-term financial health of the hospital, without compromising patient care and patient services.

Indeed, the only thing that he's announced since he was appointed as the supervisor of the Ottawa Hospital has been layoffs of administrative staff. We strongly support making sure that is the first area that's looked at, and

not areas with respect to patient care. That project is going on with great enthusiasm.

The Queensway Carleton hospital, another big, important priority that this budget will help continue to fund, got a budget increase of \$12.9 million. There was an expansion of the hospital planned in the 1980s that, regrettably, was cancelled. We're playing catch-up there, but progress on that expansion is continuing under the leadership of a great group of people.

The Royal Ottawa Hospital, under this budget—another concern, with respect to mental health. Too often we forget the needs of our fellow citizens, friends or family with a mental health challenge. It got a baseline budget increase that was proposed that this bill will help pay for.

We were also able to announce a private-public partnership, a P3 project, this past Friday, that should revitalize the hospital and bring it up to standard. I was pleased to work with George Langil, Graham Bird and the member for Ottawa Centre. I should congratulate him for his leadership in working with the Royal Ottawa Hospital, which is a great community institution. George Langil and Graham Bird worked for well over a year, almost two years, to try to put together a good project where we could bring private sector money in to help construct a state-of-the-art mental health teaching hospital in my community. That'll be good news for people when it's able to open. I should acknowledge the strong support of Minister Clement and the Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, Jim Flaherty, on that very important initiative.

This budget also allows a number of things that are dear to me to be paid. Supports to people with developmental disabilities: this year we announced a record increase to help people with a developmental disability—agencies in my community like Ottawa-Carleton Life Skills, under the leadership of Cathy Wood, a fantastic board and great staff who do a lot to provide supports to people with developmental disabilities, whether they be residential supports, day programs or supports to people leaving the school system. They were fortunate enough to get a budget increase this year as part of that revitalization effort, where we can revitalize agencies that need support.

Also, there is a group that serves my constituents, the Community Resource Centre of Goulbourn, Kanata and West Carleton. They're a group that works in the community to provide services and supports in a range of areas. One of the announcements we made in the budget was to expand services in the area of domestic violence. That agency will be building and operating a 25-bed shelter for women who have had to flee domestic abuse. I strongly believe that someone's home should be their sanctuary, their place where they feel safe and secure. For far too many women in this province and in my community of Nepean-Carleton, when they put the key in the door at the end of the workday, it's the beginning of fear. That's something that is unacceptable.

The investments that were made in the budget by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, in both the developmental disability area and in the violence against women area, will help make that an important reality, those initiatives. I should also acknowledge the leadership of the Premier, in particular, on the developmental disability front. He certainly was a strong supporter of those initiatives.

When I visited my community, whether I was in Stittsville, Richmond, Barrhaven, Country Place or Bells Corners, everywhere I went, people said, "You've got to stay focused and ensure we continue to live within our means. Don't turn back the clock. Balanced budgets are incredibly important. We can't put at stake all that we've worked so hard for and go back into deficit." At the same time, in my community we've had a substantial number of layoffs with both JDS Uniphase and Nortel, and we've got to continue to stay focused on job creation and on economic growth.

That's why continuing to have a competitive tax environment, continuing to have a favourable research and development tax environment and continuing to have a favourable corporate tax environment are so important, so that when companies look at where they're going to make those financial adjustments, they continue to want to invest in Ontario, they continue to want to invest in Ottawa and in eastern Ontario. That's something that's incredibly important for me, for us and for people in my community.

Welfare reform has been another important area. This bill we're debating today will help make the payments of our welfare programs in Ontario. We've seen more than 600,000 people break free of a cycle of welfare dependency. That's good news for them and it's good news for the hard-working taxpayers who pay the freight. That hasn't happened by accident; it's happened because of the hard work and dedication of a whole lot of people, not just at the Ministry of Community and Social Services and not just at the Ontario disability support program offices, but indeed at the Ontario Works offices around the province operated by the municipalities, where 44 out of 47 municipalities made their work-for-welfare targets.

As I travelled around the province this past summer I heard stories, whether they be from the caseworker in Parry Sound, whether they be from the community agencies in Thunder Bay, whether they be from people who work here in the greater Toronto area, about the huge difference the welfare reforms are making and how they're improving people's lives and helping people realize the dignity that comes with a job and the pride that comes with being independent. The bill before us today will help continue to support the important programs for those in our community who are vulnerable, who need support, who realize that government has an important role to play to help those people who, often through no fault of their own, are having a bit of trouble and need a temporary hand up while they get their life back on track. That's why I'm pleased to be supporting Bill 149 and why I'll be voting for it this afternoon.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Today, in the short time that we have to debate this bill, I want to put this government's spending in context. I just received today from legislative research the Ontario debt and deficit from 1966 through 2002. During that period of time the Liberal government of the day, and that was in the late 1980s, ran up deficits of \$5.2 billion. Then followed the NDP. In their five years, their deficit accumulation amounted to \$47.7 billion. Now it's acknowledged that the debt of Ontario is in excess of \$120 billion. So if I take the NDP and the Liberal off that, it leaves \$71 billion of debt that Progressive Conservative Parties, Tory governments, have run up. The significant part there is that almost 30% of that was run up by this government that sits right across from us. They borrowed \$20 billion. Half of it was used for a tax cut. They went out and borrowed the money.

When Mike Harris sat down there as leader of the third party, he said, "You know, province of Ontario, you don't have a revenue problem; you've got a spending problem." Well, they went right out and borrowed money and spent money. I don't know that that's such a great record. I don't know that I would be particularly proud of it. At the same time, I recall the leader of the third party saying how they wanted to manage government like it was a business. I can't think of a business that is losing money that gives its shareholders a dividend, but that's the first thing this government did. It went out and borrowed money for a dividend.

1640

What has the result of that been? We have CCACs in this province today, the needs of whose citizens—and I'll take Windsor-Essex county as an example—are increasing. Our population is aging, our population is growing, and patients are being released from hospital sicker than they ever were before. So naturally the demand would go up from the needs of our community care access centres. What does this government do? It freezes it. It's almost as though the elderly aren't growing old and the sick aren't getting sicker. They just simply froze it.

What has that resulted in? Lineups. We have lineups, yet this government can go out and spend a quarter of a billion dollars on partisan advertising. They can go out and spend what might be upwards of \$500 million, half a billion dollars, for private education. But do they have any money for health care? Do they have any money for the sick who are coming out in our communities and where the community care access centres have to attempt to take care of their needs? No, they don't. All they do is say, "Line up, folks. We'll put you in this line over here because you need care and we'll put the profitable corporations in this province in this line over here. But we're going to give the profitable corporations a \$2.5-billion tax cut." That's just not fair.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In the short time I have to participate in the debate on supply, I want to focus on two important health care issues. The first one has to do with this government's really negative decision to change the coverage for audiology services beginning

in August 2000, a change that was, first, that physicians had to be on-site in order to supervise all audiological testing. That has resulted in reduced access to diagnostic hearing tests, which has been clearly shown in the court case that was just completed at the end of November. There has been a 50% decrease in the number of people getting hearing tests. Second, the complete withdrawal altogether of OHIP coverage of hearing aid evaluations and hearing aid re-evaluations has had a particularly negative impact on seniors in the province and those who use cochlear implants.

What's shameful about the government's decision is that the government was clearly told that this would have a negative impact on children, on seniors, on people who have suffered industrial deafness, and they were clearly told that by the diagnostic hearing test subcommittee of the Physician Services Committee, which was charged with the task of looking at which services might be delisted.

Under their report number one of the schedule of benefits working group phase 3, it says under impact analysis, "The implementation of the short-term recommendations will restrict the provision of services and may result in reduced access to diagnostic hearing tests (longer wait) and existing arrangements between physicians and audiologists. The ministry will determine what funding, if any, will be substituted." Of course, there was no funding that was substituted, and people have continued to feel a very negative impact as a result.

Some of the problems include the fact that you now need a referral from your family doctor to an ENT in order to continue to get hearing tests covered. There's a shortage of family doctors in most communities in northern Ontario, 34 to be exact. There's an even greater shortage of ENT specialists, particularly in Sault Ste Marie and in Thunder Bay. One of the audiologists who was working in the Peterborough area made it clear that it is very difficult now for people to access the services because of the lack of physician referrals. He spoke specifically of the audiology program that was running at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, which had to be cancelled because of this government's change in policy, and he made it very clear that this creates an inequity wherein patients in large urban centres have access to OHIP-insured hearing tests, while people in communities such as Peterborough either pay for tests to the private sector or have to travel great distances to teaching hospitals. Many patients can't afford these costs and therefore are forced to do without. He noted that not only did the program shut at the regional hospital, but all the clinics in Bancroft, Port Hope and Lindsay were also closed. So people now are having to travel to Toronto to get some service.

We had another individual, Cheryl Fallis from Bancroft, who wrote to Tony Clement on August 9, "We live in this rural area around Peterborough. Our closest access to major centres for health care "follow-up is one and a half hours away." There is only one bus a day and you have to come back the next day. There is also a shortage

of ENT specialists. To get an appointment with an ENT in that area, it's taking between six months and one year. So clearly people in that region are dramatically affected.

Here's a letter from a pediatrician, Dr Burke Baird from Sudbury, who wrote to the Ministry of Health on September 28 and said the following:

"We live in a geographically large area and there is a significant lack of available ENT surgeons in our communities. Waiting lists for assessments are lengthy and will become even longer if we are forced to go through these offices for simple hearing testing.

"As consulting pediatricians, the members of my department assess children for developmental, speech and intellectual difficulties. We also follow children with complicated medical needs, many of which involve potential impact on hearing and related functions. I can guarantee you that this recent change in policy will have a severe impact on our ability to assess and monitor these fragile children."

One of the most telling responses to the government came from the ENT chiefs of staff from the five teaching hospitals, who met on September 4. The five chiefs of staff from the teaching hospitals said very clearly, "The executive was of the unanimous opinion that these directives need to be revisited given the significant potential negative impact they will ensure." That was directly as a result of them reviewing the government's changes to audiology.

We also have people with cochlear implants who have very specific needs and have to have a number of hearing evaluations and re-evaluations; and those are no longer covered by OHIP, courtesy of this government. We had a Catherine Luetke of Mississauga who wrote to Minister Clement in August and said:

"I am a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.... In the summer of 1998 I received a cochlear implant at Sunnybrook hospital and I'm so grateful for my new hearing.

"As the mother of four children, paying extra for the audiological services provided at my audiologist's office, who runs an excellent private business, would be unfair. I already have to pay for my cochlear implant cords, batteries and insurance on top of my family expenses."

What's interesting is that one of the experts who appeared on behalf of the government in the recent court case reversed his position with respect to this important issue. The ministry had him there ostensibly to support the government position. He came and under cross-examination said the following—this is Dr Hawke who is chair of the OMA ENT section:

"And having thought about it and having reconsidered it and having it pointed out today, it became apparent that there is probably a better solution for this problem.

"Question: For this problem being...?"

"Answer: Being providing hearing aid evaluations, you know, and that there is a specific group that is going to be disadvantaged and that that could be taken care of.

"Question: And the specific group is the...?"

"Answer: Those individuals with cochlear implants who require multiple hearing aid evaluations and hearing aid re-evaluations."

Even the government's own witness at the recent court case where audiologists and others are taking the government to court over this change has said that the government made a mistake. Again, that was one of the government witnesses, a Dr Hawke who was chair of the OMA ENT committee.

We know that many people, not only in northern Ontario but in underserved areas, have been severely, negatively affected. They are going without hearing tests. They are going without hearing evaluations or re-evaluations. It was wrong of the government to make this decision, particularly because the government has \$2.3 billion to throw around in corporate tax cuts and is saving a lousy \$21 million on some of these changes. People who need these services deserve better. The government should continue to fund these services.

The one other issue I want to address has to do with primary health care reform. The government is clearly putting all its eggs in the basket of its family health networks and I don't think the family health networks are going to provide adequate primary care reform to the thousands and thousands of Ontarians who need it. I don't believe they are going to work in terms of moving away from a strictly treatment model to one of health prevention and health promotion. Frankly, the current structure that the government is implementing in the family health networks doesn't do anything to incorporate the skills of other health care providers who should be involved in delivering primary care.

I think the government should focus on expanding the network of community health centres and aboriginal health centres that exist in the province of Ontario and I say that because they've been in existence for over 30 years now. They are proven in terms of costing less because everyone who works there is on salary; very effective in terms of recruitment and retention not only of doctors but other health care providers. They use the skills of nurse practitioners, nurses, dieticians, social workers, counsellors etc, and they as well are very effective in recruitment and retention.

It seems to me the government would be well advised to accept the report that has been given to them by the Association of Ontario Health Centres, a report entitled Community Health Centre Expansion in Ontario, A Business Case for Strengthening Community-Based Primary Health Care Services, that the government would be wise to invest \$115 million in new funding over the next three years to increase the number of new health care centres to 131, to expand the network of existing health centres to better serve the communities and also to have an evaluation of this project after the next three years to determine if we should increase our funding in this even more.

We know that there are now 21 health care centres that could expand within the next six months if this government would only provide the funding. In many under-

serviced communities, like my own, that would result in better primary health care, more physicians and more health care providers into a community that really needs it.

1650

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further debate? The member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I can barely say my name in the amount of time that's allocated for speaking. But I'm glad the Minister of Labour is in the House this afternoon, because I want to compliment him. I want to compliment him, first of all, for abandoning Conservative policy, the policy of the Harris government, on further tax cuts. He was, along with you, one of the original people who told Mike Harris and the whiz kids, "Look, you've got to wait until you balance the budget before you cut taxes." You were right, Mr Speaker; the Minister of Labour was right. He's right now when he says we can't afford more tax cuts in the province without going into a deficit position. He's right in saying that we need more democracy in this Parliament, that this government has held the backbenchers down for so very long. He is actually coming around on some issues. I want to compliment him. He may get some Liberal votes. I don't know how many Conservative votes he'll get. But he is modifying his position, and he deserves some credit for that.

Let me mention a couple of very significant issues that are before this House that I hope will be decided soon. One issue is the need for the Visudyne treatment for those with the wet form of age-related macular degeneration. Dalton McGuinty, the Leader of the Opposition, leader of the Liberal Party, again today addressed a question, this time to the associate minister of health, pleading with the government to get rid of the red tape that's stopping this, to appropriately fund it, to forget about the \$2.2-billion tax cut for the corporations, the income tax cut which favours the wealthiest people in the province and the tax credit for private schools, which is opposed by the Minister of Education but is imposed on her by the Treasurer of this province.

I also want to talk about the need for more services and accommodation for developmentally delayed and developmentally disabled people in our province, particularly as they become adults and become a challenge for parents who have looked after them as youngsters as they become older physically and still continue to have challenges which must be met. There's a need for more accommodation. It is not sufficient to have to have members phone the minister's office to try to assist in getting accommodation. Even though we appreciate the assistance, what is needed are more spaces and more services for these individuals.

I want to say that I'm very disappointed with Bill 130, which is a bill designed to muzzle those who are now sitting on the boards of community care access centres, the centres that provide home care for the frail elderly and others being discharged from hospital and other circumstances in this province.

In St Catharines, in Niagara, Cathy Chisholm has been fired out the door. The chair of the board, Ross Gillett, has resigned. Others have resigned from the board. There's apparently a muzzle out there, even on the people who are being fired around the province. The muzzle is that if you want this severance package, then you're not allowed to speak to the media or anybody else about the problems which exist. That's straight muzzling. I would hope that the minister of democracy, who was making his pronouncements yesterday to curry favour with the backbenchers in the Conservative benches, will go to bat for individuals who wish to make known their opposition to government policies and, better yet, wish to advocate on behalf of people who need home care in this province.

I want to say that hospital restructuring is a disaster in this province, that community after community now is having the bill sent—when the bill was, say, \$25 million, you know by now it's \$75 million. The government's running out to its friends in the private sector to try to get that money. We know this government is spending some \$250 million, that's a quarter of a billion dollars, on self-serving advertising. I think I have a copy in my desk somewhere of these pamphlets with the Premier's picture on them that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Millions of dollars are being spent on ads on television, and this is a government that preaches frugality to others.

I know that their school closings—and this is my entrée to the member for Hamilton East—are a real problem. An inflexible funding formula does not allow older schools, neighbourhood schools, to stay open. On that note, I want to pass it over to my friend from Hamilton East.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I appreciate getting some time from my colleague from St Catharines.

This bill is about priorities. It is about government priorities; it is about the priorities this government has as they see fit to spend money in this province, I guess in comparison to the priorities of the opposition, the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty. Clearly, this is where we differ and this is where I'm glad we differ from those folks across the floor.

This is a government that believes it is appropriate to spend an additional \$2.2 billion on a corporate tax cut, not to bring us on a par with our neighbouring states—because we were already there; we were competitive—but to bring us 25% below the corporate tax rate of the bordering states that we compete with. This is a government that thinks it's more important to spend \$2.2 billion there than to ensure that the schools in our communities stay open. This is a government that believes it is acceptable in Ontario today to have school closures at an unprecedented rate, because you've set a funding formula that punishes schools in smaller communities, that punishes inner city schools, and through your policies this government is gutting the heart out of communities. There are community schools in this province that have been there for 100 years that are being forced to close

because of this government's lack of funding. These are the types of priorities we're talking about.

I raised today that in Hamilton, in my own community, in the first nine months of this year, 900 women were turned away from shelters. So far, up to the month of October, 900 women who went to a shelter or called to get into a shelter could not get in, in the city of Hamilton. It's a question of priorities. You're right. There is a choice in priorities here. Do we prefer to put that money into ensuring that women who leave an abusive situation have a place to go, or do we prefer to put it into corporate tax cuts? Do we prefer to put that money into ensuring our schools remain open, or do we put it into corporate tax cuts?

I have schools in my community where, when it rains, teachers have to move the desks where the kids are sitting because it's leaking on the kids' desks. Again, it's a question of priorities. This government thinks it's appropriate to spend \$500 million for tax credits for private schools in Ontario while our public school system is suffering. We don't have enough textbooks, we have large classrooms, we don't have enough computers or enough teachers, and we have buildings that are literally falling apart. It is a question of priorities.

We have a situation in my own community of Hamilton where we have a neonatal unit at McMaster, a world-class unit that does not have an intensive care unit for these kids. The kids have to be brought to London or Toronto or elsewhere across Ontario because this government doesn't see it as a priority to ensure that there's an intensive care unit at the neonatal department at McMaster University in Hamilton.

We have a situation where they've shut down the burn unit in London and the hospital in Hamilton. The burn unit at the General has 10 beds that are at capacity year-round. They've asked for 14 more beds to ensure that there are beds for someone who needs help. We serve a catchment area of two million people. Again, it's a question of priorities. This government thinks it's more important to give \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts than to ensure there is a bed for someone if they're burned and need that emergency help in a hospital across the province of Ontario. There is a lack of palliative care beds in our province, in our community. Again, it's a question of priorities. This government doesn't seem to get it.

But maybe there is some hope here, because as they're getting into the leadership fight to replace Premier Harris, they're all trying so hard to run away from this record. They're all trying so hard to say, "I don't really agree with everything that was done. I don't really think we did it the right way. I would have done it differently." I challenge the contenders for Mike Harris's throne to come forward and tell the people of Ontario which decisions you disagreed with—which tax cut decisions, which priority you thought was wrong—and how you would have done it differently. Because nobody said a word while they were sitting in that cabinet. Nobody had the guts while they were sitting in there to turn in the keys to the limo and challenge the decisions of government.

But now that they're running for Mike Harris's job, they're all pounding their chests. They want to be heroes and tell us, "Well, we would have been different." It ain't going to work. They're all the same. They were all there. They were all part of that decision. They are not going to fool Ontarians. People are tired of six and a half years of this brutal, oppressive government and the decisions they've made. I can tell you, they can play all the games they want in the leadership race; the gig's up and Ontarians have seen it. In a year and a half, they're out the door and they will be sitting on this side of the floor.

The Speaker: Mr O'Toole has moved second reading of Bill 149, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the public service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2002. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1700 to 1710.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Sorbara, Greg
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 38.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

SUPPLY ACT, 2001

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2001

Mr Flaherty moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 149, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the public service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2002 / *Projet de loi 149, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2002.*

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Quiet, please. Same vote? Same vote.

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

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I would like to ask for unanimous consent to move motions without notice regarding Bill 105, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require the taking of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons, and Bill 98, An Act to proclaim May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day, and that the questions on the motions be put without further debate or amendment.

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

Hon Mrs Ecker: I move that the order for third reading of Bill 105, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act to require the taking of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons, be discharged and the bill be recommitted to the standing committee on justice and social policy for clause-by-clause consideration on Thursday, December 13, 2001, from 10 am to 12 noon; that the committee will report the bill to the House on Thursday, December 13, 2001, and at such time the bill will be ordered for third reading; and that when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put the question immediately on third reading without further debate or amendment and without any deferral of the vote.

The Speaker: Dispense? Dispense. Thank you. There seemed to be consensus on that.

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

Hon Mrs Ecker: I move that the standing committee on justice and social policy shall be authorized to meet from 10 am to 12 noon on Thursday, December 13, 2001,

for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 98, An Act to proclaim May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day; that the committee will report the bill to the House on Thursday, December 13, 2001, and at such time the bill will be ordered for third reading; and that when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put the question immediately on third reading without further debate or amendment and without any deferral of the vote.

The Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

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

Hon Mrs Ecker: Mr Speaker, Her Honour awaits.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.

1720

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

Hon Hilary M. Weston (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present sittings thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 110, An Act to promote quality in the classroom / *Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir la qualité dans les salles de classe;*

Bill 111, An Act to revise the Municipal Act and to amend or repeal other Acts in relation to municipalities / *Projet de loi 111, Loi révisant la Loi sur les municipalités et modifiant ou abrogeant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les municipalités;*

Bill 145, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act / *Projet de loi 145, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail.*

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, l'honorable lieutenant-gouverneur sanctionne ces projets de loi.

The Speaker: May it please Your Honour, we, Her Majesty's most dutiful and faithful subjects of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario in session assembled, approach Your Honour with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and government, and humbly beg to present for Your Honour's acceptance, a bill entitled An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the public service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2002.

Clerk Assistant: The following is the title of the bill to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 149, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the public service for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2002 / Projet de loi 149, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2002.

Clerk of the House: Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth thank Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, accept their benevolence and assent to this bill in Her Majesty's name.

Son Honneur la lieutenant-gouverneure remercie les bons et loyaux sujets de Sa Majesté, accepte leur bienveillance et sanctionne ce projet de loi en leur nom.

TRIBUTES TO HER HONOUR

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I beg the indulgence of the House to say a few words regarding Her Honour.

My colleagues, it is my privilege to rise in the House today to honour Hilary Weston, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. I ask that the House join me in both recognizing Her Honour's accomplishments as Ontario's representative of the Queen and particularly in thanking her for working so hard on behalf of the people of this province in this vice-regal role.

When Her Honour was appointed in 1997, it was not long before people realized that this Lieutenant Governor did things differently. She moved the New Year's Day levy, for example, right away out of Toronto for the first time since Confederation, and I know the people of Kingston and of London in 2001 were delighted to have this levy in their home towns.

Very early on, our Lieutenant Governor made it known she was very committed to women, to children, to volunteers. Through visits to women's shelters in towns all across Ontario she's made a real difference in the lives of many. Her Honour's caring extends far beyond the confines of her office to the everyday lives of ordinary people. We need only look to the hundreds of other visits she's made for proof of this, visiting 87 communities from Sioux Lookout to Leamington, Kenora and Cornwall.

Her Honour also made children a top priority. The Lieutenant Governor established the Hilary M. Weston Foundation for Youth shortly after her appointment to office, and she donates her entire salary to this foundation. Through the foundation Her Honour launched First Connection, a student career development initiative, in 1998. This program places grade 12 students from across the province in companies as management interns for the summer, allowing them to gain knowledge and to gain experience and to gain contacts. On behalf of the 88 students who have benefited from participating in First Connection since 1998, I thank Her Honour for enabling them to gain the experience that influences their career and their education choices so positively.

The Lieutenant Governor's commitment to hard work is indeed unflagging. After five years of unrelenting ceremonial duties, making 44,161 appointments of notaries

and commissioners, signing 15,115 orders in council, being on duty every single New Year's Day, she is still the epitome of grace under pressure. What more can one say of a person who, after all this work, says, "I wish there were more days in a week or more hours in a day."

All I can say is thank you to our Lieutenant Governor. I thank you for caring so much. I thank you for working so hard. I thank you for representing all the people of Ontario, and Ontario itself, with leadership and dignity and with such respect for your fellow citizens. I do know that our province has been enriched by your contributions.

Might I also say to His Honour, congratulations to you too. You have been most supportive of Her Honour. You have played an important role in helping her carry out those responsibilities.

Your Honour, thank you.

Applause.

1730

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Colleagues, it is my distinct pleasure as leader of the official opposition to offer my warmest best wishes and my heartfelt thanks to Your Honour. As I was listening to the Premier, my only regret is that you have not been able to spend more time sitting in that chair. Never has this House witnessed such decorum as you've instilled here among us this afternoon.

Your Honour has had nothing short of a remarkable tenure in your office. On Monday in a speech to the Canadian Club, Her Honour said, "It is not the holder of the office who is significant, but the office itself." On its face, of course, Your Honour is correct. But I would add the following: the holder of the office can and does have great influence over the respect and esteem in which the office itself is held. What the holder brings to the office and how the holder exercises the privilege of the office greatly colours our perception of the office itself.

Your Honour, you brought much to the office of Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. You brought us warmth and grace and dignity and intellectual curiosity and caring and a determination to do good. Your conduct in the office, your record of service, has not only earned you high public esteem, but has raised the institution of the office itself. Your Honour's accomplishments as Lieutenant Governor are almost too numerous to list. As the Premier stated, it is our understanding that you have attended or hosted over 1,500 public events and greeted more than 35,000 guests at over 500 gatherings here at Queen's Park.

But it was not Your Honour's custom to simply wait for an invitation to be issued. You sought out the poor, the dispossessed, the marginalized. Your Honour went where she felt she was needed. Her Honour had a special empathy for battered women and women's shelters. She also used her office to celebrate volunteers by instituting the Lieutenant Governor's Volunteer Award, which will be a lasting legacy of your time in office.

Your Honour devoted much of your time to the young people of our province. Whenever I have spoken to Her

Honour, I have always been struck by her obvious genuine energy, commitment and enthusiasm felt for young people. These are challenging times for all of us, but especially, I would argue, for our young people. In Your Honour, we have had a Lieutenant Governor who recognizes the potential of young people and, in turn, you have made it your mission to nurture that potential. By doing so, you've really taught us all a very valuable lesson. The lesson is quite simply this: if we don't see the potential in our young people, how can we expect them to see it in themselves?

Your Honour, you have ennobled the office you have held. You have raised it in public esteem. You leave it in higher regard than it was held when you assumed the office some five years ago. Through your warmth, your caring, your drive, you have served us with honour and distinction. Quite simply, you've helped to make our province a better place to live.

In your Canadian Club speech this week, Her Honour said that the office of Lieutenant Governor "may be less 'head' of state than 'heart' of government." My colleagues, on behalf of my caucus, and I'm sure I speak for all members present, I wish to publicly thank Your Honour for giving us the gift of your heart. Now that you are leaving the office of Lieutenant Governor, let it be said what so many thousands of your fellow citizens already know so well: Hilary Weston served us well.

Applause.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Your Honour, on behalf of the New Democratic caucus, I am pleased to be able to say some words of thanks for five years of distinguished service to the people of Ontario. I believe I speak for all Ontarians when I say that you will be missed.

The office of Lieutenant Governor is steeped in tradition. Those who hold it are called to the highest level of public service, to say nothing of the busiest level of public service.

You brought class and distinction to your office. It is a role that you filled naturally.

People regard you fondly for a host of reasons. I believe it was your sincerity and your genuine sense of caring that spoke loudest to our citizens. They saw you forgo a salary and donate those proceeds to worthy programs for women and children. You demonstrated your commitment to youth when you established the First Connection program, something that young Ontarians continue to benefit from.

People admired your grace and style. These qualities shone through at the over 1,500 public events you attended in 87 Ontario communities over the past five years. And let me say personally, thank you for not forgetting communities like Sioux Lookout and Kenora. People there very much appreciated the fact that you recognized there is life beyond the 401.

You have touched the lives of individuals from all different backgrounds and walks of life in every corner of this province. They applauded your advocacy and involvement in a wide range of concerns, from disabilities

to seniors. Most of all, they saw you enjoying your duties and putting everything you had into them.

Now, as you return to private life, or a little more of private life, you will be warmly remembered by all, and you have indeed set a high standard for those who will follow you.

In honour of your Irish heritage and this occasion, there is a poem by a very Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*.

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and
wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for
the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace
comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning
to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon
a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day,
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds
by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on
the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

As leader of Ontario New Democrats, I wish you well on your future path. Enjoy a well-earned break. Your family will be happy to reclaim you from public life.

On behalf of people across this province, I want to extend warmest wishes for your continued good health, happiness, success and the contribution I know you will continue to make.

Applause.

1740

Hon Hilary M. Weston (Lieutenant Governor): Mr Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, I first want to thank the Premier for his very kind words in this chamber today. I assure you that his personal support and that of the government have been very warmly felt. I thank him for his kindnesses over the past five years.

Premier, as we both are about to make our official exit from the provincial spotlight, I am reminded of the line from a Tom Stoppard play: "Every exit is an entry somewhere else." I join with everyone here in wishing you all the best in your future endeavours in whatever arena you choose to enter next.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition and to the honourable member for Kenora-Rainy River for your very good wishes today. I certainly enjoyed your reading of W.B. Yeats's *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. It reminded me of my early school days in Ireland.

I'm not sure if the positive reception in the chamber thus far this evening emanates from good manners or from that easy politeness that comes from knowing that this is the final goodbye. But I must say that it's rather nice not to be interrupted by the mutterings from some corners of the House that have been known to greet me while reading the four throne speeches of my time. I might say that I am also grateful for the absence of the pelts of paper that came my way from the press gallery during my one prorogation speech.

I am hoping that you might maintain this positive spirit and indulge me for a few more minutes.

I stand before you as I approach the fifth anniversary of my installation into this venerable office, the culmination of a whirlwind 1,825-day journey, one that saw out one century and welcomed in a historic new millennium once or twice, depending on which experts you listen to.

Although my installation took place in the last century, it seems like only yesterday that I stood in this chamber and took an oath to be faithful and bear true allegiance and to administer justice impartially. On that day in January 1997, I committed myself to supporting young people, volunteers and women and I hoped that I would merit the trust that you placed in me here.

This role was quite a challenge for someone who had never held public office. I can assure you that I have today a much deeper understanding of the commitment and sacrifice that each of you makes as elected representatives.

I am glad to report to members here today that I have visited all but three of your 103 constituencies while serving the people of this province. In the process I attended, as was said earlier, close to 1,500 events in 87 different communities, from Sioux Lookout to Leamington and from Kenora in the west to Cornwall in the east.

I have received close to 35,000 guests at official events in the Lieutenant Governor's suite in this historic building, and more than 72,000 visitors participated in guided tours of the suite here at Queen's Park, the heart of our provincial democracy.

Like all of you, I take great pleasure in congratulating senior citizens on reaching milestones in their lives; in my case, more than 22,000 times for birthdays and for wedding anniversaries of 50 years or more.

I have also been privileged to honour more than 450 citizens at 40 investitures in Ontario's honour system, the largest and most well regarded in the country. And I know that many members who were present on these occasions have also been proud of these deserving citizens.

I have been warmly received in communities throughout the province by members from all sides of this House. I thank all of you and, through you, your constituents for a very moving welcome.

I have also benefited greatly from the very professional work of the Ontario public service and I would like to thank them, through you, Mr Speaker, especially for the able assistance of your distinguished Clerk and table officers, the Sergeant at Arms and his staff and, indeed, all the assembly staff. All have given me tremendous support.

I also would like to extend my thanks to the Chair of Management Board, whose secretariat assists me at my very small office with administrative and financial support; to the Solicitor General for the services of the OPP in keeping me safe from harm and for support in my travels; and to the Minister of Natural Resources for the skilled pilots who delivered us safely to destinations across the province and, I may say, in all kinds of weather. Also, a special thank you to the ministries of citizenship and economic development and trade and to the Cabinet Office staff who sought me out and tracked me down, all to ensure that I signed close to 16,000 orders in council and 45,000 appointments of notaries, commissioners and land patents. Above all, I thank my loyal, hard-working and dedicated staff who epitomized the best qualities of public service and somehow managed to keep everything, mainly me, going. They are perhaps the best gift that I will leave to my successor.

As I leave office, we stand at the threshold of an exciting and interesting time in this province and this country. I am told that the year ahead may bring many changes in who sits where in the government's front benches. But 2002 will also be the year in which we celebrate the 50 years of exceptional dedication of our sovereign. I know that Ontarians will look forward to greeting the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh on their visit to this province next October. In addition, World Youth Day and the presence of Pope John Paul II will bring millions of young people to this city next June. Finally, the year ahead marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of our first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe, a man of great vision who established the roots of parliamentary democracy in this province and bequeathed to us the proud traditions of our constitutional monarchy.

The Ontario that I have come to know and love fully lives up to its motto, "Loyal she began and loyal she remains," and loyal I shall remain as I watch from the wings. I shall always wish that Divine Providence guide you in all your deliberations and continue to bless this country and this extraordinary province of Ontario.

God save the Queen.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It being almost 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1754.

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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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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