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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 2 May 2005

Lundi 2 mai 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 May 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): Last week I had the pleasure of driving across this great province. I stopped to meet with business people, councillors and industry representatives from across the north. One issue that was raised over and over by municipal councils right across the north was this government's Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund. I was astonished to hear the circumstances of two communities where COMRIF applications were rejected: Rainy River and Iroquois Falls.

Rainy River is under an environmental caution for their sewer system. In fact, the situation is so grave that the community can't add another house to their existing system. This government turned down their application.

Iroquois Falls also made a COMRIF application for improvements to their water and sewer system. The water system is so bad that when the Iroquois Falls fire service truck responded to a garage fire they found that the filters on the truck got plugged from corrosion from the water system. The garage burned down. Thankfully, no one was injured. Iroquois Falls's COMRIF application was also rejected.

These are just two of the communities that are disappointed by this program. In fact, only two communities in northwestern Ontario received funding. Many councillors I spoke with at the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association remarked that it looked as if COMRIF funding stopped at North Bay.

Northern communities are struggling with antiquated water and sewer systems, but this government doesn't seem to be listening to their cries for help. I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing why he has turned his back on the communities in northern Ontario.

MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): I'm very pleased to rise today to make everyone aware of the upcoming Organization of Small Urban Municipalities'

conference, commonly known as OSUM. This year it is being held in the beautiful town of Goderich, Ontario, in the new state-of-the-art building called the Maitland Recreation Centre. This year's theme is Strong Partnerships—Strong Communities, and I think this is an excellent theme. It represents not only the strong partnerships between small urban municipalities but their strong partnership with the provincial government.

OSUM is an important part of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. I am proud to be part of a government that is listening to the concerns of small urban municipalities. The new Ontario municipal partnership fund is an example of how we have consulted with AMO to come up with a formula that all municipalities can understand and that treats all municipalities with fairness and equality.

I wish to thank all of the organizers and volunteers for this 52nd annual OSUM conference and welcome all of the delegates. I know they will enjoy the town of Goderich, and I encourage all members to come to this event within the beautiful riding of Huron–Bruce.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): In recent months we've heard the Minister of Community and Social Services defend the Liberal government's plan to close the three remaining centres in Ontario that are home to over 1,000 adults with severe developmental disabilities. These are centres that the minister has declined to tour, and she has forged ahead with a cold and calculated decision driven solely by financial considerations.

The de-institutionalization and closure of the three facilities—Southwestern Regional, Huronia and Rideau Regional—had been brought to a virtual standstill by the previous Progressive Conservative government, and for good reason. That good reason was a determination that in the cases of the most severely disabled, the ones who are still in these excellent facilities, their needs are best met in their current environment.

In her defence of the closures, Minister Pupatello talks about the provision of community services, but thousands of Ontarians are already waiting for those services to materialize. Before the Liberal government starts moving people out of their homes—facilities such as the Rideau Regional Centre—I implore them to provide an individual service plan that will satisfy the concerns of family members who believe their loved ones are now receiving

the best care available. I believe that family members are in the best position to assess the care model that meets the needs of their loved ones, and their beliefs should not be ignored.

KASHECHEWAN FIRST NATION

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): That's a statement I totally agree with.

I want to bring to the attention of the Legislature the situation in Kashechewan. You will know that last Wednesday, both myself and Minister Kwinter went to Kashechewan to visit the flood that happened there this spring.

I want to paint a bit of a picture for you of what this community has to face. They are basically a community that is built inside a dike. About 10 years ago, the federal government built a dike around the community, about 20 feet high, made of dirt, to protect the community from possible floods from the Albany River. Well, Mr. Speaker, you will know there are not many things that stand up to Mother Nature and, sure as things are the way they are, that particular dike is starting to have some engineering problems. As the minister who was with me knows—and he was so gracious to come along—we recognize that we have a very serious situation where we have to make a decision either to replace the dike and rebuild it or to try to move the community away.

In the words of Monte Kwinter, the minister who was with me, it's a really difficult situation for that community. Imagine living in a dike, and what that has to do with how you feel as an individual living in a community like that, where when you walk out your door in the morning, all you see is a big berm of sand and dirt.

I want to thank Minister Kwinter for having come last Wednesday. I notice that he is sending me over some information about it as we speak. I look forward to working with him and pressuring our federal government, along with the province, to do what needs to be done to resolve the situation in Kashechewan.

ARBOUR DAY

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I rise today to recognize Arbour Day in the city of Mississauga. The observance of Arbour Day, which originated in 1872 in Nebraska, has spread to Canada and other countries around the world, and it's been adopted by schools and organizations as a tree-planting and environmental cleanup day.

The city of Mississauga celebrates Arbour Day annually with a tree-planting ceremony. This year's celebration was held Friday, April 29, at St. Edith Stein Elementary School near my home in Mississauga West. Students prepared for the special day by tracing and colouring their own handprints, which, once collected and assembled, formed a vibrant multicoloured mural of trees titled Helping Hands for Earth.

Friday's celebrations brought student representatives from each class together to join in singing It's a Wonder-

ful World, followed by a reading of The Giving Tree. My parish priest, Father Leo Huard, who in June will celebrate his 40th anniversary of ordination, then blessed the 20-foot sugar maple tree planted at the school.

I'd like to recognize and congratulate St. Edith Stein's principal, Cathy Saytar; vice-principal, Julie Rienzo; and ward 9 councillor Pat Saito and her representative, Teresa Martin-Greer, as well as the entire St. Edith Stein student body for raising awareness about environmental protection in Mississauga and making 2005 Arbour Day celebrations a success.

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ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham): Being able to celebrate and take pride in our cultural diversities and heritage gives Ontario its strength. I stand here today to proudly announce that May is Asian Heritage Month.

Asian Canadians have greatly enriched our province over the years, and their contributions have helped to shape our community. We need only to look at the world of literature and the names of Joy Kogawa, Paul Yee, Michael Ondaatje, Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Wayson Choy, and Rohinton Mistry. They remind us of how lucky we are to have such great writers, who tell their wonderful and compelling stories about their experiences and heritage.

Asian Ontarians have also excelled in many other areas: in the medical community, in the sciences and in government.

Our current Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, and the Honourable Vivienne Poy have made significant contributions, not only to our province but also to our country. In the medical community, Toronto's own Dr. Lap-Chee Tsui was a major contributor to the international project in mapping the human genome. In the financial community, Christopher Ondaatje has contributed significantly with his generous donation to the ROM. Mr. Ondaatje has stated that his contribution is a manifestation of not only his love of the ROM and his pride in his own South Asian heritage but, most importantly, his love and appreciation of Canada.

Our province is fortunate to have Asian immigrants call Ontario their home. Their contributions have helped shape our province, making Ontario the place to be. I ask all of you to join me, along with all Ontarians, in celebrating Asian Heritage Month, and to celebrate the diversity and strength of our province.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Yesterday, May 1, I had the honour of representing our caucus and our leader, John Tory, at the sixth annual ceremony of remembrance at the Ontario Police Memorial here at Queen's Park. This year, the names of Constable Tyler L. Boutilier of the Grenville OPP, Constable Christopher Garrett of the Cobourg police, and Constable Michael

Siydock of the Port Credit OPP were added to the wall of honour.

The spouses of the officers, family members, and thousands of police officers from police services from across our province, and even officers from the United States of America were present. It was a beautiful service, with the Ontario Provincial Police choruses and various pipes and drums providing music.

The ceremony of remembrance is organized each year by the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation. I would like to thank the board of directors of the foundation: Richard Houston, president; Robert Welsh, vice-president; Frank Parkhouse; Charlie Green; Timothy Zayack; Joan Whalley, and David Brown for their commitment in seeing that this important event is carried on year after year.

But in particular, I'd like to thank the families of Tyler, Chris, and Michael for allowing their special heroes to serve the citizens of our great province. They will always be heroes in life, not death.

LAPS FOR LUNGS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): I rise today to talk about Laps for Lungs. Laps for Lungs is a new, school-based health promotion and charitable activity that is organized by the Lung Association. It is aimed at helping to educate students about asthma, as well as supporting schools with their fundraising strategy.

Laps for Lungs works in four ways: It provides asthma education and information for students from junior kindergarten to grade 8, their teachers and their parents; it promotes physical fitness among students; it gives back 30% of the net proceeds of each registered school as they raise it; and it provides vital funding for the Lung Association to ensure the continuation and development of its programs, research and other education initiatives.

I applaud the Lung Association, the schools and the students that participate in this important event, as it helps to bring awareness to a condition that affects more and more people every year. We must all do our part to ease the suffering that asthma causes.

I'm proud to say that we are doing our part. Last week we announced the closing of the Lakeview generating station. It was physically shut down this weekend. Closing Lakeview is the equivalent of removing 500,000 cars from the road—that's half a million vehicles. Not only will this help our environment by eliminating over two million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and help us in our efforts to achieve Canada's Kyoto targets, but by shutting down Lakeview and eliminating those emissions, we are also insuring that all Ontarians can breathe cleaner air.

FIRE IN COBOURG

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): It is with extreme pleasure that I rise in front of the House today to

update my colleagues on the status of the dreadful fire that occurred one week ago today at Horizon Plastics in my riding of Northumberland.

I had the opportunity this weekend to meet with Brian Read, the president of Horizon Plastics. He was thankful for the support that was offered by the community and ministry officials. Mr. Read expressed his appreciation to the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Labour staff for their much-needed support and guidance during these difficult circumstances.

We've always known that Northumberland is a wonderful community to live in, but only when circumstances like these present themselves is it clearly evident how thoughtful and considerate these citizens really are. So many people pulled together to offer their unselfish and generous help to everyone and anyone in need of assistance.

Generously, a local community college offered temporary office space to Horizon Plastics, which permitted them to be back up and running on Tuesday, April 26, less than 24 hours after the day of the horrific fire. Mr. Read proudly let us know that he never missed a day of shipping.

Mr. Read has stated that this is one reason that he continues to operate his large-scale operation in Cobourg. We often take for granted how wonderful life is in small-town Ontario, until something as devastating as this happens. Mr. Read was astounded at the way people went out of their way to help his company get back and running. I'm happy to say, along with Mr. Read, that the company is 100% in operation today.

VISITORS

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I had the pleasure of having lunch with Page Taylor Mercer today, and I wanted to introduce his family, because he has four generations here today; they're in the west members' gallery. His mother, Lauralynn Mercer, his grandmother, Barbara Mercer, and his great-grandmother, Mildred Caines, are here listening today.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): That's not a point of order, but it's a very interesting point.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ontario Heritage Act / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the standing committee on general government and the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I move that, in addition to their regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on general government be authorized to meet the morning of Wednesday, May 4, 2005, for the purpose of considering Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, and the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, for the purpose of considering Bill 133, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act in respect of enforcement and other matters.

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

VISITORS

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to take this time to draw the members' attention to a visitor from my hometown of Barry's Bay here today: Wilmer Matthews, a former principal at several high schools in the riding. It's good to have him here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): The member knows that's not a point of order, but welcome.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): It is indeed my great pleasure to inform the House that last week the Canada-Ontario affordable housing agreement was officially signed and Ontario's new affordable housing program has been launched.

This is an historic occasion in this province. Ontario is back into affordable housing in a meaningful, significant way, after almost a decade of neglect by the previous government. I want all members of this House to know that that decade of discontent is over. Thousands of new units and housing allowances will become available for the neediest, most vulnerable members of our society.

This momentous agreement occurred through precedent-setting co-operation among all three levels of

government, each committing to finding a long-term affordable housing solution.

Over the past many months, ministry staff and I have worked closely with Canada's Minister of Housing, Joe Fontana, as well as other federal ministers responsible for housing—Andy Scott and Steve Mahoney—and their staff to develop the best new affordable housing program possible.

This new program also affirms the effectiveness of this government's approach to negotiating with its municipal partners and stakeholder groups. By choosing consultation over confrontation and co-operation over conflict, we were able to reach this historic agreement. Our government consulted with and listened to our municipal partners and stakeholder groups, who told us that the old program designed by the previous government simply did not work. They told us they needed more flexibility to meet local housing needs. They told us about the growing affordability problems in northern Ontario and in rural communities. They told us that they wanted to try innovative approaches.

Well, the McGuinty government listened. We agreed and, most importantly, we have acted. Ontario demanded and fought for flexibility and innovation. To their credit, our federal partners listened.

I also want to acknowledge the work of my colleague Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Gerretsen and his valued insights and contribution.

Our government truly believes that in an age of affluence, in one of the richest jurisdictions in the world, there is no justification for turning our backs on those who suffer misfortune. That is why, despite an extremely challenging fiscal situation, the McGuinty government is investing \$301 million in this affordable housing program, matching the \$301 million contributed by the federal government, for a grand total of \$602 million. We are keeping our election commitment to fully match federal dollars in this critical area. This brings the total amount invested in affordable housing in Ontario by the federal, provincial and municipal governments to \$734 million over the life of this program. It's an investment that will create more than 15,000 units of affordable housing and provide housing allowances for some 5,000 lower-income families.

Through the affordable housing program, there will be: more affordable rental units; more support for those needing housing assistance in northern Ontario; a major expansion of new supportive housing for victims of domestic violence and persons suffering from mental illness; and \$80 million directed toward 5,000 housing allowances in communities right across the province, providing immediate relief to low-income Ontarians.

The program establishes the Ontario mortgage and housing partnership, fulfilling another key commitment of our government. This will help housing providers access stable, long-term, low-cost financing to help build more units faster.

The program will also help make home ownership possible for those who thought it was beyond their reach.

We are introducing the home ownership market entry fund, or HOME, a new initiative that will offer a capital grant for the creation of new affordable housing. This grant will help to support the development of at least 4,500 units, which would then be purchased by Ontarians with low to moderate income at below the average market selling price for any given area. If appropriate legislation is passed, it will become permanent. If the unit is sold, the grant will be repaid to the fund, along with a share of the capital gains. This money would then be used to help more low-income families realize the Canadian dream of home ownership. Shelter is a basic human right, a basic human need. Because a house is more than a home, a home is a catalyst for stability in our lives, a necessary precondition for education and for employment. By investing in housing, we are investing in our people. By investing in our people, we are investing in stronger communities. In the days ahead, and in a continuing spirit of co-operation, our government will be working with our federal and municipal partners on the implementation and successful rollout of this important initiative.

We will be announcing further details as we move forward. Affordable housing is a key priority for our government. The new affordable housing program is a key component of our comprehensive housing strategy for this province. In this and in many other ways, we are taking action to protect and support Ontario's neediest, weakest and most vulnerable. We are helping to create the caring, compassionate civil society of which we can all be justly proud. I thank all members of this Legislature for supporting this important initiative.

EDUCATION WEEK

SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I rise today to recognize the many schools across Ontario that are celebrating Education Week. There is a great deal to celebrate about our publicly funded schools in Ontario, and today I encourage all my colleagues to see for themselves what is happening in our local schools. It has been 34 years, on average, since MPPs have been students in the schools, and suffice it to say that a lot has changed since then. I've once again issued, as I did for the last five years as critic, and now as minister, a non-partisan challenge to all members of this House by encouraging them to reconnect with Ontario's students, teachers, education workers and principals by spending a full day back in the classroom this month.

Une fois de plus, comme je l'ai fait au cours des cinq dernières années, je lance un défi non partisan à tous les membres de cette Assemblée et je les encourage à rétablir des liens avec les élèves, le personnel enseignant, les travailleurs d'éducation et la direction des écoles de l'Ontario, en passant une journée complète en salle de classe ce mois-ci.

As a government, we have worked relentlessly to help all students get the education they deserve. Our education

partnership approach has paved the way for an environment of peace and stability, a necessity if we are to achieve our shared goals for students. If members decide to visit an elementary school this year, they may well see the results of our \$90-million investment to help bring the average class size down, ultimately capping it at 20 in JK to grade three. They might meet one of the 1,100 new primary teachers who were hired through that funding. Students in almost 1,300 schools have benefited; that's one in three schools that are seeing and feeling that improvement.

This morning I met with Mrs. Marie Braz, a grade 3 teacher, and her students at Indian Road Crescent Junior Public School. The school has hired a new teacher with funding that we provided to reduce class sizes. With our investment, the school estimates that there would have been 32 students in Mrs. Braz's class otherwise; there are now 23. That is a result we all can be proud of and one that has been repeated 1,300 times in school after school right across Ontario.

We have also focused on providing our high school students with more opportunities to succeed. We recognize the need for a new, imaginative program to lower the dropout rates in Ontario high schools. That's why last June we announced an additional \$100-million initiative to fix curriculum issues, improve technological education and provide other alternatives for struggling students.

Today, if you visit the schools, you have a good chance of seeing the results of 105 innovative projects for 3,000 secondary students who are most at risk as part of an \$18-million investment we made in January designed to give them new opportunities to succeed in school. For example, in the Honourable Jim Watson's riding, Ottawa West-Nepean, 11 students in the Ridgemont High School's renovation project took on the task of completely renovating a house. A grade 12 student enrolled in the program said it was a struggle for him to get up in the morning and go to school, but now he's excited about the work ahead. I met him when I travelled to Ottawa to visit the project myself, and he said to me and to Minister Watson, "When I see the completed house that I worked on, I will feel more satisfaction than I ever have with a book of notes." That's a change in attitude that we can be proud of, more of which will be usual in the schools across the province.

1400

Les écoles de toute la province sont maintenant plus accessibles aux groupes communautaires. En juillet dernier nous avons accordé 20 \$ millions, avec le ministre de « Tourism and Recreation », aux conseils scolaires pour ouvrir les portes de nos écoles et créer ainsi des centres communautaires où toute la population de l'Ontario peut apprendre et s'épanouir.

As a result, non-profit community groups that run activities for children and youth no longer have to pay rental fees, for example, to the Limestone District School Board. Minister Dombrowsky, the member representing Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington; Minister Gerretsen, the member for Kingston and the Islands; and

Mr. Sterling, the member for Lanark–Carleton, may well see those results when they visit schools in their communities. Those schools will be available to community groups for 7,000 more hours a year. That's 3,500 more basketball games or 5,000 Brownie meetings, thanks in good part to the hard work of my colleague the Minister of Tourism and Recreation—a significant result for local students, parents and members of the community.

The McGuinty government believes that all students, including those in small rural communities, should have an equal opportunity for quality education. By investing \$31 million to help keep good schools open, 1,149 rural schools will benefit. The St. Clair Catholic District School Board has hired full-time secretaries at 19 of their schools and recommends that 15 elementary schools be assigned a full-time principal instead of part-time.

I encourage my colleagues—the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, Pat Hoy; the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Maria Van Bommel; and the member for Sarnia–Lambton, Caroline Di Cocco—to spend time with some of those secretaries when they spend a day in school this spring. If they do, they'll see the difference a full-time secretary makes to a school and its students, and the support that that provides to the principal and teachers throughout the school.

These are just some of the results of our education investment. Clearly, we acknowledge that there is much more that needs to be done. Our government firmly believes that excellence in education is critical to our students' and to our province's future. We will continue to invest wisely in Ontario's publicly funded system.

Il ne s'agit que de quelques-uns des exemples du fruit de notre investissement en éducation. Il reste toutefois du pain sur la planche.

Notre gouvernement est fermement convaincu que l'excellence dans le domaine de l'éducation publique est vitale pour l'avenir des élèves et de la province, et nous continuerons à investir de façon judicieuse dans le système d'éducation financé par les deniers publics de l'Ontario.

By going back to the classroom, we, the legislators of this province, can all reconnect with teachers and students and see the McGuinty government's investment at work, producing results. Constituency week is just around the corner, so the timing for this commitment in Education Week couldn't be better: smaller class sizes, resources and respect for teachers, more opportunities for high school students, and peace and stability in our schools.

Réduction de l'effectif des classes; ressources pour le personnel enseignant et respect envers lui; augmentation du nombre des possibilités offertes aux élèves des écoles secondaires; paix et stabilité dans nos écoles.

To my colleagues I say that Ontario schools are better this year. Please go back to your local school and see for yourself.

Thank you. Je vous remercie.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Responses?

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I am pleased to rise on behalf of the official opposition to acknowledge and celebrate Education Week in Ontario. The public boards are celebrating this week with the theme Read to Succeed, and the 2005 Catholic Education Week theme is Being the Body of Christ.

For the Catholic board, this annual promotion celebrates the distinctive contribution that Catholic schools make to students, the community and society. The foundational belief of Catholic education is that spiritual and moral formation are critical to the development of the whole person and to the realization of the fullness of life.

As we set aside this week to mark the importance of education and to honour those who work with our children in the education system, we focus on building a brighter, successful future for our children. The two themes chosen for 2005 speak eloquently to that goal.

Read to Succeed has been a central theme in education across Canada for many years. Almost daily it seems we see celebrities, athletes, corporations and non-profit organizations espousing the necessity of reading skills as a key to success.

The Minister of Education's press release today emphasizes that collective agreements and infrastructure loans are what we should be celebrating. While no one disputes the importance of renewing our schools and classrooms, it is equally important to ensure that those who teach our children have the skills and resources to provide the best possible education. Doretta Wilson, of the Society for Quality Education, made the point just recently that children can't learn if they can't read. We need to implement proven, effective phonics reading programs in order to successfully teach Ontario's children. There are hundreds of thousands of parents who share those sentiments. We need to remember that some of the basics that we were taught remain valid and valued in today's Ontario.

As we mark Education Week, I want to champion the dedicated teachers in our children's classrooms, the parents who get involved with their child's school council, those in rural Ontario who are struggling to keep their schools open, the students who do peer tutoring and mentoring, those students who participate in student government and the principals and all of the support and administrative staff who strive daily to provide a nurturing, caring environment before, during and after school for all of our students. We must recognize that the education system is made up of dedicated individuals who, by their actions, have a profound impact on our children each and every day. The success of our children is undeniably tied to those who work in our schools and classrooms. As we celebrate this specific week, let's work with our partners in the education system to make every week a celebration of student success.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I'm pleased to respond to my friend and colleague the Minister for Public

Infrastructure Renewal's announcement. While we would like to see the Liberals actually keep a campaign promise, I'm going to remain a bit skeptical here until we actually see some spades in the soil. I can't help but say that it looks a lot like pre-election goodies for their federal Liberal cousins. We hear in here day after day from the Liberals what a lousy job the federal Liberals are doing and how they're not standing up for Ontario. But now that we're getting close to an election and they've got cameras there, they couldn't get up-close and personal enough for those TV cameras.

I think when members look at the details—

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): Jack Layton—

Mr. Hudak: There may be credit due to Jack Layton as well for pushing those federal Liberals along. These guys certainly aren't doing a good enough job pushing the federal Liberals, because now they're buddies again, whereas last week they were sworn enemies.

When you look at some of the details here, it looks a lot like a reannouncement of the deals that were signed by the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves governments in 2002 and 2003, except they're giving themselves until 2010 to come through with the funds. It's the same pool extended a number of years.

We certainly think that there are a number of things in here that we want to encourage, including, as the minister said, encouraging home ownership. We believe, as Conservatives, in that principle of encouraging people to own their own homes. We think that's a good initiative and would like to see more of that in that housing deal. Lowering taxes on individuals will go a long way to helping them invest in their own family homes.

It's important to encourage the building of rental units. A punishing tax regime exists. More regulations from the McGuinty government and strained signals on the Tenant Protection Act are discouraging the building of rental supply to help address this issue from the private sector.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I have to remind myself of the old phrase "third time lucky." This is the third time I've heard this announcement, and I hope that this time the people of Ontario are lucky.

We acknowledge in the NDP that there is an absolutely huge need for affordable housing. There are 65,000 families in this city alone who are on a waiting list of anywhere from three years to 14 years, depending on the housing they need. There are 150,000 families in Ontario in exactly the same predicament.

There has been virtually no affordable housing built in this province for 10 long and very sad years. After the NDP there just was none. In eight years of the Conservatives and, I have to tell you, nearly two years of this Liberal government, nothing has been built. In the year 2003-04, your own deputy minister has said you built 21 homes in all of Ontario. The year 2004-05, when we get those figures, will be pretty much the same.

I live in hope, and so do all of those families who need affordable housing. I have to say that the log-jam was broken and the announcement was made only after a deal

was struck in Ottawa; not the deal between the minister and his federal counterpart, but the deal between Jack Layton and the federal Liberals. All of a sudden, there's money for housing; all of a sudden, there's money for social programs and post-secondary education. We could only be so lucky for all of our political lives to have such a situation.

1410

I have to tell you that I remain somewhat sceptical. We have heard it all before. So have the champions of housing in this province. Mr. Shapcott, Cathy Crowe and Charles Catto have heard it all before and listened to this. But there were smiles on their faces last week, and I suppose we all must smile too. The real test will come not with the announcement today but at some time in the very near future, if we actually see those 150,000 families in their brand new homes.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I'm happy to stand as a former teacher to celebrate and honour the work of all the men and women teachers that we have in the system. I was listening to the minister, desperately looking for something to celebrate with him as he made this announcement, desperately wanting to praise him and his government. I just don't know how to do it.

So I look at all the things the government has done. I look at the special ed problem we have in our system. Last year, he announced \$100 million in July and then clawed back \$100 million in August. He gives it in one month, takes it away the next month, and he leaves 43,000 students who are waiting for special ed—the very ones he defended before he was in government—waiting again for another year without one cent of special education dollars that would help those kids to learn to read.

So I wonder, where is this government and this minister when it comes to the special ed promises? Where is this government when we talk about closure of small schools? He is the minister, and this is the government that says, "We're not going to allow small schools to close; in fact, we've got a moratorium on small school closures." And yet, as we speak, in a matter of weeks the Fourway School and six other northern Ontario schools are scheduled to close, in spite of the moratorium imposed by this government and in spite of all that big heart Gerard Kennedy and the Premier have about saving small schools.

We talk about transportation. These people were going to bring in an equitable transportation system—which now leaves 30 boards with less money than ever before. They were going to correct the Conservative transportation system, but now, come this September, 30 school boards will get so much less money that many children will have to travel for more miles than ever before. This is under a Liberal government that has a heart for education. This heart couldn't get any bigger, and yet we suffer these problems.

We've got capital school announcements where he's going to spend \$3 billion or \$4 billion in capital improvements, and I'm telling you, there ain't no money. There isn't any money that's going to flow.

We talk about this new deal with elementary teachers and secondary teachers where we're going to see 1,300 at the elementary level and 1,300 at the secondary level—all inventions. They're manufacturing an illusion, and it's my job to demystify those mysteries. As I do that, I hope that the teachers, in spite of the broken Liberal promises, will continue to do what they always have done, and that is to teach our young men and women to be the best that they can be.

DEFERRED VOTES

PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LES SERVICES PRIVÉS DE SÉCURITÉ ET D'ENQUÊTE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 159, Loi révisant la Loi sur les enquêteurs privés et les gardiens et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi de 1999 sur le Tribunal d'appel en matière de permis.

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

The division bells rang from 1414 to 1419.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Horwath, Andrea	Peters, Steve
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Peterson, Tim
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Marchese, Rosario	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Churley, Marilyn	McMeekin, Ted	Sterling, Norman W.
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	Munro, Julia	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	O'Toole, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dunlop, Garfield	Orazietti, David	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Zimmer, David
Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie	
Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 76; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Mr. Speaker, can I refer it to the standing committee on justice policy?

The Speaker: So ordered.

MEMBERS' ANNIVERSARIES

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on the 20th anniversary of the election of you, Mr. Speaker, Minister Ramsey, Minister Kwinter, Minister Cordiano and Mr. Jackson as MPPs.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Since I've had the privilege of serving with all of these individuals, I would like to pay tribute to them all, collectively and individually.

First of all, I think what you have to consider is that if a person is elected consistently over the years, both when the tide is coming in and when the tide is going out, that speaks well of the individual within the constituency itself, because that does happen in politics. Each one of these individuals was elected at a very significant time in Ontario history. While this wasn't the end of the 42-year reign—a very impressive reign of 42 years—by the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, it did nevertheless represent a significant change, in that a minority government was elected and ultimately a change of government took place.

Each of these individuals, you will notice, when the tide has come in—and it has, because the Liberal Party won an overwhelming victory in 1987, the NDP in 1990, the Conservative Party came in very strongly in 1995, and the Liberal Party came back in 2003—with these sweeps, as they are referred to, each of these individuals survived. What is most difficult, by the way, is not only surviving when another party is being elected rather substantially, but surviving when your own government is heading out the door. That is the ultimate difficulty and challenge when that's happening, and each one of these individuals has been able to do that.

Each came from a different background, and it's interesting to see. Joe Cordiano, for instance, came from a business background, was an entrepreneur in the private sector, and now he has an opportunity, with an economic portfolio, to fulfill and bring to that portfolio the expertise and intuition he developed as an entrepreneur. He has also been in opposition, the deputy leader of the official opposition, and was at one time the parliamentary assistant to former Premier David Peterson.

Again, each of the individuals being honoured today has played a significant role both in government and in opposition, and my contention is, though I sit on the gov-

ernment side today, that the opposition in our democratic system plays an exceedingly important role. Each of these individuals was a key person, or perhaps continues to be a key person, on one side of the House or another, playing that particular role on behalf of their constituents and all the people of Ontario.

You, Mr. Speaker, were elected in the riding of Scarborough North, I remember it was, now Scarborough—Rouge River. I know of your background in the community college system and your dedication to literacy, for instance. You, I remember, were the Minister of Housing at one time under the Peterson government and the Minister of Skills Development. I know as well that you were the president of World Literacy of Canada from 1981 to 1984, on the board of directors of the World Hunger Project, and you recently received an award from the government of Jamaica, the Order of Distinction, with the rank of commander. Again, you come from an educational background and you've been able to utilize that as a member of the Legislature.

Cam Jackson comes from a business background as well, and an education background, having served on the Halton Board of Education. He was involved in a number of activities within his own community—and still, as a member of the Legislature, is involved in those activities—and has held significant portfolios as an opposition critic. Of course, he has been Minister of Long-Term Care with responsibility for seniors, Minister of Tourism, Minister of Citizenship and Minister of Tourism and Recreation—again, a long and distinguished career, not only in this House but preceding this House.

Monte Kwinter—a rather impressive educational background, Monte. I didn't know you had gone to so many different schools and had such a background. He was elected from Wilson Heights, a very challenging riding. He served as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Minister of Financial Institutions, Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, and has been very much involved in his own community, particularly in Toronto.

David Ramsay, elected in Timiskaming in 1985, was the Minister of Northern Development and Mines; he was Minister of Correctional Services, Minister of Agriculture and Food, and is now Minister of Natural Resources.

Each of these individuals, if you look at where they came from, never forgot where they came from, and the people of their communities appreciate the job that they've done. I join other members of the Legislature in congratulating the 20-year club, the five members honoured today.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark—Carleton): Mr. Speaker, as you are one of the celebrants today, I'd ask you, are you going to recognize me first for petitions today? I just want to get that straight before I start my remarks.

Before the proceedings started today, Mr. Bradley came over and talked to me about what we were going to say. We both agreed that we'd still call the group of five that are being celebrated today as johnny-come-latelies,

because we only consider people over 25 to be seniors in this place. Isn't that right, Mr. Bradley? Mr. Bradley and I will be celebrating our 28th anniversaries very shortly.

I've had a long and pleasant association with each and every one of the five celebrants today. Of course, only Mr. Jackson sits in my caucus. Mr. Bradley talked about the tides coming in and out, and only Cam and I and 14 others in 1987 survived a tide that was really going out at that time. So we do all understand the ebbs and flows of politics as we go along.

I think that all the five members we are talking about today have worked well with all members of the Legislature. I can remember working with David Ramsay when he was the Minister of Agriculture and I chaired the committee on agencies and boards and commissions of the Legislature. At that time, even though he was sitting in opposition as the Minister of Agriculture, David and I came together with the committee, and out of that particular process emanated what was to be the predecessor of committee bills for this Legislature. It was because of David's willingness to work with a member of the opposition to try to get this place to work a little differently. That particular offer resulted in a twiggling of the rules some years later, when I became the House leader and was able to do it, so that we then had a new process where committees can create legislation in the committee and add to the legislative process.

1430

I know Monte Kwinter and his wife, Wilma, very, very well. Monte served at one time as the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. As you know, Mr. Speaker, at that given time that minister was responsible for the LCBO. I always thought that that was one of the most wasteful appointments that David Peterson ever made, because Monte does not imbibe at all. I only want to ensure Monte and anybody else who ever wondered that his successors made up for his lack of appreciation of the finer things in life.

I understand that Minister Joe Cordiano is in Japan today representing Ontario's interests. I have always been interested in working with him, because Joe in some ways represents a more closely fitted political philosophy of myself than perhaps some of his colleagues. I consider that he is serving in the right portfolio. Joe, as you know, ran as a very strong candidate for the Liberal Party leadership, and I think that his support and his work led to the considerable support that he received in that as well.

Mr. Speaker, of course you have been an eminent member of the Legislature, and now have been honoured by being elected from among your peers as our leader. I think that speaks more than anything else of the recognition you have gained, over your 20 years, as someone who can be trusted and has integrity in our Legislature.

Lastly, I would like to talk about my good friend Cam. When Cam was elected here very, very early, I can remember Cam standing over to your right, Mr. Speaker, with his daughter Amy, and it was probably the only time a young child like that appeared on the floor of the

House. I don't think the Speaker saw that Cam was with Amy at that time, but the interesting part was that it was the time that Mr. Nixon was delivering his first budget. Amy is now 19 years old, so it was in that first year. The picture from the Speaker's gallery came down and, lo and behold, on the front page of the paper the next day it wasn't Robert Nixon with his budget—he was relegated to page 2—but it was Cam and Amy who had the front page.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Cam always knows how to do it.

Mr. Sterling: Cam always knows how to do it, as Mr. Bradley says. I congratulate Cam. He has been a tremendous advocate in his own community of Burlington. He always has something going on: a blood clinic, or a seniors' seminar, whom he has represented here many times, either in opposition or in cabinet.

I want to say to all of the members, congratulations. The average stay around here is six years; 20 years is a long time away from the average.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on 20 years in this House, along with your colleagues Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kwinter, Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Cordiano.

I've got to say, normally we do this as you are leaving, and I'm wondering if there's some other announcement a little later on this afternoon, or are we just wishing you well while you are here? I have to wonder.

I want to say to all of you, being elected for 20 years is not easy. We know that the job as representatives, provincially or federally, can be fairly difficult at times. All of these individuals have sat both in government and in opposition, so you all understand the challenges of opposition along with the challenges of government, and the good and the bad that go with both sides. To be able to survive for 20 years is quite something. Very few people are going to get the opportunity to choose their exit out of this Legislature. Obviously—

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: I'll tell you, it is very true. Most people don't get to choose; it's the people who choose when you're out of here.

I have to say that 20 years of service in this Legislature, being elected at least five times, says something about the ability to be prepared in elections, doing your jobs and making sure that the people back home say, "Yes, I give you the confidence for yet another election."

I also want to say, on a bit of a personal note to some of you—and I don't want to go through all of it, because I know my colleagues before have gone through it—I had an opportunity just this week to fly up to Kashechewan with Minister. Kwinter. We had an opportunity on the flight up—I paid for the charter, by the way, everybody should know—

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): What?

Mr. Bisson: Yes, I'm allowed, as a member, to travel across Ontario.

Anyway, we had an opportunity to not only discuss what happened in Kashechewan but to talk about why he got into politics. It was quite interesting in that particular

discussion, given the work that he had done, mostly at the federal level—that he had decided in the end to run provincially, at the behest of David Peterson, the then Leader of the Opposition. I'm glad to know, from this discussion that we had the other day, that after 20 years he said, "You know, I made the right choice." Because, at the end of the day, provincial politics is actually rather interesting, and you're much more engaged in the local issues than you would be on the federal side.

To my good friend Mr. Ramsay: Well, you've had a chance to be on both sides and then some. I'm sorry, David. I had to take a shot. But I want to say with all respect, at times we've been on the same side of some issues, fighting on behalf of northerners, and other times we've been on the opposite side. The one thing I will say is at least we've always kept our sense of humour about us. Specifically, we've never taken any of this personally. I think that says something about you as a member. One of the reasons you've been able to survive 20 years is remembering, at the end of the day, that politics is about the art of the possible. At times you need to take the positions that sometimes are not popular and respect the other side, so I give you credit for that.

To my good friend Mr. Curling, the Speaker: I've had an opportunity to serve with you on a number of occasions at the BOIE, and on other occasions I've sat on committees with you—always a good approach when it comes to representing your constituents. It's interesting that the Speaker is probably more independent than most Speakers when it comes to isolating himself from party politics at times. That's one of the things that I want to give you credit for. You've always understood it's the people back home, and sometimes we don't want to get too involved on the political side of what happens here in the Legislature. I think that says something about you being elected for those 20 years—always remembering at the end of the day that you're here to do a job, and that job is to represent the people back home.

To my good friend Mr. Jackson: I've got to say Cam is one of the more interesting people in the Legislature, because he's one of the more complex people I've had to deal with, in the sense that—

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): You could describe it like that.

Mr. Bisson: Well, it's interesting. This is coming from a New Democrat. He's much more of a social democrat than he makes out to be.

Interjections.

Mr. Bisson: No, I've got to say this in all honesty. Listen, everybody, I'm giving him a compliment. He's to the left of the party, I want to tell you.

I had an opportunity on many occasions, when he was minister of the various ministries that he was responsible for, to deal with him. I specifically remember the very open-door policy that Cam Jackson had, not only when it came to me but when it came to First Nations. He is one of the few ministers in the years that I have been here who really had a soft spot in trying to do something right

on behalf of First Nations. I'll always remember a number of meetings that we've had together. For example, Chief Leo Friday in Kashechewan, who has a lot of difficulties in that community—open-door policy. You made the impossible happen, in funding the arena project up in Kashechewan. He overturned his ministry to make it happen. I give you full credit for that, and that was a job well done.

To my good friend Joe—and I'm running out of time—I do want to say it has been really interesting, because over the years we've sat on committee together on one of the issues that was very important to all of us, and that is economic development as it relates to our communities. I wish you well in your time and your portfolio as Minister of Economic Development and Trade. I know that if I was with you in Japan, I would be telling you many good stories about what we can be doing with Japan in order to enhance trade here in Ontario.

The Speaker Let me, on behalf of the five, thank the two deans and the possible dean in the future for the wonderful and kind words that they have said about my colleagues. We intend to stay here another 20 years.

Mr. Bisson: On a point of order, Speaker: I just wonder, does that mean you now qualify for your pensions after 20 years?

The Speaker: I'll tell you later.

1440

Mr. Sterling: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I did mean to mention, and I know all members of the Legislature want me to thank on their behalf, Cam Jackson's wife Elaine, and his children Amy, Lauren and Michelle; David Ramsay's wife, Kathleen, his daughters Erin and Danielle, and his stepson Michael and his 2-month-old grandson Issah; Joe Cordiano's wife, Rose, and daughters Lara and Natalie; Monte's wife, Wilma, and his children Richard, Robert, Lisa and Cathy; and your children, Mr. Speaker, Deone, Nicole and Tyrone. All members of the Legislature recognize the sacrifice the families make, and we should thank them as well on this 20th anniversary.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): May is Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on the devastating impact that sexual violence has on victims, on our communities and on our society. It also reminds us of the need for collective action on this issue.

I'd like to share some statistics with my legislative colleagues today. Children and young people under the age of 18 accounted for 61% of sexual assault cases

reported to police in 2003. Those at the highest risk of sexual assault are girls aged 11 to 17. In cases reported to police, 80% of sexual assault victims knew their accuser. More than one third of Canadian women reported that they have experienced sexual violence. Fewer than 10% of sexual assaults are even reported to the police.

These statistics show the alarming reality that sexual assault continues to be a pervasive social problem in our society, and one for which we must collectively find an answer. The McGuinty government is committed to doing just that, and in fact we have already started.

Earlier this year we announced the first funding increase to sexual assault centres in 13 years. Our \$1.9-million investment will provide an 8% increase in funding—annualized operating funding—to 36 sexual assault centres and help sexual assault victims with better community supports. The funding will also help French-language centres attain equal funding with other centres and to address gaps in service to French-language communities. Last December, we released our domestic violence action plan, which includes, importantly, \$5.9 million to train professionals and front-line workers, including those who work in shelters and in our justice system. These dedicated women and men on the front lines do talk about sexual violence. The new funding will help equip them with more training and resources to provide even better support to those who have been abused.

Our plan promotes and champions healthy, equal relationships, because part of the solution is early intervention. We're doing this by encouraging a shift in attitudes about relationships, particularly in younger generations. This is especially important given that girls and young women are at the highest risk of sexual assault.

We are investing in a four-year public education and prevention campaign aimed at mobilizing communities across Ontario to promote healthy, equal relationships among youth; to encourage youth to adopt positive social skills and values; to help equip parents and adults alike who influence youth with tools they need to change behaviours and attitudes.

The strength of our province lies in our people and in our communities. Sexual violence compromises that strength and the safety of our communities. It has a devastating impact on the people victimized by this horrendous crime and their families. It is simply unacceptable. It commands all of us to play a role in ensuring the safety of our sisters, our mothers, our daughters, our friends. By raising awareness of sexual violence prevention and by talking to children and youth about the importance of equality and respect in relationships, we are moving forward in our mission to make our communities safer for everyone.

I'd like everyone to reference a resource at the Ontario Women's Directorate Web site. It does help us talk about sexual violence. The Web site has information on the warning signs of sexual violence, advice on prevention and links to people who can help. It can be found at www.ontariowomensdirectorate.gov.on.ca.

I want to give you just a couple of samples of those warning signs: Has your friend's appearance changed significantly, a major change in weight, for example? Has her schoolwork been suffering? These could be signs of depression, which often indicate abuse. Does your friend have a history of feeling anxious, distrustful or unsafe? Is your friend giving up things that used to be important to her? Is your friend's boyfriend extremely jealous and possessive? Does your friend's boyfriend call her demeaning names and put her down in front of other people? Has your friend stopped expressing her own opinion? I urge parents and student alike to visit our Web page. Read the kinds of things that may become apparent when you're looking at your own circle of friends and family.

I'd like to share an important campaign that ties into Sexual Assault Prevention Month and Mother's Day, the Daisy of Hope campaign. We're very proud to say today that Joy Freeman, the executive director of Nova Vita, launched this in the great riding of Brant. Once again, this initiative started in Brantford: Nova Vita Women's Services, in Dave Levac's riding of Brant. We're very proud once again to say that through the daisy pin, women's shelters across the province can raise awareness of domestic violence and profile the services that shelters provide to abused women and their children. All political parties in Ontario have recognized this campaign since 2001.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to ask my colleagues to recognize this campaign by wearing the Daisy of Hope pin during the month of May. You'll be showing your support for strong, safe communities that are free of sexual violence. By wearing this pin you will recognize the invaluable work of shelters in providing women and their children with support and care.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak to this Sexual Assault Prevention Month in the province of Ontario. It's a time when we have the opportunity to shed some light on a crime that most people don't want to talk about, and that, of course, is the crime of sexual assault.

This month has been recognized in Ontario since 1988. It's a way to create public awareness of sexual assault and improve the prevention of violence against women and all members of society.

As we know, sexual assault can take place between intimates, dating partners, friends, acquaintances or strangers. Rapes committed by acquaintances of the victims are the most common form of sexual assault, followed by sexual assaults by dating or other relationship partners. Sexual assaults, unfortunately, occur much more frequently than we know, because they are not always reported. In Canada, it's estimated that one out of every four women and one out of 10 men over the age of 18 will be sexually assaulted sometime during their lives. This is from Statistics Canada in 2001.

It is important, as we speak today about sexual assault and violence, that we recognize that men and children are

also too often the victims of sexual assault. The unfortunate reality is that these children are also the victims of abuse. If we have been following the story in the Toronto Star these past few days, it tells the disturbing story of the serial pedophile who, over the course of many years, sexually assaulted numerous young boys. According to the article, in 2003, 4,807 children between the ages of 6 to 13 were victims of sexual assault. Unfortunately, most of the abusers were relatives. Further, most children who suffer sexual assault are destroyed emotionally by it. They often end up involved in drugs, in prostitution, in violence and in crime.

As lawmakers, we have a tremendous responsibility to ensure that the appropriate measures are put in place to protect these children. The Canadian Panel on Violence against Women found that 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their husbands, their common-law partners or their boyfriends. The violence against women study conducted by Statistics Canada in 1993 revealed that one third of all women polled had actually experienced sexual assault, and that one quarter of all women reported being sexually assaulted by their spouse or partner. This finding suggests that for the sampled women, the sexual assault by a partner was even more likely to occur in their relationships than was physical assault or abuse.

1450

However, as I said before, underreporting of these crimes presents a formidable obstacle to understanding the nature and the real extent of this problem. For example, researchers at Statistics Canada estimate that fewer than 10% of sexual assaults of people over 15 years of age are ever reported to Canadian police agencies, and only 1% of all date/acquaintance rapes ever come to the attention of law enforcement. So it is extremely important that we do what we can to influence social attitudes among young people in order to encourage them to inform their parents and certainly the law about sexual assault.

The youth of today deal with many issues surrounding sexual violence. Their issues are real, just as women's and men's issues are real. It is important that we give all victims of sexual abuse and violence the resources, the support and the solutions. We need to give them a voice. By focusing on these young people early, in particular, we have the opportunity to protect future generations. Together, I would encourage those in this House to do what we can in order to prevent sexual assault and violence.

The Speaker: From the minister's statement, I take it that you are asking for unanimous consent for the wearing of the buttons. Is that it? I think we do have it. Thank you.

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My colleagues have cited many statistics about sexual violence in Canada and Ontario, but we are so inundated with numbers that we sometimes fail to see these numbers as real women: our sisters, our daughters, our wives, our mothers. I think of my good and brave friend, Jane Doe,

who was sexually assaulted many years ago as she lay sleeping in her bed in her apartment building. And 25 years ago, Barbra Schlifer was returning home after celebrating her call to the bar of Ontario. It had been a day of dreams fulfilled and marked the start of a fulfilling and exciting career. Committed to social justice, she and her friends planned to open a law practice together that would provide representation to people who were abused, oppressed and marginalized. But that night, Barbra Schlifer was brutally sexually assaulted and murdered in the basement stairwell of her apartment building. Those are two very visible and well-known examples of women who have been sexually assaulted right here in our neighbourhoods: one who survived and one who died. Today we stand, I think, partly in remembering these women who were victims of such brutal crimes.

You apply this statistic, and you will see that one in every four Canadian women is sexually assaulted in her lifetime in our immediate setting. That translates into the fact that there are those among us here in this chamber right now and in the offices and hallways of this Legislature who have been or will be victims of such violence. I want to underscore that one in four does not capture the extent of the crisis, because sexual violence remains one of the most underreported crimes in this nation.

As we know, only one in 10 sexual assaults is reported. Victims are reluctant to inform the criminal justice system about acts of sexual violence, in part because of the stigma they feel personally and the stigma they or others receive from the system itself and society as a whole. Then, sexual assault, by virtue of how it is defined, does not capture all the kinds of sexual violence that take place. For example, sexual harassment is not, by definition, seen as a form of violence; misogyny, sexism. The limitations on what constitutes sexual violence in the eyes of the law lend to why we do not have accurate figures on how prevalent sexual violence is in our communities, in our workplaces, in our province and in our nation.

For reporting to increase, there needs to be an action plan to reform how our institutions and communities respond to sexual violence of any kind, and such a plan is critically important if the rate of violence is to start decreasing.

The current state of affairs, instead of being a deterrent, expresses leniency toward those who commit sexual violence and too often treats victims with indifference and, sometimes, hostility.

Examples that illustrate how the system perversely favours the perpetrators rather than the victims are also abundant. They range from audits of court proceedings that reveal that only 4% of cases tried—4%—lead to convictions, and that, in too many cases, acts of sexual violence are reduced to lesser charges, like misdemeanours. Many victims have some sort of relationship with the assaulter. After sensing that their credibility is being questioned because they may have known the accused, victims frequently withdraw the charges.

Despite the rising rate of violence against women, it is still not regarded as a priority area for many police units. For example, even in the aftermath of the Jane Doe audit and its own statistics that show one third of all calls they receive involve a transgression against a woman, commonly police still do not list violence against women as an area of strategic importance.

We still have a lot of work to do. I urge the Ontario government to come up with a comprehensive plan to measure and resolve the shortcomings toward sexual violence on every front.

BUDGET SPEECH

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I beg leave to inform the House that the Minister of Finance will be presenting his budget in this place, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on May 11, 2005.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week mayors from across northern Ontario met in Kenora to discuss, among other things, your new so-called fairer program for our cities and towns.

Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield says your new program is “easier to understand, [but] it’s not very palatable... we have to tell the government that this doesn’t work.”

No wonder he is saying that, because Kenora is set to lose \$2.1 million, or 42% less each year, as a result of your “good-news program,” as you described it last week.

Who should the residents of Kenora believe? Should they believe the mayor, who says your new program doesn’t work, or should they believe you, who claims it is good news?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I want to remind the leader of the official opposition what it is that we are doing here and why we are so very proud of our new model, which is both fair and transparent. This is all about cleaning up the downloading mess created by the previous government.

I’ll remind my friend that the Provincial Auditor, in his 2001 annual report, said that the Conservative downloading and subsequent community reinvestment fund caused municipalities “a significant, negative fiscal impact.” He went on to say that the unfairness that the policy created has been growing over time ever since downloading first took place. So this is about a government taking responsibility for cleaning up yet another mess left by the previous Conservative government. It is fair, it is transparent, it needed to be done, and we are proud to have done it.

Mr. Tory: I think it's time for the Premier to take responsibility for what is happening to people like the Kenora taxpayers. You are not cleaning up anything in Kenora; you are cleaning out the pockets of the taxpayers in Kenora. That's what you're doing.

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Ignace Mayor Bryan Brown says that his town will not be able to handle more cuts. He was quoted this weekend as saying, "We've virtually used up all of our resources and we've laid off probably more people than we're legally allowed to. You just don't get it."

Premier, Ignace is in line for a 12.5% cut in annual funding under your new program that you call "good news for all." Who should the residents of Ignace believe: you, who says this is good news, or Mayor Brown, who says they just can't cut any more? How is that cleaning anything up?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I know that the leader of the official opposition will be very interested in hearing what Mayor Bill Enouy from Kirkland Lake had to say. He sent us a letter and said, "I have been presenting our case since the mid-1980s and this is the first time that the government of the day has listened and taken action. Without your understanding and timely moves, our town would be facing huge tax increases, little, if any, capital works and a desperate future.

"Once again, thank you for your good work."

We're pleased to hear from Mayor Enouy, and we're pleased to hear from other mayors from across the province.

Mr. Tory: I just don't understand how the Premier can stand here and talk about how thankful people are, when in fact it's coming out of the pockets of other cities and towns in the province of Ontario.

Pickle Lake Mayor Roy Hoffman said that each household in his town pays \$2,076 in taxes already. He says that his town is going to have to raise taxes as a result of your changes in funding. Pickle Lake, according to your own Ministry of Finance Web site information, is set to lose 30% in annual funding under your so-called fairer program.

In the Kenora Daily Miner and News, Mayor Hoffman said on Friday, "Our community has a financial crisis. We're just going to have to throw the keys to the province."

Premier, who should the residents of Pickle Lake believe? Maybe he should have a meeting with the mayor of Kirkland Lake and they can decide how to sort this out together. They're in a crisis as a result of your 30% cut. How do you answer them?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We have told the people of Ontario where we stand when it comes to developing a better program, one that is both fair and transparent. I've yet to hear Mr. Tory's alternative. Apparently, he's going to supply additional funding to all of those who claim that they are somehow getting less. Just to be clear, he's going to take \$2.4 billion out of health care; he's going to fund private schools in the province of Ontario; and now—another very expensive financial commitment on

his part—he is going to be providing additional monies, apparently, for some of those communities who claim that they're getting less.

One more thing I want to make clear: Last week, my friend made reference to the community of Belleville. He said that they'd be coming up short. I know that he'd want to hear what some people from Belleville have to say. I quote from the Belleville Intelligencer: "City treasurer Brian Cousins says programs continue to be delivered and services are remaining at the status quo despite claims by provincial Conservative leader John Tory that the city will have to make cuts.

"John Tory also said the province's new deal would leave municipalities in a crisis situation. Cousins said he would not agree with that statement."

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): We'll ask Mr. Cousins again in a year and see what he has to say at that time about the people you're giving the short end of the stick to.

My question is to the Premier. Three weeks ago, your Minister of Health stood in the House—actually, he was outside the House—and he mused, "It is not necessarily sensible to have an obstetrics program if a hospital only has a volume of 50 or 60 births a year."

Three weeks ago, I posed a question to that same minister, asking him which communities would lose their childbirth services as a result of your apparent change in policy. Premier, can you tell us today, after all this time we've had to study this, based on whatever the criteria are that the minister is applying at a given moment, which hospitals and which communities will lose their birth programs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm pleased to speak to this on behalf of the Minister of Health, who could not be here today. And I'll speak to the higher principles; I don't have the specifics that the member opposite seeks.

I have said that we are determined to find efficiencies in a way that does not compromise the quality of services that we are delivering at present to Ontarians. Furthermore, by way of our wait-time strategy, for example, we are seeking to improve the quality of services that we provide to the people of Ontario. Mr. Tory may be trying to have Ontarians believe that we are about to compromise the quality of care, but I can assure you that our intention is to ensure that we get the very best value for the limited dollars, the precious dollars, that we receive from Ontario taxpayers. We want to do that in a way that not only does not compromise the quality of care, but in fact enhances the quality of their care.

Mr. Tory: The Premier said that he didn't have specifics at hand. He might well undertake to get those, because in fact there are 18 hospitals that serve countless numbers of communities across the province that fall under that new cut-off. I'll just give you some examples and perhaps ask you to respond to these: Manitoulin

Health Centre in Little Current only performed 56 births in 2003—that's the last year for which numbers are available; Red Lake memorial hospital performed 47; Lady Minto Hospital in Cochrane, 46; Kirkland and District Hospital in Kirkland Lake—you were talking about them a moment ago—performed 36.

Premier, these northern communities are deserving of some special consideration. Can you stand in your place today and guarantee those residents in and around Little Current, Red Lake, Cochrane and Kirkland Lake that their local childbirth services will not be cut by your government? Can you guarantee that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is being selective in his recollection of statements that I made in this House. I specifically said that we would have to give special consideration to remote communities and to northern communities. In some cases it simply will not make sense to provide for consolidation, because of the low number of services in communities that are very remote. It just doesn't make any sense because that would, in fact, compromise the quality of care. So I say it again: We have a responsibility—and I believe Mr. Tory shares this sentiment—to give the best value for those dollars that we're receiving from our taxpayers. We want to do that in a way that does not compromise quality of care for Ontarians.

Mr. Tory: It would be so simple if you wanted to come into this House any day of the week and then say, based on a threshold your minister articulated, that those communities, I think all the ones I have mentioned and the ones I'm about to mention, are not going to suffer any withdrawal of those services. That's all you have to do to actually answer a question. So let me just add to the list, and I will request that the Premier come back and tell us that these places are not losing their childbirth services: Wilson Memorial General Hospital in Marathon, 24 births; Lady Dunn Health Centre in Wawa; Wingham and District Hospital, which is not in the north, 32; McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay, 11.

Would you please just stand in your place today or undertake to come back and tell us that these services will not be withdrawn, pursuant to your own statement that these kinds of communities will be given special consideration—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you. Order. The Minister of Community and Social Services needs to be quiet. I wasn't able to hear the last part of the question because of the interruption. If you need 10 seconds just to finish—

Mr. Tory: I can repeat it. Will the Premier stand up and guarantee all of the communities I've asked about today, pursuant to his own commitment that remote and northern communities will be given special consideration, will keep these childbirth services in their local communities? It's easy to stand up and say, "Yes, I'll give that guarantee." Please do it.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is engaging in unhelpful speculation and scare-

mongering. It's outright scaremongering. Nobody at any time, as a representative of this government, has ever suggested that we would remove those programs from those hospitals. I think it's important to keep in mind, as an interesting contrast here, that we've been on the job for close to 18 months. We've invested close to \$3 billion more in our public health care system. We've also invested in that \$1.7 billion in our hospitals. Now, if people want to be concerned about what the future holds, they might ask themselves, "What would happen to our health care system when that leader, in that prospective government, takes \$2.4 billion out of Ontario's health care system?" If there's something to worry about, I would suggest that would be it.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, last week the Ombudsman announced a special investigation into special needs agreements for children with severe disabilities. He said the current situation is absolutely unconscionable. You said: "When it came to my attention that there were more families that were still considering giving up their children"—and some actually did give up their children—"to receive services, I immediately acted." But, Minister, the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy warned you three months ago that 30 families were at imminent risk of losing custody of their severely disabled children in order to obtain the services that they needed desperately. That report is dated February 9 of this year. Why did you tell Ontarians and the press that you immediately acted, when the report from the child advocate's office shows that's not the case?

1510

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I thank the honourable member for her question. It gives me a chance to clarify. The report was written in February, it was given to me in March, and I did indeed immediately act. Those 30 families were given the services they needed, following the process of the communities solving the problems and finding the resources for those children, and they didn't have to go to the courts to give up custody of their children.

The Ombudsman is saying that this is still going on. I welcome his work; I welcome the work of my ministry, which actually precedes the Ombudsman's work. When the reports are given to me, I will look at the recommendations, because I truly believe, as we all do in this chamber, that no parent today should give up their child in order to get them the help they need.

Ms. Horwath: The child advocate's report from February 9 is just the latest in a long series of reports that are condemning the government's inaction on special-needs agreements for severely disabled children. Here are two other reports that are on my desk from the child advocate, one from June 2000 and one from January

2001. They include victim impact statements like this one: "I am the mother of a nine-year-old girl with special needs...."

"The stress of having a child with special needs indirectly led to the breakdown of my marriage, isolation from friends and at times even relatives, numerous health problems, depression and eventually despair...."

"I did what any desperate person would do, even though my heart knew it wasn't right: I placed the custody of my child in CAS.... We should never have been forced to give up custody in order to get service for our child."

Minister, that heart-wrenching story was written in June 2000. How can you tell us in April 2005 that you acted immediately to help these families and their children?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: I'd like to remind the member that we weren't the government in June 2000. I'd also like to tell the whole chamber here that this is a problem that has been going on for decades. We will solve this problem.

For over a decade and a half, this area has had a lack of investment—that's children's mental health and children's treatment centres—for various reasons. In our first year of government alone, we put in \$74 million for children's mental health and children's treatment centres: \$200 million, all in all, of new spending for children of this province.

I'm not going to insult the intelligence of the member opposite or of anyone else in this chamber by saying that we're going to solve this overnight. We're not. But we are well on our way and are meeting our goal of helping these children and their families.

Ms. Horwath: This week, Anne Larcade will come to Queen's Park on behalf of her severely disabled son Alexandre. She says that your ministry failed to serve the needs of her son. She has launched a lawsuit saying that you failed to provide clear and consistent guidelines for special-needs agreements and failed to provide adequate alternative services for her son.

We've heard this story before. In 2001, an MPP rose in this House and said that the "government is breaking the law, that your government has a legal obligation to provide services to their special sons and daughters." Who said that? The chair of the Liberal caucus, Michael Gravelle. He knew this was happening four years ago.

Minister, can you guarantee to Anne and her son Alexandre, and to hundreds of other families with special-needs children, that this time you will follow the law?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: I can commit to the member opposite that we're working as hard as we can and, for the first time in over a decade, are investing significantly in services so that we can reduce the wait list. The answer isn't to bump one child off a wait list for another one who comes to this chamber. That would be unfair and unethical. The solution is to build capacity so that all children can access these services. That's what we're doing. I wish we could do it overnight; it's just not

possible. We're working very hard, and we will meet the goal of helping these children.

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): New question?

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Let me remind you of what you said last week: "When it came to my attention that there were more families that were still considering giving up their children—and some actually did—to receive services, I immediately acted." Minister, you said in response to an earlier question that the 30 families that were on the list submitted to you by the child advocate all received the services that they needed through a community process. I can tell you that that's just not true. Cynthia Cameron and her son Jesse were at Queen's Park on March 31. I was here, and I asked you to consider entering into a special-needs agreement with Cynthia Cameron and her son.

On April 7, your government wrote to her and you said no. Jesse is still in a group home in Barrie, not in London. He is still on a wait list for a residential placement in London, and he has been on that list for two years. Most importantly, his family is still at risk of losing custody because the CAS is still involved, even though this isn't a protection issue. Minister, why would you tell this House that the situation of these 30 families was resolved, when that's not true?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: The family that the honourable member mentions has come to this chamber, and yes, we have written to this family. We do not enter into special-needs agreements. Our solution is not to do one-offs, as has been done in the past. Our solution is to build capacity, so that all children who have severe special needs will access these services, not just those who have the political astuteness to come to this gallery. That's unfair, that's unethical, and until we build capacity, we will not be doing these unethical events.

Ms. Martel: Just to remind the minister, I wrote to her about the situation involving Cynthia Cameron in November 2004. Cynthia wrote to the ministry earlier than that. She finally got a response to her situation after she was in here, and she got that response on April 7, Minister. That's how quickly you responded to her and her needs.

But let me reiterate. You told this House that the 30 families got a solution that they wanted through a community process, and that is not true. Your government could have used a community process to resolve Cynthia's problem and the problems of other families who, I suspect, are on that list and not resolved. You've got a document called Decision-Making Guidelines for Specialized Support for Children/Youth with Complex Multiple Needs. The guidelines say that your ministry has to ensure that they look at the community resources to be sure that families don't have to go to the CAS to get the care that they need. That was developed in July of 2004. It has never been implemented by your ministry. Minister, I ask you again, why is your government not even using its own policy to ensure that families with special needs, who are in crises, are not forced to go to the CAS to get the care they need?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: The issue here, again, is the lack of resources. We are building capacity so that all children can access these resources. Having said that, when this came to my attention that this was still going on, I directed my ministry to meet with all of the regional programs and all of the community agencies to address this. They have told me they will give me a report and recommendations in June. The Ombudsman said he will give me one even sooner, in May, which I welcome. As soon as I get the recommendations, I will act on them. In the meantime, we are building capacity to address the needs of all children, not just those who are brought into this gallery.

Ms. Martel: I don't apologize for bringing Cynthia Cameron here, because it was the only way she could get a response from this ministry and this minister. That's the sad reality. This is not a new issue for the government. The matter of parents giving up custody of their children in order to get special-needs agreements was the subject of the child advocate's report in 2000, 2001 and again in February 2005 under this government. Despite the minister saying that she acted immediately to respond to the needs of these children, nothing has changed for Cynthia Cameron and her son Jesse. They were on that list that was given to you by Judy Finlay. Your government has done nothing to implement a policy developed in July 2004 to use mediation and to use a community process to ensure that families get the support they need without having to go to the CAS. Despite the fact that Judy Finlay also recommended to you that you should bring forward legislation to ensure that families would get the services that they need without having to go to the CAS, you say you're not going to do that. Frankly, Minister, your handling of this has been dismal. What are you going to do?

Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni: The member is pretending that we are not following our own policies. That's not true. Those families did follow due process and did get the help they need. If the honourable member is talking about one of the exceptions, I understand that there are families that are going to desperate lengths to get resources for their children faster. That's not a solution. Special-needs agreements, which are nothing more but one-offs, is not the solution; building capacity is the solution.

I want to remind that member that when she was in government she cut funding to children's mental health. She cut it by \$40 million in their second year. In our first year alone, we put \$25 million in. We put \$50 million into children's treatment centres. We put \$38 million this year into children's mental health. There has never been this much investment in children in over a decade. We're proud of our record, and we will solve this problem.

1520

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): To the Premier. Your Minister of Education has unilaterally negotiated

contracts for teacher unions: four-year, 10.5% increases over the last few weeks. Premier, can you tell us how much the total package that your Minister of Education has negotiated will cost taxpayers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm going to give the supplementary to the minister, but let me just say how proud I am of him and the work he has been doing.

We are close; we are on the verge of having an unprecedented situation obtain in the province of Ontario where we're going to have peace and stability in our schools. We'll all be focusing on the job at hand, which is improving the quality of education for our children. I would ask you and Ontarians to compare our record that we're working hard to develop with the previous government's record, when 24 million school days were lost as a result of the approach brought by that government to our teachers and our schoolchildren alike.

Yes, I am proud of the work that this minister is doing. I am proud of the environment we are creating in the province of Ontario, where learning is coming first.

Mr. Klees: I do hope that the Premier will not deflect the supplementary to the Minister of Education, because my question to the Premier is this: At no point during the election campaign did you ever promise a four-year, 10.5% increase to teachers, but what you did promise was that you would fund treatment for autistic children beyond the age of six. You now have a court order telling you to do that and yet you're not prepared to do that.

I would like to know from this Premier how he can justify billions of dollars for teacher contracts and fail to keep his promise to autistic children in this province.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the minister.

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): The basic idea here, of course, is one that's very hard for the member opposite to understand. The idea here, simply put, is that students win; teachers win; school boards win. There isn't a need to have people fighting one another in order for our school system to work properly. It's a very tough concept, I understand, and it stands in direct contrast to what has happened.

In point of fact, there will be more special education resource teachers as part of what comes forward. In the high schools, it will be part of the resources that will flow back in as part of the 1,300 new teachers announced so far.

What I would say about the cost of this arrangement is that it's less than 1% of the total cost of spending on education. The important part is, the part that is benefiting teachers is also benefiting students—the very same teachers who will relieve some of the workload assignments that his government left gnarled up around silly numbers rather than worry about kids. Those will be fixed. What we will get in their place is more people for phys ed, more for arts, more for music—more help in the disgraceful dropout rate left to us by the last government, and more help, ultimately, in smaller class sizes now in secondary to match the ones in primary.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Premier. Premier, you'll know that last Thursday more than 1,000 people in the Kapuskasing area gathered in front of the Tembec mill in order to protest your government's inaction when it comes to good hydro policy that would allow Tembec to operate with a hydroelectric bill that is reasonable and, at the same time, to protest your minister's response to what has happened in the community of Opasatika. Everybody at that rally had the same thing to say, and that is, your government's plan is missing in action when it comes to dealing with the challenges that face us in northeastern and northwestern Ontario.

My question to you is simply this. We in northern Ontario have a number of issues we need to have dealt with. We're not getting the response from your government. Will you agree today to meet with representatives from the Kapuskasing area in order to discuss the issues that are facing communities like Opasatika and Kapuskasing?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Let me say that I've had the opportunity to meet with a number of representatives from northern communities, including, in fact, just this morning, Mr. Buchanan from Buchanan Forest Products, and I was pleased to be able to do so.

Let me say to the member opposite that if you're really interested in setting up a meeting, you can just come over and talk to me; you can tell me that you have an interested community, and I'll do my very best to ensure that we can make that meeting happen.

Mr. Bisson: Premier, I'm going to take that as a yes for the meeting, and I appreciate that. But I want to be clear on what people have to say. A number of issues are facing us across northern Ontario when it come to the forestry industry.

Your Minister of Natural Resources is allowing forestry companies to become lumber barons, to decide that they're going to take wood from one community, divert it to another, and shut down sawmills in communities like Kirkland Lake, Chapleau, Opasatika and others.

We have hydroelectric problems. If you look at what's happening in Kapuskasing right now, as across the north when it comes to all pulp and paper mills and the mining sector, hydro prices are going through the roof. As we know, last week it was announced that one mill is going to shut down. Others are probably not far behind.

We're going to be coming to you specifically, because we believe your failed hydro policies and the forestry policies of your Minister of Natural Resources have been a disaster. We're looking forward to your government changing direction on what is, quite frankly, an abysmal record.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The Minister of Natural Resources would like to speak to this.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): The member knows that I have one of your mayors, Roger Sigouin, the mayor of Hearst, on my forest sector

competitiveness council. We've made sure that we're involving the communities, the municipalities, the First Nation communities. Labour is on that committee, as are the companies. You know that we've been working very hard in the last few months. Within about two weeks, I will be receiving the final edition of that report. I want to assure the member that this government will be acting on that report, because the McGuinty government believes in the forest sector and its contribution to the economy of this province.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. As you know, there is a substantial need for affordable housing across Ontario. For eight years, the previous government sat by and watched as the list for affordable housing grew longer and longer. They watched as people who were already struggling to make ends meet tightened their belts even further, having to decide what was more important, heat or food or clothes, because their rent was eating up their income.

I was pleased to see that you and your federal counterpart Minister Fontana announced a massive \$602-million investment in affordable housing in Ontario last Friday. Can you tell me what this announcement means for Ontarians in communities across this province, Minister?

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): I want to thank the member for the question. The new federal-provincial housing agreement represents a giant leap forward for affordable housing in the province of Ontario. With this investment, together with our federal and municipal partners, we will create over 15,000 new units of affordable housing, as well as housing allowances to provide immediate assistance for approximately 5,000 Ontario families in need, for communities right across our province. This means the largest single affordable housing investment in a decade, and it means housing assistance for people suffering from mental illness, victims of domestic violence, the working poor and low- to moderate-income families looking to purchase a home.

Our government believes that safe, secure, affordable housing is a basic human need, and with our \$602-million investment, Ontario and the federal government will address the need for some 20,000 Ontario families.

Mr. Ramal: Minister, it's good news. It's a good day for those who have long waited to hear that their government is back in the affordable housing business after so long. Ontarians shouldn't have to choose between feeding their children or heating their homes; with last week's announcement, they won't have to.

Minister, now that we have committed to the affordable housing program, which is a partnership program between governments and the non-profit and private sectors, we must ensure that we have strong relationships with these partners. Do you have plans to consult important partners in the municipal, non-profit and private sectors about the new affordable housing?

1530

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Again, I want to thank the member opposite, because he rightly points out the importance of developing that partnership. We're proud of the approach we've taken to date in developing that partnership with federal partners, municipal partners, non-profit and with the private sector as well. We've listened to those stakeholders during intensive consultations over the past 18 months, and we aim to develop the very best affordable housing program possible and we will do it again as we prepare for future announcements about the details of the program design.

Those efforts to listen to and to collaborate with our key stakeholders are examples of why partners like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario are saying, "This agreement is an excellent example of how all three orders of government are working co-operatively to serve our communities, province and country better." We're going to continue with this approach because it has proven so successful as our government moves toward building even stronger communities.

GREENBELT

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, municipal leaders and other advocates of the greenbelt have said the greenbelt municipalities should get special consideration under programs like the municipal partnership fund or the COMRIF program. Do you agree?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): We continually get these questions about the greenbelt from the opposition party. It was the opposition party, over the years of the great tradition of Bill Davis, that established the Niagara Escarpment Commission and, as of late, the Oak Ridges moraine commission. If you add that up, that's 800,000 acres. Maybe this is an acreage envy situation—I don't know—because we added a million acres with the greenbelt. Maybe that's what this is about. Why don't you get on board, because you always have supported greenbelts, and support ours today?

Mr. Hudak: It's certainly very disappointing that the Premier takes the concerns of municipal leaders in the greenbelt so lightly that he hands it off to the Minister of Natural Resources to give some other argument altogether. I'm sorry he has that disdain; maybe he'll accept the supplementary.

Premier, there's a series of municipalities, like Ajax, Stouffville and Scugog, that did not get their COMRIF grants, others that have had significant cuts under the municipal funding program, and then there are those that are losers in both respects—Pelham, Thorold and Lincoln—that have had their funding cut and their capital programs denied.

The Minister of Natural Resources probably doesn't know this, but you should, as should the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Section 6 of the greenbelt legislation gives you the authority, and I'd say the responsibility, to make sure that greenbelt municipalities are supported in other ministries' initiatives. Premier, surely you agree that greenbelt municipalities should have special consideration?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I'd like to give a couple of quotes in the member's own area, first of all from Tim Rigby, the St. Catharines mayor: "While this announcement's immediate and substantive effect is the continued and expanded enhancement of the Glendale-Merritt area, it is certain to have a ripple effect on the rest of St. Catharines as it will be recognized that the vision does become a reality in our city." Also, from the mayor of Niagara Falls: "This is a very important project for the residents of Niagara Falls. We are very excited to work with our federal and provincial partners to proceed as quickly as possible with these upgrades that will have such a positive impact on our residents."

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, the residents of Weston are very concerned about the environmental and safety implications associated with the proposed GO Transit air-rail link project. You yourself have the ability to increase the present class B environmental assessment to a class C assessment if any one of three conditions exist: if there are more than 50 kilometres of rail; if there is something new that GO Transit does not normally do; or if there is serious public controversy. In this case, all three of those situations are in existence. As a matter of fact, on the last one alone the residents had to have their meeting cancelled by the fire marshal two weeks ago because of the size of the crowd. Last week's rescheduled meeting attracted 2,500 residents. If this does not reflect serious public controversy, we are at a loss to understand what does. My question to you is, will you instruct GO Transit to bump up the class B environmental assessment of the GO air-rail link proposal to a full class C environmental assessment?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank the member for asking this question. We are in the public information sessions at this point in time. The purpose of these public information sessions is to get input from the public.

There have been some concerns expressed, and we are absolutely determined to address those questions for the public. If that requires that we adopt a different environmental assessment process, we will look at that. But at this time, we are at the very initial stages of this process.

Mr. Prue: Minister, you're only going part way. I want you to go all the way here today. Given that one of the proponents of the project, SNC-Lavalin, is also the company hired by GO Transit, to the tune of some

\$600,000, to undertake the environmental assessment, the people of Weston are well justified in their concern that the process may not be carried out in a fashion in keeping with the interests of their community. Moving to a full environmental assessment of this project will provide Weston residents the open inquiry that they demand.

In fact, your own colleague in government, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, stated in a letter to the community, "I have written to the Ministers of Transportation and Environment to express my concerns over this proposed new rail service and request consideration for a more detailed and comprehensive evaluation of the impacts of this proposal on our community."

My question to you is direct: Your own minister wants to do it. Will you do it? Will you do it today?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: Let me say this. The Minister of Economic Development has been very active on this file. He has talked to me about the issues of the residents, and we are listening very carefully to what the residents have to say. They also have the option to bump up the environmental assessment process if it's required.

I want to assure the people of Weston that we are absolutely determined to have the proper consultations with the people of the Weston area. Whatever it will require to address their concerns, we are absolutely committed to doing that.

EDUCATION

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Education. Today is the first day of Education Week in Ontario. It is a chance for everyone in Ontario to express their support for public education.

Public education took a beating in Ontario under the Tories. They created a crisis in our schools and took \$2 billion out of the education system.

I know that our Liberal government is different. The Liberal government is putting money into the education system. I think we all know the results of the horrific Tory record: lost teachers, poor student performance and crumbling infrastructure. Contrast their record with our record: groundbreaking agreements with Ontario's teachers, good outcomes for every student and a plan for rebuilding education infrastructure.

Minister, as Education Week begins today, what are the government's long-term goals for education in Ontario?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I would again enjoin everyone in this House to be part of Education Week, if they can, between now and the end of constituency week: go back to school; visit their local ridings. We look forward to what they find there and also what they bring back.

The first stage of our plan is to reinvigorate the school system to bring around an attitude of respect, which can't be bought but really is about treating people with respect. We're seeing the dividends of that now. Yes, there is an

investment, because the basic replacement of things as fundamental as buildings has to be done. Everything we're doing is to set up the system for progress. Peace and stability is for progress. The buildings that are there are to show the respect and the function for progress.

We've set goals for literacy and numeracy and for student success in high school. We intend to meet those, very significantly, in the next number of years. We invite everyone in this House to do what has happened in other jurisdictions: Make education a true partnership. Let's work on making sure that we get an education advantage for our kids in Ontario.

1540

Mrs. Sandals: It is inspiring to hear what this government is doing for education in Ontario. It is inspiring to hear that we have a real, tangible, long-term plan.

It is obvious that this government's long-term plan for education provides real benefits to our children, our educators and our society. I've talked to many parents back in my riding. I've visited many schools and talked to many educators from all over Ontario.

The message was clear during the last election: Ontario flat-out rejects the Tory destruction of our education system and the stale, destructive policies of the ill-fated Common Sense Revolution, which the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey supported.

The people of Ontario voted for a new deal. They chose change, and the Liberals are delivering. Minister, how will the long-term vision for education in Ontario benefit other children?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: I appreciate the question. The challenge, of course, it poses to every party in this House is to be able to get a clear accomplishment from this system. We believe it's there. Myself and the Premier of the province have taken a great, direct interest in this. We know that we have these ambitious goals for the system, of taking it where it has never been before in terms of outcomes, in terms of a cohesive system. The good news is that, somewhere in the province, some of that is already happening.

We have a tremendous infrastructure in Ontario that needs to be built upon, and the leadership of that, frankly, should be shared in this House. It has been rejected by the party opposite. In part, the voters rejected them, and for some reason they cling to this idea of private schools and private advantage.

We say, instead, that the essential Canadian and Ontario idea is about conveying an advantage, unlocking the potential of every single student in this province. We will not deviate from that, and we enjoin everyone in this House and across the province to join us in that goal. People as diverse as the C.D. Howe Institute and people from across the social spectrum agree that we should have in this province an education advantage, because our economic policy is our education policy, and our social policy is—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you. New question.

ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, unfortunately, most of the energy coming out of your ministry's office is in the form of RFP announcements, appointments, re-announcements and yet more appointments. The typical Ontario consumer wants to know when this cascading series of announcements is going to end so that you can get on with the business of managing Ontario's electricity system.

Minister, today you announced the appointments of board members for the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity Systems Operator. I noticed that many of the appointments were from outside jurisdictions. On the other hand, I'm very disappointed that knowledgeable individuals from Ontario such as Jack Gibbons of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance and Tom Adams from Energy Probe are not part of your energy plan for Ontario.

I have two separate questions, if you could answer them, please. What is the selection process for membership on the board, and can you tell the people of Ontario what remuneration is paid, or is this just another raise for your friends in the electricity sector?

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Where is this place called Lobby?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Lobby: That's where the Tim Hudak fundraiser is, at 192 Bloor Street East. Tickets are \$250 each; \$1,000 for an executive circle.

I'll tell you what we're doing: We're cleaning up the mess that government left. In the last 10 years we've lost 5,000 megawatts of capacity, with nothing being generated—nothing. We've announced 5,000 new megawatts to replace that.

Number two: We've applied freedom of information and public disclosure on OPG and all of our entities so that we'll see no more contracts to Tory insiders, like we saw under that government.

When we assumed office, Ontario's reserve capacity was 10%—half of what it should be. We've doubled it, according to the IESO, for the year 2005. We're safer, more secure, with lower-priced power than we were the day you left office. What are we doing? We're fixing the mess you created.

Mr. O'Toole: Actually, your announcement last week was an announcement made by Elizabeth Witmer back in 2001. In fact, the work done by the energy conservation and supply task force is yet another report that is serving as the blueprint for all the changes initiated by our minister, John Baird, at the time.

Your ministry, under Dalton McGuinty, is creating an electricity bureaucracy. Consumers are alarmed over how much their electricity bills have increased—some 30%. Let's be true to the people of Ontario. This is yet more bureaucracy by the McGuinty government. What I consider is the true independence of the Conservation Bureau. That issue was brought up during Bill 100, yet

you've subsumed them under the Ontario Power Authority, which clearly is not what the people of Ontario want.

What are you going to do to provide the people of Ontario with a plan for reliable and affordable electricity in Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: We're undoing everything they did. That's the key. This, coming from a government that did nothing on conservation. Do you know what they did? They put an artificial price cap on, which not only didn't encourage conservation, it encouraged the opposite. So we've dealt with that. We've appointed a new chief conservation officer who's one of the leading experts in this country on energy efficiency. He'll be in place on May 13, which I believe is his first day.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: What did Jim Wilson say?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Jim Wilson said that conservation doesn't work. He said there was no place for it, and that was borne out in your government's policies. That party, Mr. Tory's party, has a shameful record on energy: no conservation, price freezes that stifle generation. We've moved to fix it. We've moved to fix the fact that Mr. Marchese's party cancelled all conservation programs while they were buying rain forests in Costa Rica. We take a serious approach to our province's energy security and future. I invite the parties opposite to join with Premier McGuinty and this government in providing cleaner, reliable—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you. New question?

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): My question is to the Minister of Education. At 11 o'clock today, children across this province and across Canada stood up and sang for Music Monday.

In my riding of Beaches—East York, the Earl Haig Junior Public School choir is busy preparing to showcase its amazing talent at the TDSB festival at Massey Hall on Wednesday night. Earl Haig's choir is the pride of our community and it is the glue that holds the school together. It had, up until recently, a dedicated music specialist. Their choir has won awards, competitions, sung our national anthem at baseball games, even performed here at Queen's Park. But next year there's going to be no music specialist. There is going to be no money under your funding formula.

Minister, can you please explain to this House how your government can justify a funding formula that would decimate such a successful musical program at that inner-city school?

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity—Spadina): Go after the boards, Gerard.

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): I would just note that the member opposite is being bushwhacked by his own critic, saying, "Go after the boards."

I say that that's not the style of this government. I know it's hard for the two parties opposite to give up that reflex. I would have wished that, in keeping with Music

Monday, the member's question had been a bit more harmonious with the actual times and what's happening out there, but there was a group here from Jarvis Collegiate. They did a terrific job serenading some of the members, hoping for that effect.

Mr. Speaker, you know, and I think the member opposite knows, that the financial decisions made by boards are made after they receive their allocations from the province. They've made no decisions because they've received no allocations—not yet, at least—from the province. Those will be forthcoming very shortly. But one thing that is sure is the new allocation that we have advised the boards about for 1,300 specialist teachers in public and elementary schools, that includes for the first time in a long time music and the arts. Phys ed has not been factored in. A significant number of those teachers will be available this fall, so we know that the news, whatever it is today, will only get better for the students of Earl Haig and around the province.

Mr. Prue: Minister, the parents, the principal, the vice-principal, everybody who's associated with Earl Haig Collegiate wants an answer today.

Let me tell you about Earl Haig school. Like many inner-city schools, a large portion of the kids at that school come from low-income families. These are families that cannot afford to take music classes outside of the school. The choir program at Earl Haig gave them a real opportunity to excel.

The problem is that your government has not put any real new money into the system. You're going to stand there and talk about the billions, but I have to tell you that I think even Ernie Eves gave more money for these types of programs in inner-city schools. What these schools need is sustained funding from the province, not once a year while they have to scramble, so they can provide a real kind of curriculum for our children.

Minister, can you please tell us what your government is going to do to ensure that the kids of Earl Haig Junior Public School will be able to keep their choir next year?

1550

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: Again, perhaps Earl Haig is the destination this member has in mind to go and visit and to see. He would find that there are approximately 30 fewer students projected for next year. That has raised some concerns, and there is an almost 5% drop expected in the student body. There is a speculative outline being made by the board, which he knows, but he brings it into this House. He would rather raise concerns than solve problems. That's been the hallmark of his party, and that's why it sits where it sits today.

I will say this to you: We have provided resources to the board. They already know what some of them are; they will soon know what all of them are. I'd be happy to work with the member opposite to make sure that we not only maintain but sustain a better program for music, for the arts. We've made that commitment, we've allocated the funding, and I expect it to be in evidence at Earl Haig Junior Public School and in all other schools around the province.

ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Ms. Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke–Lakeshore): My question is for the Minister of Energy. I've always been a vocal opponent of coal-burning electricity generation, and last week I was extremely pleased and proud to be at Byngmount Beach Public School when we announced the closure of Lakeview generation station for good. Lakeview is the first of Ontario's five coal-fired generating stations to close.

The residents in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore know all too well the effects of air pollution. Whether it be from cardiac, respiratory or neurological health problems, they know that smog in our air causes much suffering for Ontarian families.

We've heard a lot of hot air from the opposition when it comes to coal-fired electricity generation. Now that Toronto's biggest source of air pollution is no longer in operation, can you highlight the improvements to our air quality that we will see in all of our communities as a result of the closure? I can tell you that these are improvements that my community is very much looking forward to.

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Our government is committed to replacing coal with the cleanest, most affordable potential power sources in Ontario. We will do so, and are doing so, in a way that protects our supply.

Lakeview accounted for 26% of the region's SO₂ emissions and 8% of its NO_x emissions. As a result, Lakeview will be the first coal-fired station that will be closing, the largest polluter in the greater Toronto area. It was closed and has stopped running. As of last Saturday, it was put into retirement. This is the equivalent of taking 500,000 cars off our roads.

Coal is costing the people of Ontario more than the number on their electricity bill. Our cost-benefit analysis shows that the true cost of coal is in air-pollution-related illnesses, hospital visits and premature deaths. The study found a relationship between increased air pollution due to coal-fired generation and up to 668 premature deaths.

Ms. Broten: The environmental and health impacts of burning coal are undeniable. My riding is very close to the Lakeview site in Mississauga and feels double the effects of pollution, not only in our air but in our water in our lake. Yet there are naysayers, people who have said that we shouldn't shut down Ontario's coal plants, people who say that coal really isn't all that bad—people like the Leader of the Opposition, who announced last week that he supports coal and would keep dirty, coal-burning plants running in Ontario, or the environment critic, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who said a little more than six months ago in this Legislature, "If you think you're going to close down Lakeview by 2005, good luck."

Minister, I'm pretty certain that it wasn't good luck that enabled our government to shut down Lakeview, the GTA's single largest source of air pollution. I would ask you to provide us with some details as to what factors

contributed to and enabled us to make this difficult but necessary decision.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: I can tell the members opposite, particularly the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, that the reason he said, “Good luck,” is that when they left office, in spite of their commitment, nothing, nada, had been done to close Lakeview. We had to put together Hydro One and a number of others so that the greater Toronto area would not lose power as a result of this. We spent, and they spent nothing to close it. Hydro One invested \$170 million. We made that order after we came to office. Nothing had even been started, in spite of the fact that their commitment was more than two years old. I’d also like to remind the members opposite that while they talk a good game about Lakeview, they did nothing to shut it. Now we hear that Mr. Tory wants coal maybe till 2015, maybe till 2020.

This government established a very challenging goal. We are moving toward it. We are doing it in a prudent and responsible fashion. We will get those coal plants closed. We are on tight deadlines. If we miss, and I don’t know if we’re going to miss, we’ll be very close, because we understand the benefits—

The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Thank you. New question.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a question for the Minister of Energy. While travelling across the north last week, I stopped in Atikokan. Minister, you will recall Atikokan because you were there last year, addressing the chamber of commerce. At that time, you told the people of the community that you would work with them, and you went so far as to make a commitment. I’d like to remind you of that commitment because you made a speech. You said, “We will make the investments in Atikokan to ensure there is no job loss here. And not only will we not eliminate jobs; my hope is that we will create jobs, high-paying, good jobs in the town of Atikokan.” I have to tell you, having been there just last week, that the people of Atikokan are very nervous. They’re waiting to hear from you about your plan and so far they’ve heard nothing. Minister, I’d like you to make good on your promise. When are you going to tell the people of Atikokan what your plan is all about?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Our plan is to close the Lakeview coal plant and to maintain the 90 full-time-equivalent jobs that are there. The Minister of Northern Development was there last week and reassured the community. I was there as well. As a result of this government’s policies on clean energy, more than \$3.5 billion is being invested in Ontario, including northern Ontario, for new jobs related to green energy. While you may be trapped in the past, relying on a carbon-based economy and the pollution that it generates, we’re moving forward. The people of Atikokan have had our assurance that that plant, when it’s closed, will be replaced with 90 new jobs.

The town’s tax base is seriously affected by this as well. That’s an undertaking we’ve given them that apparently you haven’t. I’ve met with the mayor; I’ve been to

Atikokan; the Premier has met with him; the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The plant is running now, and when that plant comes down, there will be 90 jobs to replace those jobs in a responsible and prudent way that protects the people of Atikokan from the loss of the coal plant.

Mr. Miller: The people of Atikokan want to know your plan. I met with the mayor and with business people and they want to know your plan. They’re nervous and they haven’t heard anything from you. I think it’s a reasonable thing to expect; 2007 isn’t very far away. I can tell you, having met with many mill operators in the north, that they’re nervous too. If you drive around the north, in every town the main feature is some large paper mill or large sawmill and the community depends on that. They’re nervous about your energy policies because right now those mills are just barely hanging on. They’ve been faced with the increase of the Canadian dollar, with the softwood lumber dispute, and now your energy policies are like the nail in the coffin for many of these mills. They’re just barely hanging on. They want to know how you’re going to ensure that they have a reasonable price for energy. Many of the mills—one of the mill managers they met—use 30% natural gas in their production, and when you switch coal-fired to natural gas, what do you think is going to happen to the price of natural gas? You’re going to drive it up, and you may force many of these mills out of business. Let us know your plan.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: You know, it’s interesting: We’ve met with everyone in the industry. I’ve been to all the big plants. We’re appointing an industrial cogeneration facilitator. What has John Tory done about this? Nothing. What did they do about cogeneration? Nothing. You were there for eight years. The problems of these plants didn’t just start. They’ve been going on for a long time. In fact, 14 plants closed under the NDP administration. During his leadership, John Tory never mentioned the northern forestry industry and what’s happening to it: what’s happening to it because of the value of the dollar; what’s happening to it because of a range of factors that are beyond the control of any government. We’ve done something they didn’t think to do: industrial cogeneration. We brought together the experts to help us help these plants to be competitive and successful in Ontario. The plan we’ve laid out undoes what his government and the members opposite did: undermine the safety and reliability and price effectiveness of electricity in this province. John Tory has no vision for electricity. He’s no leader. The leader who knows what he’s doing is Premier McGuinty, and this government is going to fix the mess that they left behind. It was you—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Thank you. Order. You know that you’ve made some unparliamentary comment; I would ask you to get back to your seat and withdraw. Do the honourable thing.

1600

Mr. Dunlop: I withdraw that, Speaker. Can I get to petitions now?

The Speaker: I will state it now. You have made some unparliamentary comment. Would you mind withdrawing it?

Mr. Dunlop: I did withdraw it. Can I do my petition first?

The Speaker: You were just about at petitions, but you've run the clock to 4 o'clock. Pursuant to standing order 30(b), it being 4 o'clock, I'm now required to call—

Hon. Mr. Duncan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have consent, because of the number of statements we had today, to add 15 minutes to the clock, the usual amount of time for petitions.

The Speaker: I was just about to do the 30(b), and I understand there's unanimous consent to add 15 minutes in order for us to get petitions on. Is that OK? Do I have unanimous consent? Agreed.

PETITIONS

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I beg your indulgence to read a petition from my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Honourable Michael Bryant is minister responsible for democratic renewal; and

"Whereas the Honourable Michael Bryant, Attorney General of Ontario, is elected to safeguard our justice system on behalf of the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the ministry of our Attorney General may not be aware of the serious and important issues facing individuals involved in areas of the justice system even though the Attorney General's ministry is continually monitoring;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Honourable Michael Bryant, Attorney General, for his in-depth investigation of the Ontario judicial system and [to] make the public aware of his findings immediately."

I am pleased to support this on behalf of my constituent Albert Werry.

ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I have a petition that's written to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I have to thank Debbie Bruce from Erin Mills in Mississauga for her support and help in submitting this petition.

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I put my name on this petition and hand it to Lindsay, our page.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I am pleased to sign my name to that and present it to Sean McConkey.

GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions about the planned tunnel near St. Clair Avenue West. It reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; and

"Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge; and

"Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under the St. Clair Avenue West bridge, thus eliminating this eyesore with its high banks and blank walls. Instead, it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this document.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

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"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign my name to that and give it to Alexandra.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition here signed by many members of the management and board of Credit Valley Hospital. It is a petition to ban smoking in public places in Ontario. Credit Valley Hospital itself will be smoke-free on all of its grounds as of this Thursday. I thank Wayne Fyffe, the hospital president, and some of the board members, especially

Cheryl Englander, Cindy Fleming, and my opponent in the last election, Nina Tangri, who has graciously signed the petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 16,000 Ontarians each year die of tobacco-related causes; and

"Whereas the inhalation of direct and second-hand tobacco smoke both lead to health hazards that can and do cause preventable death; and

"Whereas more than four out of every five Ontarians do not smoke, and this large majority desires that enclosed public places in Ontario be smoke-free at all times; and

"Whereas preventing the sale of tobacco products, especially to young people, and banning the use of tobacco products in public and gathering places of all types will lower the incidence of smoking among Ontarians and decrease preventable deaths;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Ontario Legislative Assembly enact Bill 164 and that the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care aggressively implement measures to restrict the sale and supply of tobacco to those under 25; that the display of tobacco products in retail settings be banned; that smoking be banned in enclosed public places or in workplaces and banned on or near the grounds of public and private schools, hospitals and day nurseries; that designated smoking areas or rooms in public places be banned; and that penalties for violations of smoking laws be substantially increased."

I agree completely with this petition, I've affixed my signature to it, and I'll ask Taylor to carry it.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I have a different petition, this time from Oro-Medonte.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in December 2001 and July 2002, Ucci Consolidated Holdings Inc. applied to the township of Oro-Medonte and the county of Simcoe (respectively) to amend their official plans to provide for an adult lifestyle community;

"Whereas the following studies were undertaken in support of the application: planning justification report; environmental analysis report; hydrogeological analysis ... ; fiscal impact analysis; market analysis; preliminary servicing report; and functional servicing report ... ;

"Whereas the township of Oro-Medonte approved to amend their official plan in October 2003 (official plan amendment number 18);

"Whereas the county of Simcoe approved to amend their official plan (official plan amendment number 2);

"Whereas on October 1, 2004, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing refused to approve county of Simcoe official plan amendment number 2 on the basis of what the petitioner believes to be incorrect information and inadequate analysis of supporting documentation;

"Whereas the approval of the adult lifestyle community would have the following positive impacts: de-

velopment of a strong community to provide housing alternatives and aging in place for seniors; provide community infrastructure in the form of recreational and social facilities, including a community centre, golf course, indoor swimming pool and recreational trails; respond to the site's environment sensitivities and protect and enhance natural heritage features; provide full municipal services not only to the proposed community but also to surrounding developments on private septic services; protect water quality and quantity entering Lake Simcoe; and provide an appropriate development design that incorporates the best principles of land use planning and environmental stewardship;

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

"To call upon the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to inform the Ontario Municipal Board that the government of Ontario fully supports official plan amendment number 2 of the county of Simcoe."

I'm pleased to that sign my name to that and give it to Sean.

1610

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Southwestern Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Southwestern Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Southwestern Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Southwestern Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

This petition is signed by hundreds of persons—for example, from Blenheim, Kent Bridge, Cedar Springs—and I too have signed this petition.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): This is a petition from 2,500 people who agree with those who want to save Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I have signed that, and I agree with that petition.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I have a similar petition signed by a number of people from the area who brought it to my attention.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I sign that petition and also have a family member in that institution.

ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls): I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of a local organization in the Niagara region called NASK. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established province-wide standards to deal with anaphylactic shock in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylactic shock in the Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylactic shock is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 20, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 92, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise and debate on Bill 92, in my capacity as official opposition critic for municipal affairs and housing. This bill has had a number of days of debate and my friend from Brantford supports the bill, as do we. We're pleased to see this bill finally moving forward—if they have a good idea, we're glad to support it in the Legislature. In fact, Bill 92 is more or less legislating a memorandum of understanding that had previously existed, I think begun under the Mike Harris government, as I recall, when Chris Hodgson was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. So it had been a standing agreement between the ministry and AMO, acting on behalf of municipalities, that now has been brought forward in a legislative form.

It doesn't have any particular penalties, for example, if the letter of the law or spirit of the law is not followed, which is interesting. There are no penalties in there, because we have already spotted a significant number of breaches of the legislation, which I will get to momentarily. But there have been a disconcerting number of times

where the government has moved forward with various bills, regulations or policy decisions, failing to have first consulted municipalities, as they had claimed they would do under Bill 92, or, if they had consulted it wasn't genuine consultation. We saw any kind of feedback from municipalities summarily rejected by the government, by the minister of the day. So we certainly hope that we'll see better attention to Bill 92 by the Dalton McGuinty government now that it's moving through second reading than has been shown in the past year and any time since Dalton McGuinty and this cabinet were sworn in, in the fall of 2003.

1620

By way of background, Bill 92, officially called the Municipal Amendment Act, 2005, provides that the province shall consult with municipalities on matters of mutual interest "in accordance with a memorandum of understanding entered into between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario," AMO, as I mentioned moments ago. I know that AMO chair Roger Anderson, the municipal leaders he speaks for, and Pat Vanini at AMO have been pushing very much behind the scenes with the government, as well as us in opposition, to see this bill move forward. I'll tell you why they are bit impatient: It is because this bill was originally introduced June 8, 2004. So not quite a year, but about 11 months have now passed since first reading of this bill.

There was great fanfare in the Legislature; there was great fanfare at a municipal conference where the minister officially signed the document, I believe with the past chair, not Chair Anderson, if I recall the picture. At any rate, there was great fanfare at that time, but then it ran out of energy, I guess, and sort of fell on the farthest back of the back burners on the legislative agenda for the government, which is regrettable. There has been a reaction from municipalities to that. I'm very pleased that we, the members of the opposition, played a role here in bringing these concerns forward and, I believe, helping to motivate this bill to where it is today in the Legislature.

As I said at the outset, I do want to give a particular commendation to a Minister of Municipal Affairs under Mike Harris, Chris Hodgson, who had brought this forward as the MOU. Of course, Premier Mike Harris had brought this forward under his government, and now we'll see it as part of Bill 92 under the Dalton McGuinty government, which is a good thing. It is good to see this continuation of policy. We just hope that we'll see some actual action behind the bill to make sure that the paper is worth more than the words that are simply typed upon it.

Again, this bill was introduced June 8, 2004, in the House. At the time, it was trumpeted as a "new relationship with the municipalities." Well, in reality it was the continuation of the previously existing memorandum of understanding, but I guess at the time of introduction of bills there is that kind of hyperbole. It was trumpeted as a new relation with the municipalities, a big signing ceremony, a big announcement here in the Legislature, but then it disappeared. It was never called back for second reading until a week or two ago. In fact, my

understanding was that it was never brought forward by government during their negotiations among House leaders, for example, to have this bill brought forward for debate over the last 11 months or so.

In fact, when I review Hansard, there were five times, five occasions, when members of the opposition stood up and asked for unanimous consent that we move to debate on second reading of Bill 92. These things took place in the winter of this year, between February 21 and March 29. There may have been some before that, but those are the ones that I recall.

Certainly some other bills have been brought forward that I would not have given the same weight to as an important issue like Bill 92 to the municipalities. We certainly spent a great deal of time debating, for example, the Film Classification Act in this Legislature. I remember the special winter session that we were all called to attend, again with great fanfare about what an active agenda Dalton McGuinty was pursuing and these major pieces of legislation that had to be attended to at once. We got here, and I think the first couple of days of debate, the majority of those days, were spent debating film classification in the province of Ontario.

I don't know if that meets the priorities of the majority of our constituents across the province, which would probably be centred around health care, for example; a lot of concern about transportation and energy issues and certainly now, as we head to the budget, a lot of concern about fiscal issues, the state of the province's books, for example. It looks like we're heading to over a \$6-billion deficit this past year and who knows how big the Dalton McGuinty deficit will be in 2005-06. We will find that out May 11, I expect, or at least we'll have an estimate of it.

I guess I'm putting a bit of an asterisk beside that statement, because initially we were told that the deficit for 2004-05 was going to be about \$2.2 billion, and then, I think to the great credit of the work of the Provincial Auditor—and members of the opposition had also circled this—he caught the finance minister in an accounting trick and showed that the true deficit under Dalton McGuinty for 2004-05 was more like \$6 billion; it would be a more accurate figure than \$2.2 billion.

So to the public, the deficit tripled in Dalton McGuinty's first year in office. We'll see on May 11 what the next segment, the next increase, in the deficit is going to be, but I fear that it will be a substantial burden placed on taxpayers through overspending and a lack of revenue caused by the slowdown of the Ontario economy relative to previous years.

But as was I saying, back in February and early March, we brought forward a number of motions to call for Bill 92. We had debated the Film Classification Act and spent a lot of time debating an act with respect to pit bulls, but there was no time found for Bill 92 debate, an issue of significant importance to municipalities. After an 11-month period, finally we can stand to give second reading debate on this particular bill.

On February 21, it was actually me. This was the time that ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association

conference, was taking place. I called for unanimous consent that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario debate Bill 92 that afternoon, February 21; Tuesday afternoon, February 22; and Thursday afternoon, February 24; and that we would look for a second reading vote on Thursday, February 24. I thought this would be an important thing to do—as I said, we were talking about film classification—or at least maybe it would broker some sort of compromise so we could have some debate on Bill 92. Unfortunately, I did not receive unanimous consent on that motion.

The same day, my friend and colleague the member for Nepean–Carleton rose on a point of order, looking for unanimous consent that “instead of debating this, on behalf of Roger Anderson, the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario”—he's the chairman, but it's close—“we debate Bill 92 this afternoon because we were very interested and concerned about this bill too.” Speaker Curling called for unanimous consent, but it was not given.

There were some subsequent meetings of the House leaders, and again the bill was not brought forward on the order paper.

On March 9, I had the opportunity to rise in the House again, and I asked for unanimous consent of the House concerning Bill 92, which is the Municipal Amendment Act, 2005, dealing with the MOU between the province and municipalities. I went on to say at the time, March 9:

“Given that this bill was introduced on June 8 and has not been called, in almost a year, for even one hour of second reading debate, I move the following motion:

“That, after question period today, the House immediately move to second reading debate on March 9, followed by immediate debate on March 29....”

The Speaker asked for unanimous consent, but unfortunately, that was not received on the bill at that particular time.

John Baird, the member for Nepean–Carleton, who, at the time was our House leader, rose on March 9 and again asked for unanimous consent that Bill 92, the AMO memorandum of understanding act, be called for debate that afternoon. The Speaker again called for unanimous consent, which was defeated.

Similarly, points of order were brought forward on March 29 by me and Mr. Baird, discussing the need to enter into debate on Bill 92, but sadly, we were not able to achieve that.

I know there was a great deal of frustration on the part of municipalities. The AMO chair and the executive director, among others in the AMO leadership, I'm sure, put great pressure on the government. I'm pleased that that did occur so that now we can in fact move to debate on Bill 92, which has happened in the last week or so. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to enter into that debate today.

Obviously, a very important principle that we embraced under the Mike Harris government, by bringing forward the MOU in the first place, was a responsibility to work closely with municipalities on programs of

shared delivery, shared concern. If the province were making a change in policy, for example, that impacted on municipal budgets where they were required to deliver it, it made sense that we should consult with municipalities and take their best advice in bringing the program forward. As I mentioned, that was the MOU from a couple of years ago, and now it's part of this bill.

What is unfortunate, in return, is a number of examples, which I will address shortly, where the government has not followed the letter of the law, has not followed the spirit of the law, and in fact has ignored Bill 92 altogether.

Some conspiracy theorists may say that they delayed bringing Bill 92 forward because they had a plan to change the municipal-provincial relationship significantly in the negative for municipalities and therefore did not want to be bound by Bill 92. For example, they have significantly cut transfers to the municipal partners in their ongoing funding by some \$47 million. I suppose that if they had run the numbers by municipalities, there's no way the municipalities would have given this their support when they saw some significant impacts on areas like Chatham–Kent, Brantford, right across eastern Ontario, and of course my own area in Niagara. Conspiracy theorists might say that the reason the government did not bring this bill forward for debate and a vote was because they had a plan to cut funding to municipalities, contrary to Dalton McGuinty's campaign promises, and to try to get away with that and not be bound by Bill 92.

I usually don't put much carriage into theories of conspiracy theorists, conspiracy mongers, and I suspect that may not be accurate. Whether Bill 92 was passed or not, I suspect the government still would have gone about its plans to cut funding to their municipal partners, for example.

1630

We know there are no penalties in this bill, so if the minister cavalierly cut programs, cut funding for municipalities, there really are no consequences, other than that he's breaking the promise of the bill, and we certainly know that the Premier and his cabinet have a propensity for breaking their promises. They would say one thing before the campaign and something entirely different while in office. There are some 40 examples of this, which I won't rhyme off as part of my discussion today, that show that if they have that kind of disregard for their campaign platform and the voters who endorsed that campaign platform, it's not surprising that they would have the same disregard for municipal partners and the same disregard for Bill 92, which is before the Legislature today.

Let me give one early example. This was before Bill 92 was introduced, so it's not a violation of Bill 92, except retroactively. Although in a number of pieces of legislation, like the greenbelt and like the Adams mine legislation, for example, the government has brought forward retroactive clauses in their bills, there are no retroactive clauses in Bill 92. Bill 92 has no power to go

after the government for a promise they broke before Bill 92 is passed. While it exists in some aspects of Liberal legislation, it does not exist in Bill 92. But if it did, if this were amended to have a retroactive clause, one of the items that would be caught up—one of the very first broken promises of the Dalton McGuinty government and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was the famous McGuinty flip-flop on the de-amalgamation of Kawartha Lakes.

Before the election, Dalton McGuinty, really in a crass attempt to try to cater to votes, as opposed to any strongly held policy position, committed to honouring the results of a referendum in Kawartha Lakes concerning amalgamation or de-amalgamation.

Here are some of the quotes from the Lindsay Daily Post: Lynn Boldt said, "Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty has twice made a similar commitment with respect to de-amalgamation to Kawartha Lakes, once in writing and reconfirmed later at the beginning of Jason Ward's local Liberal candidacy."

Jason Ward, of course, the Liberal candidate at the time, was defeated by Laurie Scott, our hard-working and excellent colleague from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. When Jason Ward launched his Liberal candidacy, Dalton McGuinty said he would move forward with de-amalgamation commitments if that was the result of the referendum.

Here is something from Jason Ward, the Haliburton–Victoria–Brock Liberal candidate, in the Lindsay Daily Post, March 18, 2003. Mr. Ward said, "Dalton McGuinty and my party have committed to lending provincial assistance to the city to de-amalgamate if that is what is decided. We can't commit to an exact figure because there are no firm costs that have been decided on for de-amalgamation."

So he gave himself some political wiggle room in terms of the cost, but Mr. Ward, and I suspect Mr. McGuinty, from what I read in the Lindsay Daily Post, did not give themselves any wiggle room. They were very clear that they would honour a de-amalgamation commitment if that's the way Kawartha Lakes voted.

I think most members of the assembly know, because we have talked about this in debate before, that Kawartha Lakes did vote to de-amalgamate in the referendum. What happened after the election? We know what the position of Dalton McGuinty and his Minister of Municipal Affairs was before the election. After the election, McGuinty and Minister Gerretsen stated that they would not support the results of the municipal referendum calling for the de-amalgamation of the city of Kawartha Lakes. That referendum was held in conjunction with the 2003 municipal election.

I won't get into too many more quotes on that particular issue. There are a number of further quotes, but I think the point has been made by the use of those quotes, that Dalton McGuinty promised that he would follow the referendum results with respect to Kawartha Lakes. His candidate at the time, Mr. Ward, made the same commitment. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has a role in

this as well. Shortly after the election, as a harbinger of things to come, Minister Gerretsen snuck into the community at night, announced that they were breaking the promise—that they would not de-amalgamate—and then snuck back out of the community. I think that's a pretty accurate description, from what I've heard from my colleague and what I've read in the papers. In fact, a local businessman had a rather inflammatory sign up about Dalton McGuinty for some time after the minister had come up and announced the broken promise.

Bill 92, for example, if it had been passed, probably would have had something to say about the broken promise and the obvious lack of consultation with the municipality. My understanding is that the minister did not go in there and speak with the municipality, who then told him that to break his promise—it was a promise broken out of habit by Premier McGuinty and his cabinet. So while they bring Bill 92 forward on one hand, their actions, in terms of lack of consultation with individuals and municipal leaders, belie that. It does the exact opposite.

The hardworking staff in the municipal affairs critic's office have put together the top 10 breaches of Bill 92. If Bill 92 had passed—if Bill 92 had, for argument's sake, a fine of \$100 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for each of these occasions, that would be a \$1,000 fine. That's probably a lower number than the bill would have in it, but it's for the sake of demonstration. While they talk a good game on Bill 92 in their discussions in the House, the reality is that they are not consulting with the municipalities; or if they do, they regularly ignore the feedback they have received.

Number one on the top 10, from a chronological point of view, was the Kawartha Lakes broken promise: ignoring the work of local municipal leaders and breaking a campaign promise. Number two is—I talked about this a bit earlier—the much-vaunted pit bull legislation. I have a lot of constituents who would use this line: While they regret that they have to wait a year or two years to have hip or knee replacement surgery, or to await cancer treatment for far too long on a waiting list, they are so relieved that on their way to the hospital they won't be attacked by a pit bull in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario—facetious, but the point constituents are making is that there seems to be a strange set of priorities. Instead of addressing the real needs of families across the province by lowering waiting lists and getting the needed surgeries, tests, MRIs or CT machines, a great deal of energy was spent by the government in going after one particular breed of animal.

The Attorney General has made a habit of this; in fact, I think he has also—my colleague will correct me if I'm wrong—assigned some significant resources to the Attorney General's office to pursue whether they could take the Stanley Cup away from the Hockey Hall of Fame or the NHL, the trustees of the NHL; I'm not sure who the right owner is. Why, when there are important issues like health care and crime to be addressed, would the Attorney General dedicate resources to the Stanley

Cup? It causes a great deal of puzzlement in taxpayers across the province.

In this pit bull bill, I gather that it's municipalities that will be forced to administer the legislation. Probably local bylaw enforcement officers, local animal control officers and local police forces would be involved. A significant number of municipalities across the province have their own municipal police force, or others will pay through the OPP, so it's on the municipal tab. I expect they'll be required to enact the pit bull legislation; I wouldn't think this is all a publicity stunt by the Attorney General. He has no intention of enforcing the legislation. I don't think the Attorney General would do that. So I presume it's going to be administered by the municipalities, to measure the length of a dog's ear or how long his tail is or the length of his hair—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Or just to identify one. That's a big problem for the minister.

1640

Mr. Hudak: The minister hasn't really given a very good example in terms of how to identify a pit bull in the first place. Certainly it's not much of a course for police officers and animal control officers to address what a pit bull looks like. Presumably, based on the Attorney General's example, they'll have to spend time determining by the looks of the animal whether it's a pit bull or not, and that is a cost on municipalities.

I don't think there is any consultation with municipalities on the enforcement of this act. We certainly have not seen it. I bet you that municipalities in turn would say, "OK, if you want us to enforce the pit bull legislation, then give us the resources to do so." From what we've seen from municipal grant programs, that is not included at all. I've not seen the Attorney General assign any funds for municipalities. I can only say, with the lack of any knowledge to the contrary—I haven't heard it in debate—that the pit bull legislation is another example of a breach of Bill 92. It has a municipal enforcement component, and there has been no consultation and no support for municipalities for the pit bull legislation.

Another famed broken promise was the cancellation of the municipal drainage program. It certainly caused a great deal of concern and anger for rural municipalities and the agricultural community when that program was cancelled. From what I understand, there wasn't any real consultation with the municipalities, as Bill 92 would have you believe, on this cancellation of the drainage program. They more or less went ahead and did it. I think they might have told a municipal councillor that they were going to do it, but there was no basis for it, no consultation involved and certainly no advice.

Eventually, because of the pressure we saw from municipalities and from some of our hardworking members of the opposition, like Ernie Hardeman from Oxford, and the member from Simcoe North, helping me with my discourse this afternoon, because of hardworking members like that and the pressure at ROMA, the government in turn changed their mind and have, if I understand it correctly, restored funding for the municipal drainage

program. We're glad they did that, but if they had consulted with municipalities, as Bill 92 instructs them to do, they probably would not have made that mistake in the first place, because municipal partners would have said, "That's crazy." That was a crazy decision. It was a bad decision. It's been reinstated, in large part due to municipal pressure, but that whole controversy and embarrassment to the government would have been avoided if they had followed Bill 92 and consulted municipalities in detail about the importance of the municipal drainage program, particularly, obviously, to our smallest municipalities.

The local health integration networks: We've had the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Attorney General all in breach of this legislation, and now it was the Minister of Health's turn, when he brought forward his local health integration networks. For those who aren't aware, this is a new level of bureaucracy that would be imposed between the Ministry of Health and local service providers. I can only imagine how many millions of dollars this is going to cost. I know what they're looking at for their employees—the CEO, or whatever the proper title is, of each LHIN. I saw an advertisement in the paper for I think between \$200,000 to \$250,000 each, a significant investment in administration, and not in front-line services to doctors or nurses or chiropractors, for example, to deliver services to patients. A new bureaucracy, an expensive bureaucracy and an unwanted bureaucracy was brought forward by the Minister of Health.

I would suspect that across the province, and I know in my area, there has been a great deal of criticism by municipal leaders about these new LHINs in their form, but also about the bizarre maps that have been drawn up, where municipalities have been put into these huge areas or into areas that they don't have much of a relationship with. We have a supersized LHIN in the Niagara Peninsula that lumps Niagara in with Hamilton, Brantford, Haldimand, Norfolk and Brant. That's a massive area. What people in Niagara and municipal leaders rightly fear is that the Niagara focus will be lost under the LHIN, and issues of importance to us—like a new cancer centre in St. Catharines, recruiting more doctors to rural Ontario—will be lost in this massive, supersized LHIN.

I'm going to wager—and if I'm wrong I'll admit I'm wrong—that the Minister of Health did not sit down with municipal leaders to work out these boundaries. I talked about a fine earlier on. This would be too harsh, but by way of example, if there were a jail sentence for violations of Bill 92, I think half the cabinet would be locked up. That might be a good thing for Ontario. It certainly would hold back the rapid increases in funding and high taxes. I'm using it as an illustrative point; I don't mean for them to be locked up. Some would argue that that might be a good thing because it would stop the damage happening to the province. But if Bill 92 had, by way of argument, a jail sentence attached to it, half the cabinet would be locked up. I've already gone through four or five who have violated Bill 92.

The LHINs are a violation of Bill 92, I would expect, because I don't believe there was any consultation with municipal leaders. Municipal leaders in my area, and I suspect in others, have strongly objected to the boundaries of the LHINs and the necessity of them as a new level of bureaucracy. They are also upset about the DHCs being blown up. So you had a local group planning in Niagara or Brant or Simcoe that's been blown up and replaced by a faceless bureaucracy that has no relationship with the community. Besides that, it is very far behind schedule.

The greenbelt legislation, another salient example: Minister Gerretsen was bound for leather to ram that legislation through before Christmas in 2004. I think some people have forgotten about this. We asked him repeatedly in the House and called upon him to go out to consultations to make sure they had the bill right. The minister and the Premier said they would not do that. It was only through relentless pressure by the opposition and some tough, hardball negotiations by our then House leader, Mr. Baird, with the support of our leader, John Tory, that we were successful in getting committee hearings in the new year.

I know for a fact that municipal leaders across the greenbelt were extremely upset with the bill being rammed through the Legislature potentially before Christmas. I bet the timing of the greenbelt legislation alone had not gone through any kind of municipal consultation process. If it had, the responses would have been 100% contrary. So I have got to believe that the Minister of Municipal Affairs did not check with the greenbelt municipalities surrounding timing of the greenbelt legislation or his initial attempt to ram it through before Christmas.

Another example on the greenbelt theme, number six on our list of Bill 92 violations, was the extensive, widespread and serious mapping problems with the greenbelt map. I believe that if they had taken a more responsible and more timely approach to the municipalities, a lot of these items could have been ironed out, because municipalities know their boundaries. Municipalities know if there is an important natural feature in their jurisdiction; they know which properties have been set aside for development, which ones have not; and, I would argue, would probably know where the strength of the agriculture community is within their municipal boundaries. But we had all kinds of bizarre mapping areas. We had marshes—the Beverly marsh was cut in half in the greenbelt map. The Holland Marsh, the world-famous Holland Marsh, in the original draft map was cut in half. We had cemeteries and graveyards included in the greenbelt area, and we had boundaries that had been set aside under municipal official plans that were already serviced included in the greenbelt. Some pristine areas, like Boyd Conservation Area, for example, or Pleasantview in Dundas, were excluded from the greenbelt, that municipal partners would have said should be included in the greenbelt legislation.

I've got to believe, and I think I stand on pretty solid ground, that the Minister of Municipal Affairs rushed out

the greenbelt legislation, didn't consult with the stakeholders, threw it out there and drew out the draft map on the back of a napkin because he was retreating from his broken promise on stopping housing on the Oak Ridges moraine. In order to try to make up for that clear and distinct broken promise, they rushed the greenbelt out there and, as a result, didn't thoroughly think it through, and had a number of problems with the mapping exercise.

Number seven: The government insists that they listened to duly elected councils when they made the final greenbelt map decisions, but there seem to be some municipal councils that are more equal than others, I guess, if they truly consulted. Grimsby is still very upset with some of the decisions made on the greenbelt map in their area. Pretty well every week there's a story in the paper about a discussion at local council that is upset that their good advice was ignored by the minister. We had a lot of very strong language sent by the mayor of Vaughan, who said that if the minister believed that official plans should be respected, then why was the Vaughan municipal plan rejected so summarily by the minister? Pickering is another issue. I know my colleague from Pickering is here. He'll know there is some upset in the Pickering council. So the government had a bit of a double standard, where it respected some municipalities but ignored others. I suspect it's because they didn't follow through with the principles of Bill 92. If they had, I believe a lot of these issues would have been ironed out beforehand.

Number eight: Bill 186, currently before us—I know Mayor Fennell of Brampton and Mayor Morrison of Caledon are very upset with this legislation, the lack of clarity, the lack of consistency, and the fact that the solution in the bill was one that had not even been debated, not for a day, not for an hour, not even for a minute, before Peel regional council. It was pulled out of the air, I guess, by the Minister of Municipal Affairs or one of the Premier's advisers, to try to solve the issue that they had let burn in Peel, and it was met with great dissatisfaction by the majority of municipal councillors in that area.

1650

They also ignored their facilitator's recommendations. The esteemed Justice Adams did a facilitation report on this, spoke with the interested municipal parties and brought forward a document. The Premier sat on it for months and months and then basically crumpled it up and tossed it into the garbage can. I don't know if it hit the rim or if it swished, but it went in the garbage can.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: Slam dunk, my colleague across the floor says.

What is regrettable is that the municipal advice was ignored. If you see the responses from the mayor of Brampton and the mayor of Caledon to those municipal councillors, to say they're extremely upset with the decisions of Dalton McGuinty, the broken promises and the fact that the solution was never brought before them but imposed upon them—they would say that they

shattered Bill 92, that they broke it in spades with Bill 186.

Number nine: the 2004 CRF reconciliation. I think my colleagues in the House are quite aware of the CRF program; the municipal partners certainly are. The community reinvestment fund would be two envelopes. At the beginning of the year, municipalities would get a certain envelope estimating the cost of delivery of social services, as part of the realignment of services in the late 1990s, and then, at the end of the year, there would be a second CRF envelope called the reconciliation fund. These funds would be used to calculate the difference between what the programs actually cost and how much money the municipality received, and try to make up the difference.

That had been the case since 1998. Then Minister Gerretsen went down to the ROMA convention just a few weeks ago and gave a very puzzling announcement that—bottom line—basically the province was going to renege on its 2004 reconciliation payments. It had been done consistently from 1998 until 2004, and now they announced they had stopped doing the 2004 reconciliation. There was outrage again by municipal partners. There was no consultation on that. I can't believe it. The minister and his colleagues were booed. They were jeered at ROMA. Those of us who were there saw that.

Then, thankfully, because of municipal pressure and I think some questions here in the Legislature, they backed down and said they would make good on their bills. Dalton McGuinty ran down there and waved a white flag within 24 hours. I'm pleased that he did, I'm pleased that he surrendered, because he was trying to get off the hook for bills that were owed, but the fact that the minister in the first place tried to wriggle off the hook is another clear breach of Bill 92.

Number 10 on our list is a new Ontario municipal partnership fund program. Now, I do believe there was discussion on a type of program, how to address the shortcomings of CRF and try to give municipalities a better framework to move forward. But I don't believe the actual numbers, the actual impact on municipalities was discussed with the municipalities themselves. Certainly, when you look at the change in the base funding for this new program and the CRF funds they had received from those two envelopes, some \$47 million less is going to municipalities. I know areas like Peterborough, Brant, Niagara, Chatham-Kent and eastern Ontario have had significant reductions in their funding for municipal programs. So I can't believe that the Ontario municipal partnership program and the numbers that were attached to it were run by the municipalities to begin with. I will just give you a couple of examples.

Tim Rigby, the mayor of St Catharines, said, "Over a period of three years we'll be whittled down to nothing. It's something we're certainly going to have discussions about." So that's a significant hit, \$2.9 million.

Ted Salci, the mayor of Niagara Falls—an excellent quote—"We've got the provincial government complaining of the \$23-billion gap from the federal government.

And I can't get \$2.1 million. We're complaining about the same things." The mayor is referring to the reduction in funds to the city of Niagara Falls.

The treasurer of Grey Highlands, Alan Selby, said, "In other words we will have to raise our tax rates by 25% and/or make expense cuts ... over the next four years."

Brantford mayor Mike Hancock: "I feel betrayed. I really thought that they were listening to us.... It took us two weeks to figure out how bad it was.... It makes us extremely vulnerable to extra costs."

They go on and on across the province.

Number 10 on the list is a very serious criticism and breach of Bill 92: that so many municipalities now are taking it on the chin, with significant new costs to cover with reduced funding from the province of Ontario, contrary to what Dalton McGuinty promised.

While we're pleased to stand here and support Bill 92 and have enjoyed the debate on Bill 92, we have to raise the important and accurate criticism that, at least in these 10 areas—and that's what I and the hard-working people upstairs in room 347 alone have come up with: 10 breaches of Bill 92 already by the Dalton McGuinty government. That's certainly not as many as their 40-something broken promises, but it's an awfully ominous start to seeing how they will follow the law of Bill 92.

We look forward to the vote, but I do hope that we will see an improvement in behaviour by the cabinet and the Dalton McGuinty government to actually follow Bill 92, instead of routinely breaching this contract with municipalities.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Just with respect to the issues that the member has raised, I had a chance to speak to this bill, and I pointed out at the time—and I want to reinforce it again—that it's nice the government has got some kind of agreement with AMO to deal with some issues, but the government has been sadly lacking in any kind of discussion with small municipalities in northern Ontario, particularly those that are organized under district social service administration boards. I can tell you that the district administration boards have huge issues with this government, particularly with respect to ambulance service, which, as you can well appreciate, is a critical issue in most parts of the province and particularly critical in our part of the province, where people have to travel long distances to access medical care.

We've got the Kenora District Services Board, which earlier in April actually wrote to the Premier and said, very clearly, "Why don't you just take ambulance services, because we can't afford to operate it any more."

In my own community, the Manitoulin-Sudbury district social services board is owed about \$1.2 million because of issues involving cross-border delivery of ambulance services. That hasn't been resolved yet. Each of the municipalities in question had a significant hit on their local levy to pay for ambulance services this year, which led to a look at program cuts and a hue and cry from the many municipalities that are being serviced.

We've got a problem with homes for the aged in the Algoma district services board, and that issue hasn't been resolved. They've got outstanding issues with respect to ambulance services as well.

The DSSABs have been waiting for this government to consult with them, as Minister Papatello said they would, because she is the lead minister responsible for DSSABs. They've been waiting for months—no consultation; nothing; silence. Meanwhile, the problems of delivery of service continue to grow. How come the government's not talking to these people?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): This is a very, very insignificant bill. There's one clause in the bill. Many of us are questioning why this bill was necessary at all. I would have rather debated Bill 186 today—that's the restructuring of the Peel regional council—because that has more impact than anything else. I hope that members are out on the front lawn tomorrow when the buses pull up from Brampton and Caledon for the debate tomorrow afternoon. The people of Brampton, I tell you, are not very pleased about the co-operation of this government with their municipality.

This government tries to portray itself as working with municipalities. What they did with Brampton and Peel was to send a facilitator in—George Adams, a very renowned judge—to work out a deal with the town of Caledon, the city of Brampton and the city of Mississauga. Judge Adams came up with a solution, but what the government did was put into effect another solution—the solution proposed by one of the parties, by the mayor of Mississauga. This government talks about working with various municipalities, but the proof is in the pudding with regard to the whole restructuring of Peel regional council.

I just want to say to all members, be prepared for tomorrow. We look forward to seeing you all out on the front lawn to meet the buses from Brampton. All the councillors and, I believe, the mayor of Caledon and the mayor of Brampton are going to be there. So I look forward to tomorrow afternoon, when we hear some more about the co-operation of this government with municipalities.

1700

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm glad to have the opportunity to comment on the member from Erie-Lincoln's rating of the 10 top issues that the government has not consulted on.

I've just returned from six days in northern Ontario—3,700 kilometres in 44 hours in the car visiting with people all around the north. I can tell you that the north feels neglected by this government and has some really serious problems. When you get into the north, you find out that this government has not consulted with northern communities in terms of investment for those communities. If you look at the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, the joint federal-provincial program that has been recently announced, what do you find in northern Ontario? You find that most of the north has

been neglected, even where there are very serious cases where municipalities need help.

Look at Rainy River, where they have a sewage system that has a caution on it from the Ministry of the Environment. They can't build another house in Rainy River. If ever there was a project that should be getting investment from higher levels of government, it's that project. All the municipalities around Rainy River support them in their bid to get funding assistance from the provincial government. Their project was turned down by the provincial government.

Iroquois Falls's water system is in desperate need of assistance. They had a fire there recently. The fire truck pulls up, hooks up to the hydrant, and all they got out of the pipes was rust, which plugged up the fire truck. The garage burned to the ground as the firemen stood there because they couldn't get water. They had a COMRIF application before this government to improve their water system. Guess what? It was turned down by this government.

Smooth Rock Falls is another one that was turned down. This government thinks that the north ends at North Bay, because that's about as far north as the COMRIF applications made it. I think there were two in the northwest that I'm aware of, Ear Falls and Kenora, that got approved, and that's about it. There are many more examples that were well illustrated by the member from Erie-Lincoln on the lack of consultation by this government.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Wonderful speech.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Erie-Lincoln, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Hudak: To Timmins-James Bay, you might end up in my campaign literature, so watch out. It would win me a few votes in the north anyway.

I thank my colleagues for their comments. To Lanark-Carleton, he is right. One issue that I had spoken about, Bill 186, is a clear breach of Bill 92; right? I'll say to my friend from Peterborough, if there was a jail sentence or a fine, then the minister responsible for Bill 186 would be behind bars or paying that fine—a clear breach of what Bill 92 speaks to.

I know that Mayor Fennell will be here tomorrow and bringing all kinds of concerned citizens and municipal leaders from Brampton. They'll be asking, among other things, for the minister to follow through on Bill 92 and change Bill 186 to reflect what was part of the consultations. I'm not holding out hope.

I will hold out hope that a couple of the Brampton members will actually vote against this. I know that Brampton Centre has said as much, and I hope the other two Brampton members will follow the votes of their constituents and have the courage to stand in this place and vote against Dalton McGuinty and the government. I hope that's the case. I expect that to be the case. I look forward to seeing those three members at least rise

against it. I hope, with the quality of our debate in the Legislature and the passion that they'll hear from the people of Brampton tomorrow, that maybe other members, not necessarily from Peel region, will also vote against Bill 186.

Now that we're through the Bill 92 debate at second reading—I think I may be the last speaker on Bill 92—we hope that it will be passed expeditiously. We do regret that it took so long to get to this position, considering that it was introduced for first reading as far back as June 2004, but I think municipalities need the protection. They have seen the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the health minister and the Attorney General several times break Bill 92, so I expect that municipalities are saying that they hope this bill will be passed soon so they can be protected from further broken promises or lack of consultation by the McGuinty government.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Is there any other member who wishes to participate in the debate?

If not, Mr. Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 92. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed? I heard a no.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I seek approval to have the bill referred to the committee on general government.

The Deputy Speaker: So referred.

ADOPTION INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES ADOPTIONS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 26, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 183, An Act respecting the disclosure of information and records to adopted persons and birth parents / Projet de loi 183, Loi traitant de la divulgation de renseignements et de dossiers aux personnes adoptées et à leurs pères ou mères de sang.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 183. I have to say to you, just observing the government benches with regard to the handling of the previous bill that was being debated here, it's disconcerting, as I am sure you all appreciate, that the government didn't know what to do with this bill. We had a voice vote, the whip didn't know whether it should go to committee; the Minister of Agriculture rose to his feet and referred the bill to the committee on general government. Now he's probably in trouble with his House leader, but it's only an indication of how this government does its business.

Here we are debating Bill 183, which is another example of a piece of legislation that shouldn't even be before the House in its current form. The reason I say that is beginning even with the explanatory note there are inaccuracies here, and I have never seen political spin in the context of a piece of legislation. I'll read it into the record. The second paragraph of the explanatory note reads as follows: "Currently, the Vital Statistics Act does not permit adopted persons to obtain information from the Registrar General concerning their birth parents. Nor does it permit a birth parent of an adopted person to obtain information from the Registrar General about the adopted person." That's absolutely inaccurate, because under the current system information is, in fact, available—available with consent, yes, but there are some in this province who happen to believe that is appropriate. I'm speaking to this legislation today because I believe that the voice of many Ontarians deserves to be heard in this place in debate concerning this bill.

I want to also, for purposes of ensuring that people don't interpret my remarks as somehow being disconnected from the subject, for the record state that I have an adopted son. He was adopted at birth. My wife is adopted. Her three siblings were all adopted. So the issue of adoption is not foreign to our family; it's something we understand very well.

1710

My son knows he is adopted. There was never any sense of holding that from him. My wife went through the process of the current system, which allows for an adopted child to register. It also allows for the birth mother to register. The current system provides that if in fact there is agreement, there is a process which involves counselling. It takes, appropriately, a certain period of time to ensure that those individuals who have registered to make that contact with their child or the birth mother do so having fully considered the implications, that there are the appropriate measures taken to provide the individuals with information about what to expect, what some of the consequences might be.

I am opposed to this legislation in its current form and I will be voting against it. I look forward to this legislation going to committee. I trust that during those committee hearings we will, as legislators, listen very carefully to the representations made by people from across this province who have as an objective not to withhold information, who want not for anyone to be denied knowledge about their background or about their health records, or to deny the opportunity to become reconnected and to make that important contact with either their child given up for adoption or with their birth parents, but people who I believe deserve to be heard by legislators regarding their concerns: concerns about their personal circumstances, their concerns with regard to this legislation that does retroactively something they would never have ever imagined could happen. That is, records that were sealed—and they entered into the adoption process with the full understanding and knowledge that that information would be sealed—this Legislature now

is taking the initiative and is opening those records without any knowledge, without any consent being required. I believe that's wrong.

There is an issue of privacy here that I believe has to be respected, should be respected. I draw your attention to a piece of this legislation. The very fact that it's here speaks volumes. Section 30 reads as follows:

"30. Section 65 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

"Information relating to adoptions

"(8) This act does not apply with respect to information and records that are unsealed by virtue of section 48.1 or 48.2 of the Vital Statistics Act or notices and information registered under section 48.3 of that act."

With this legislation, we're essentially saying that we're going to reach into the protection of privacy act and we're going to ensure that individuals across this province who entered into the adoption agreements don't have the protection that every other citizen in this province has under the protection of privacy act. I believe that's wrong.

I want to read into the record a letter that I received from a constituent. I'm going to read it in its entirety, because I believe it says better than I could what hundreds and thousands of families across this province are feeling today. There are many other hundreds of thousands of individuals in this province who would feel what is being expressed by my constituent if they knew that this debate was taking place. Here's the concern: There are many people who have entered into adoption agreements over the last number of years in this province who have no idea that this legislation is being debated today. They will have no idea, once second and third reading is given, that this legislation was debated and has gone into law and that their privacy will no longer be respected.

It's one thing for this Legislature to pass legislation that comes into effect on a go-forward basis for the future; it's something else when we reach back retroactively through legislation, undo something that has been in place and take away the very provisions that were in place when people acted upon them. The principle of retroactivity in law-making is a very important one, and once again this government is bringing forward legislation—as they've done with other legislation since they have been the government—that ignores this issue of retroactivity and its implications.

I want to read this letter into the record.

"Dear Mr. Klees,

"I am writing as a responsible parent and husband living my life with my family and until recently, very contentedly in your riding. Sir, for the very first time in my life, I am afraid. I am afraid of the government of Ontario's announced intention to abrogate the province's long-standing adoption law, a law that guaranteed the privacy of both the adopted child and adoptive parents from those who, at a time of their choosing, might seek to interject themselves into the private social dynamic of the adopted child and their nuclear 'life' family.

"For reasons of privacy and discretion, I choose, as I am sure countless others would also choose, to withhold my name. But I know you, sir, and ironically, I also know the Premier and his family and they know ours. But all they know is that we have tried to live our lives honourably and that we attend church, pay our taxes, volunteer and vote. We also take care to mind our own affairs and to never visit our attitudes and cultural norms on others.

"We are a tolerant, dutiful and hopefully caring family, but sir, we do have a distinction from other families in our circle. We are all adoptees: both generations. Our children have never been told that they are adopted, and my wife and I, being only children, have never told our friends, business and professional associates or neighbours.

"We have enjoyed the anonymity our silence and right to privacy has afforded us and our children. We were never subjected to the systemic prejudices the adopted suffer in humiliating silence almost every day. When we did poorly in school, no teacher ever raised their eyebrow in that knowingly condescending fashion and asked, 'Oh, would Johnny be adopted?' When our parents died, we were not singled out by the *Toronto Star* as 'the adopted children of.' We were instead listed as 'the loving children of.'

"We were never actually told we were adopted ourselves until our parents passed away, and by that time we had become the sum collective of their beings and were content to be so. Our children have been raised as our own, as in fact we were, and they are the inheritors of all that our parents once were and loved and all that my wife and I hold to be dear.

1720

"My wife and I discovered very little about the circumstances surrounding our birth. Both she and I thank God that our knowledge of such events and people are remote and intangible. For our children, however, the horrifying background and circumstances surrounding their earliest circumstances should never see the light of day. I remember the judges in the adoption courts assuring my wife and I that these haunting shadows would never be visited upon them. Now all of this is in doubt and my family is threatened by its own government.

"Mr. Klees, there is much I have left out. Cryptic references aren't exactly the kind of documentation you are probably looking for in your defence of our family's privacy. I do, however, implore you to speak to the other members of the Legislature, to halt this attack on the thousands of defenceless families in Ontario who have adopted and been adopted with the clear understanding that our records were to be permanently sealed and that we were free to lead our lives (like everyone else) within the context of the lives we had actually lived, not the denial-laced pseudo-lives this legislation would lay at our door.

"Mr. Klees, we and the thousands of voiceless and defenceless adoptees and adoptive parents need the Legislature to amend this bill and to take out the retroactive aspects of the disclosure provisions.

"I ask you and your colleagues to change the nature and content of this proposed bill.

"On behalf of my wife and family, thank you for your interest and compassion in this matter. I know you know of what I speak."

I'm going to pass this on to the page, if you would come forward, please, because I want to ensure that that letter is reflected in the Hansard record of this debate.

I want to make it clear that I am not opposed to legislation that would take away the bureaucratic hurdles that often are in place unintentionally but so develop. If there are more efficient ways that we can find to ensure that we can deal with access to information, whether that be medical or otherwise, if there are ways that this Legislature can find to ensure, administratively, that we achieve the objective of ensuring a reunification with as little bureaucratic interference as possible, I'm for that and I will support that.

I want to make it clear again that what I object to strenuously—and every member of this Legislature who takes their responsibilities as a lawmaker should join with me in that objection—is the retroactivity contained in this legislation. You know that there are other jurisdictions in this country, other provinces, that have legislation that does not go as far as this legislation before us, that does not contain the retroactive aspects of this legislation that I and so many others in this province find offensive.

I will participate with my colleagues in the committee hearings. We will have those discussions.

I encourage people across this province to contact their MPP, to participate in this important discussion, because it is important.

I ask, as we continue this debate, that each legislator ask themselves this question: Am I imposing, through the retroactivity provisions of this bill, hardship on Ontario families unnecessarily? That is not the purpose of this Legislature. I look forward to this bill being changed through amendment to ensure that we address this issue.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? There being none, do any other members wish to participate in the debate?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I want to associate myself with many of the remarks that Mr. Klees put forward with regard to this legislation, Bill 183. As you know, we've had several private members' pieces of legislation which have attempted in the past to do some of the same things as this piece of legislation does. But this is the first time that a government has introduced a bill, and therefore I feel that the debate on this particular bill will be more interesting and more inclusive of more people in Ontario than previous legislation.

One of the objections I have to having second reading debate at this time is that this bill was only introduced on March 29 of this year. That's approximately one month ago. My view of a piece of legislation like this is that it needs some time to gestate—

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): You always tell us we're too late.

Mr. Sterling: One of the members opposite, the member for Ottawa Centre, a good friend of mine, says that we always say it's too late. But the truth of the matter is that some legislation needs different time frames than others. My feeling on this bill is that there will be considerable interest in this, and my concern is that a great number of people in the province of Ontario who are not on the side of going forward with this bill will only wake up after the process is finished, and then will be upset.

The concern that I have over this bill is mirrored by the privacy commissioner: the privacy concerns and the abrogation of privacy rights which we gave to people in law some time ago. I'm told that there are 50,000 or 60,000 adoptions which have been formalized in Ontario at the present time where there are sealed records. The law has been that those records would remain closed and that neither the natural parent nor the adopted child, even if he or she was at majority—over 18—could obtain those records. But as Mr. Klees correctly points out, there is a system for people to unite, for people to get a copy of a record; there is that possibility through our present process. Mr. Klees points out that, in fact, he has gone through that process and that, in fact, that information is there.

I also would note that the Ministry of Community and Social Services will disclose information now without consent where there is a health, safety or welfare issue. In other words, if an adoptee has a health problem, he can go to the ministry and ask for health information about his parent or parents.

1730

The other concern I had, and I hadn't realized until the member for Prince Edward—Hastings, Ernie Parsons, who has worked in the children's aid society—I'm told by him and other people who have worked in this area that only about 25% of these records have the name of the father on the record. When the natural mother has been asked for the name of the father, there's no check with the father as to whether or not he's claiming to be the father of this particular child. So it leads to a whole number of other issues that could arise if an adoptee is reunited with the natural mother and finds out that the record says there's no father. Of course, the natural reaction would be for the adoptee to want to know who that father might be, if he or she was inquisitive about the first part of it. So there are some other issues that haven't really been discussed. I think there has been a misconception out there that at the present time there is no way for a person to get their adoption records. There is a way to get it, but it does require consent.

The second issue I want to bring forward is the whole matter of privacy. I noted when the minister introduced this legislation and made a statement to the Legislature, I had thought from her statement that Ann Cavoukian, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, was in favour. I read the words of the minister on that date, March 29, when the bill was introduced:

"One woman, an officer of this Legislature—our privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian—was extraordin-

arily helpful in the development of this bill. The back and forth between our offices has led to a much better proposed bill. I thank her for her interventions, and I thank her for her thoughtfulness. While Ann could not be here in the House today, her assistant commissioner, Ken Anderson, is here. Ken, please take our sincerest thanks back to her when she returns.

"We will have the opportunity to discuss, and to enhance if required, the components of this proposed legislation."

I thought from that statement that Ann Cavoukian agreed to this legislation. Well, nothing could be further from the truth, because the very next day the privacy commissioner says that she disagrees with this.

"A new bill tabled today on adoption disclosure can lead to thousands of Ontarians having their privacy invaded, says Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian.

"Going from this day forward, with everyone aware of the rules, I am in favour of openness in adoptions." She goes on to express her concern that this legislation goes further than any other province in Ontario. The difference between our legislation and the other provinces is—and I think people should understand the difference—in other provinces, either the natural mother or the adoptee has the right to go to the record-keeper and say, "Do not disclose. Keep my privacy intact." Under this legislation, the adoptee or the natural parent does not have that right to go to the record-keeper and say, "Keep my information secret." All you have the right to do in either case is to say, "I do not want to be contacted by a child I put up for adoption," or vice versa, the adopted child could say, "I don't want to be contacted by my natural mother."

Now, the big section in the bill to prevent somebody from breaking that particular part of the law is that there could be a fine. They say that, to a person who contravenes the sections of the bill, there could be a fine of not more than \$50,000. Well, who's going to prosecute either their natural mother or their natural child? It really is a hoax. The non-contact provision in this adoption bill is a hoax.

Ann Cavoukian says that she will support this legislation if the government changes the bill and says that an adopted child who has gained their majority, or is 18 years or older, or the natural mother has a right to contact the registrar and say, "Do not disclose. Retain my privacy." I find that a reasonable position to take in terms of going backwards in law.

As well, I think there is a long tradition in our courts and in our court systems to not make law retroactively. Law can be made two different ways. It can be made by statute, as we are trying to do, as we are talking about doing, here in the Legislature, or it can be made by the courts. Where there is a hole in our law where there is no rule, then our courts will make the law. The courts never make a law retroactively. They never go back. So there is a presumption that is long-standing in our courts and in our jurisprudence, there is a presumption against retro-

activity in the interpretation of any statute law or common law that we have.

In going to the library, I wanted to look at some of the construction of statutes. I want to quote from page 553 of the fourth edition of Sullivan and Driedger on the construction of statutes. The statements on this presumption of not being retroactive are really quite important. I want to read one or two of those. I hope I can find the one I was looking at before. Oh, yes, here it is:

“It is obvious that reaching into the past and declaring the law to be different from what it was is a serious violation of the rule of law. As Raz points out, the fundamental principle on which rule of law is built is advance knowledge of the law. No matter how reasonable or benevolent retroactive legislation may be, it is inherently arbitrary for those who could not know its content when acting or making their plans. And when retroactive legislation results in a loss or disadvantage for those who relied on the previous law, it is unfair as well as arbitrary. Even for persons who are not directly affected, the stability and security of law are diminished by the frequent or unwarranted enactment of retroactive legislation.”

That’s basically what our whole society is based upon: If you act within the law today, you should be able to rely on that law as you go forward, whether it’s two years from now, five years from now or 10 years from now. So I have a great deal of difficulty with the retroactive aspect of this legislation.

As well, I quote from “Retrospectivity in Law” by Elizabeth Edinger, from the University of British Columbia Law Review. From her article on page 8: “In all retroactive laws there must be an element of surprise, by which persons whose rights are affected are taken unawares. They are called upon to act in a manner different from what they had been led by the settled state of the law to anticipate. So repugnant is such a system of legislation to our natural sense of justice, that it has been stigmatized as more unreasonable than that adopted by Caligula, who was said to have written his laws in a very small character and hung them upon high pillars, the more effectually to ensnare the people.”

This whole notion of going back and making laws affecting the decisions of people that were made 20, 30, 40 years ago is absolutely repugnant to our law system. I can’t say it any more clearly than that.

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For these reasons, I think it is extremely important that members of the Legislature take this bill very, very seriously. This is not a normal piece of legislation that we pass on a day-to-day basis in this Legislature; this is a bill that goes against our natural law that we so ardently follow. It has been my experience most recently that this government has seemed to forget about the rule of law, about natural law, about retroactivity, on far too many occasions. I think it’s absolutely necessary that we change that particular provision in committee. I will not be able to vote for this bill on second reading. I will vote for the bill on third reading, if the privacy commis-

sioner’s suggestions are taken in the bill and it is amended for third reading.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The member for Oshawa.

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): Durham.

The Deputy Speaker: Why not Durham?

Mr. O’Toole: My riding, Durham, is really a subsection of Oshawa in terms of Durham region and Durham riding.

I do appreciate the comments made by my learned friend from Lanark–Carleton. I just wanted to be in support of the observations he has addressed.

If you look at the retroactivity nature, I would say that is a very important rule of law, whether real, natural or otherwise. It’s the understanding of the people when they enter into agreements that these agreements will stand the test of government intervention.

At the same time, also recognizing the rights of the child—it’s very important in this adoption issue, and in today’s age we understand collectively that there is a process today that allows consenting parties to the agreement on adoption to be able to match up.

But I believe the no-contact provision, as I said earlier in one of my small remarks, could specifically allow genetic information to be released while not disclosing identity. I think that would go a long way, as a reasonable amendment, to addressing the issues even of the member for Toronto–Danforth, who has long advocated for this legislation.

I support the rights of the child here, as a parent of five children.

I think the remarks by the member from Lanark–Carleton were exactly what the sentiments of Ontario’s population would be: to move forward for the rights of the child on adoption disclosure, without retroactivity affecting the rights of agreement and contract in law that consenting adults made with the rights at the time.

But given the technology today, I believe this legislation could pass, with a couple of minor amendments, and go a long way to providing access to information that children and their future health needs warrant.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

The member for Lanark–Carleton has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Sterling: Some of my other colleagues would like to speak on this bill, so I’m not going to comment long on the member for Durham, but I think it is a bill that everyone should be interested in, from the point of view of how far it goes from our normal institutions of the Legislature and the law.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting Bill 92.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just to be clear, what we’re talking about is referring the bill for third reading only, and that’s all the motion would deal with? The affirmative? It’s yes? Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: I’ve been advised that we have a motion on the floor, which is the motion for second

reading. So we should deal with that motion before we deal with any other motion.

Starting with this, Ms. Pupatello had moved second reading.

Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I'm pleased to be able to make some comments concerning this bill before the House.

Let me be very clear at the outset that I would support the concept of this bill very strongly in that I believe that people should have a right to find out where their roots are, who their ancestors are or where their children might be, but only with the permission of those people who are affected. I'm basically making the point that my two caucus colleagues have made: that the retroactivity, the nature of this bill, is very offensive.

The disclosure veto, as the privacy commissioner talks about, is a very important one, and the retroactive nature of this legislation falls in line with the retroactive nature of some aspects of the greenbelt legislation that this government has introduced; it falls in line with the retroactivity of some of the budget bills that were brought in in the first budget bill dealing with school taxes on independent schools. That was rather vindictive retroactivity, where people who had put their children in independent schools, expecting to receive the government grant for some of that or a tax write-off for some of those expenses, found out almost a year later that that expense against their income tax was no longer permitted. That retroactivity had very serious consequences to many of those people.

A number of things happened that our member from Ottawa-Nepean pointed out—

Mr. Sterling: —Lanark-Carleton.

Mr. Chudleigh: Lanark-Carleton, the member from down east there somewhere. As he pointed out, when the minister announced this in the House, she announced it in such a way that led people to believe that the privacy commissioner was very helpful in the creation and development of this bill. She talked about the “back and forth between our offices, which has led to a much better proposed bill,” and thanked her for her intervention. I'm sure she led everyone in this House to believe, anyone who was listening, that the privacy commissioner was fully in support. It would be improper to say that, but you certainly did lead everyone in this House to believe that there was support from the privacy commissioner for this legislation. Although she was not in the House on that day, the assistant commissioner, Ken Anderson, was here and she asked him to take her sincere thanks back to the privacy commissioner.

Well, the next day the privacy commissioner came out with a statement and then did a number of press releases, wrote a number of articles, wrote a number of letters to the editors, was very active in pointing out that thousands of Ontarians could have had their privacy invaded by Bill 183 because the retroactive changes in the rules governing adoption disclosure exposed the identities of birth parents who entered into the adoptive process in an era

when secrecy was the norm. The no-contact notice is not nearly strong enough, in the privacy commissioner's opinion, one which I agree with wholeheartedly. She suggests that unless there is a disclosure veto—in that you can put a disclosure veto in your file—this legislation should not be passed by this House for the benefit of Ontarians.

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It goes on to talk about the experiences in other jurisdictions—BC, Alberta, Newfoundland—who have the type of legislation the privacy commissioner is suggesting that we should have. In their experience, there have been something like 3.5% to 5% of people who have implemented that disclosure veto—not a large sector at all. In fact, under those conditions, 95% to 97.5% of the people who were involved with an adoption, either the mother or the children, would be able to obtain what they needed out of the legislation. I suppose what this government is saying is that a 2.5% or 5% minority in this case can be overlooked, and I think that's a grave error. I think it's a grave mistake that we're making, because when we begin to overlook even the smallest of our minorities, we're on a very slippery slope and headed to a very dangerous place. I would ask the minister to consider very seriously the implementation of a disclosure veto in this legislation.

The only place in the world they've been able to find that has legislation such as we're contemplating here today is New South Wales, in Australia, and that's been cited as an example. But two years after that law came into effect, the New South Wales Law Reform Commission reported that a significant minority of birth parents felt the law violated their privacy, that a significant minority of adoptees disapproved of the law and that a majority of adoptive parents were opposed to the law. One year after New South Wales brought in its law, the Australian state of Queensland brought in an adoptive law with core principles similar to what Dr. Cavoukian, our privacy commissioner, is advocating.

Why would you have a privacy commissioner if you're not going to listen to her, especially on these very, very significant issues? According to the commissioner, relatively few Ontario birth parents would file a disclosure. In fact, in Alberta and BC, as an example, a small minority indicated that they would, and that amounted to about 5%. Of the 250,000 people who are involved in this process, that would amount to a minority of about 12,500.

Perhaps we should put that minority in perspective: 12,500. Who amongst us in this House would be elected and sitting here today if there was a minority of 12,500 people who voted for our opposition? I would suggest that you think about that, put that into perspective and consider where we're going to go with this bill in the way it is currently written. Give some serious consideration to that, and I would ask that the minister seriously consider where the privacy commissioner wants us to go with this piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. There are a lot of areas of concern that have been brought forward. Most of all, I agree with the members who have spoken about the retroactivity of the bill. We have some strong concerns about going back. When people enter into agreements, the basis of those agreements is how they make their decisions. That, as the privacy commissioner has stated, is certainly going to affect a lot of individuals, and they have no say in how that is going to take place—somebody else is going to make the decision for them—when they have gone into an agreement and made that decision at that time.

I know that there are some other areas that had some strong concerns—the court fines. Does anybody expect that court fine to move forward, and how is a judge going to implement that fine and set a precedent of charging somebody up to \$50,000 for breaching that contract? Yes, I would agree that giving individuals the ability and the full right to move forward to discuss and find out how it's going to be—so long as there's consent on both sides. However, when there's not, there is strong concern. You need that veto to make sure that those individuals who don't want to be contacted aren't contacted in this particular situation.

Also, I would hope that the legislation goes to committee to give individuals who are willing to come forward and speak on their concerns on this particular issue the opportunity to come forward. I know that one group that has always had some strong concerns with this legislation but I haven't heard too much talk about yet in this chamber has been the Catholic adoption services, which is the largest adoption service provider in the province of Ontario, and how they feel it's going to impact their community and how their adoptions are going to move forward and what may or may not happen as a result of that.

My main concern is the retroactivity. I have some strong concerns that it's going to impact people where somebody else is making a decision where they have entered into an agreement in the past. I would certainly hope we get the opportunity through the committee process to look at that very concerning issue.

Mr. Bisson: I just want to say quite quickly that I will be supporting this legislation. I had the opportunity in a previous speech to say why. My half-sister contacted us about four or five years ago. We would never had known if she didn't have, finally, by luck, the ability to find us. That whole process could have been made a lot simpler if this kind of legislation had gone through. I can tell you that my mother, my brother, my sister and my new

sister—who was always my sister removed at adoption—are very happy as a family unit and think it's a great thing. We support the legislation.

Mr. O'Toole: Very briefly, I just wanted to recognize the member from Halton's remarks as well as the member from Oshawa, that members from this side are supportive in principle. We're happy to think that this will go to committee, and, at that, it would be a much-improved piece of legislation protecting the rights of adopted children.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? The member for Halton has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Chudleigh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've made myself clear.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Is there any other member who wishes to participate in the debate? If not, Ms. Papatello has moved second reading of Bill 183. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I have been handed a deferral by the chief government whip. The vote on second reading of Bill 183 will be deferred until Tuesday, May 3, 2005, at deferred votes.

Hon. Mr. Peters: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 9, the House may continue to meet past 6 p.m.

Interjection: No.

Hon. Mr. Peters: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting Bill 92.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed. Minister?

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS

(continued)

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I move that the order of the House referring Bill 92, an Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001, be discharged and that the bill instead be ordered referred for third reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The minister has asked for unanimous consent. Do I have agreement? Agreed.

It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath
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Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney
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Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
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Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Social Policy / Politique sociale

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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