



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

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de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 25 September 2002

Mercredi 25 septembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 September 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Here is the news update from MCTV as of 11:40 this morning: "A two vehicle accident on Highway 69 near Still River about nine this morning sent a couple of people to hospital with serious injuries. Police are still investigating the crash between a pickup and a car.... One person was trapped in the wreckage for well over an hour ... An air ambulance was dispatched to the scene" of this head-on collision.

From the Ontario Provincial Police communications centre, "a second accident that occurred about a half-hour ago near the Pickerel River bridge has closed traffic in both directions on Highway 69 ... According to early reports, a woman is trapped in her car with serious head injuries. An air ambulance is just on the scene," and one person has been sent to hospital with serious injuries. "MCTV's Sasha Novak was returning from the first accident and is in the Pickerel area," stuck in the road closure.

When will the Eves government listen to people like Henry and Colette LeBouthillier, who collected more than 4,000 signatures of the 20,000 petition signatures that I will be submitting later on today? When will this government listen to the 6,650 people who logged on to my Web site to sign the electronic petition? When will the Eves government listen to the 9,000 people who have taken bumper stickers that read, "Four-lane Highway 69"?

When will the Eves government listen to the many municipalities, chambers of commerce, labour groups and service clubs from all over the north that are telling you, "It's time"?

When will the Eves government listen to the Crash 69 Committee when they tell you that 46 deaths on Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound is just too many lives? You have to pave that road. It has to be a four-lane, multi-lane highway, and it has to start today.

The Crash 69 Committee invites the public out this Friday at 11 o'clock at the corner of Pioneer Road and Highway 69 as we launch our next step, our billboard campaign to ensure that this government understands how important four-laning Highway 69 is.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): It's another fine mess this Conservative government has created down in Niagara as a result of the imposition of so-called hospital restructuring. Niagara Health Services finds itself in chaos, dysfunctional from day one, and now board members resigning and senior staff resigning.

One of the solutions to the problem that this government created is passage of my bill, which provides for democratization of hospital governance. It is imperative that this largest single expenditure of public funds have direct public accountability. There is a private member's bill before this Legislature now that will provide for direct election by municipalities in Niagara region to the board of directors of the Niagara health system.

Why is this government so fearful of democracy? Why is this government so fearful of accountability? Democracy and accountability are part of the solutions to the crisis this government has created around health care in Niagara region. Niagara region needs, immediately, some direct assistance, monetary input, into the provision of home care and other services for seniors and it radically needs, dramatically needs, the democratization of governance over its Niagara Health System. That can be achieved by speedy passage of my bill to provide for direct election to the board of governors of the Niagara Health System.

NORTH AMERICAN
INDIGENOUS GAMES

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): This past summer, 180 athletes from the Six Nations reserve teamed up with other native people across the province to form Team Ontario. They joined in a week of competition, fun and memories at the Indigenous Games.

Close to 6,500 aboriginal athletes and coaches from across North America converged on Winnipeg this year for the largest Indigenous Games ever. Teams vied for gold in 16 events ranging from track and field to boxing, shooting and tae kwon do, as well as traditional sports: archery, canoeing and lacrosse.

While Team Ontario may not have come home with the total team award, our proud athletes represented their people and their province well. Six Nations athletes alone brought back 56 medals, including 31 gold, 17 silver and eight bronze, after competing in 13 of the 16 sporting venues.

Building on their already well-earned reputation as a lacrosse power, Six Nations brought home gold in all three divisions, and Six Nations ball teams earned four gold, two silver and two bronze.

I'd like to mention that on the soccer field, Team Ontario's only entry was a group of young athletes from the remote northern community of Mishkeegogamang. This was their first experience in a large city environment, and they too made it count, taking home third-place honours.

I want to congratulate all our native athletes who took part in the Indigenous Games and thank them proudly for representing not only their communities but our province.

CHARLES CETINSKI

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): It's obviously a day for great athletes. It's with a great sense of pride that I rise today to acknowledge and to celebrate the accomplishments of a wonderful friend and a true Ontario hero.

Several years ago, as the result of a tragic plane crash, Charles Cetinski, avid mountain climber and pilot, was left paralyzed from the waist down. Mr Cetinski spent several months in the rehab centre at Chedoke hospital. Always candid, Mr Cetinski had this to say about the centre: "It's a grim place, a terrible place. The people [working] there are great, there's nothing wrong with the personnel — but the place itself has no facilities. That's why I want to create a place to help people get their lives back together and that's why we're going to raise funds for a special new resource centre." That said, Charlie and his friends envisaged a Golden Horseshoe Marathon, a 210-kilometre wheelchair trek between Niagara Falls and Queen's Park. The marathon would raise money to fulfill his dream.

But Charlie wasn't just raising money. More importantly, he was raising awareness, awareness of the positive contribution people with people with disabilities make every single day to improving the lives of all Ontarians. Charlie puts it well: "Just because you see someone in a chair they are not necessarily handicapped—they just cannot use their legs."

September 19 marked the conclusion of the fourth annual marathon. Amazingly, Mr Cetinski and his wheelchair-bound friend Chuck Mealing broke the world record for consecutive wheelchair marathons, completing 10 back-to-back 42-km events. I'm sure all members of this House will want to join me in congratulating Charlie and his friends. What a phenomenal inspiration they are to all of us.

1340

ARTHUR DRUMMOND

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, I'm sure you'll extend my time as well.

I rise in the House to pay tribute to Clarington's museums and their new exhibit at the Clarke Museum

and Archives. It highlights the work of one of our most notable artists, Arthur A. Drummond.

Arthur Drummond was born in 1891 and was a contemporary of the Group of Seven. The community also remembers him as Orono's bank manager. In fact, young couples in the village were often invited to the artist's home to choose a painting as a wedding gift. His paintings are treasured by many Ontario and Orono residents and families. In fact, local residents have kindly loaned their A.A. Drummond paintings to the exhibit. Although Drummond painted scenes in Muskoka, the Kawarthas and Haliburton, many of the settings are in my riding of Durham.

A.A. Drummond retired from banking in 1937 to become a full-time artist. His career spanned over 63 years. He exhibited throughout his life with respected art organizations in Canada and the United States. In 1930, he was the only Canadian artist to be elected to the American Watercolor Society.

I would like to commend guest curator Mary Loft-house for bringing this show together at the Old Kirby Schoolhouse. Congratulations also to Kirby museum curator Charles Taws, the museum board chair, Julie Cashin-Oster, vice-chair Harold St Croix, the museum board and the many, many volunteers.

The Drummond exhibit opened Sunday, September 22. It runs until November 3, Tuesday to Sunday, at the Clarke Museum and Archives at Kirby, just north of Orono off Highway 35/115. I would encourage all members to attend.

I might add, Mr Speaker, with the time you permit, that there's also an excellent exhibit of the Queen's Jubilee on display here at the Legislature, put on by curator Charles Taws.

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I am glad the Minister of Citizenship is here to hear our condemnation of his unacceptable behaviour yesterday.

Mr Speaker, as you know, our leader, Dalton McGuinty, asked this Minister of Citizenship a question yesterday: if he agreed with the government-appointed auditor who is in the process of killing the international language programs. He should simply have said yes or no if he didn't know a better answer.

Instead, Mr Minister, you said, "I will pass this question on to the Minister of Education." That is really unacceptable. Not only were you providing a disservice to the Minister of Education, who in turn quickly had to consult her book—and guess what. She picked the wrong page. Instead of answering the question in terms of the international language programs, she answered on the English-as-a-second-language program: two separate, different programs—a whole embarrassment to him and an embarrassment to this government.

What we need today is very simple. Every educator knows that kids today need to be ready to compete in the

international environment. To do that, we need to have a better level of education, a better understanding of international programs, especially international language programs. We all know that, except this minister who is authorized to speak on behalf of Ontario newcomers. He's not. What we want is for him to move aside. We want him to move aside because the Liberals can take over and show that the next generation of students will be better prepared for the future to ensure that we in Ontario are competing internationally.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: First of all, my friend on the other side should know that's a budget item under the Ministry of Education.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Will the minister take his seat. It's not a point of order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The minister will take his seat now, please. Thank you.

ROBERT HARDIE

Mr Bob Wood (London West): On September 20, 2002, I attended a ceremony at the London Health Sciences Centre where Robert Hardie, a researcher in the division of urology, donated \$1 million in support of research into prostate and other urologic cancers. In June of this year, Mr Hardie won the \$10-million jackpot in the Lotto 6/49, and he continues his work at the health sciences centre.

Mr Hardie said in announcing his gift, "As a research team, we are driven by the need to know, to push the boundaries of knowledge that will improve the lives of our patients." Mr Hardie said he enjoyed his work, his colleagues, his patients and their families, and it was important to him to share his good fortune and see that the tradition of excellence continues.

What Mr Hardie has done shows how committed he is both to his community and his work. The donation will support the creation of the Robert Hardie research chair in prostate and other urologic cancers. The scientists to be recruited will further the understanding of the biology of prostate cancer.

At the same time, Dr Joseph Chin, chief of urology at London Health Sciences Centre, also announced the establishment of the Prostate Cancer Centre. The Prostate Cancer Centre will be a collaboration of physicians, clinicians and researchers from the London Health Sciences Centre, the Lawson Health Research Institute, St Joseph's Health Care and the London Regional Cancer Centre.

I know that all members of the Legislative Assembly will join with me in our heartfelt thanks to Robert Hardie. His dedication and generous gift will go a long way in helping to fight this type of cancer.

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I used to believe that Ernie Eves looked like a million bucks, but apparently I've been underestimating him, because the financial disclosures from the leadership race show he's not the million-dollar man—oh, no—he's the \$3-million Premier.

Bay Street almost drowned Ernie Eves in a sea of campaign donations, and in return the \$3-million Premier showers his backers in corporate tax cuts.

The \$3-million Premier also hands his wealthy backers private school vouchers to send their kids to Upper Canada College, and the \$3-million Premier lets his rich pals jump to the front of the line when it comes to two-tier health care at MRI clinics. Seniors on fixed incomes are forced to pay skyrocketing hydro rates, thanks to Ernie, but Ernie has hundreds of thousands of dollars to pay for PC party memberships.

The \$3-million Premier bought the Premier's office, no doubt about it, just like another steak at Bigliardi's.

Only Dalton McGuinty has the new plan and the new perspective to earn the Premier's office.

JAPANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL CENTRE

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): On Monday, with my colleagues Minister Turnbull and Minister Tsubouchi, I was honoured and pleased to honour a worthy beneficiary of the Ontario Trillium Foundation program. The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre received a total of \$210,000.

This funding has a noble goal, which is to support the JCCC's Nikkei Heritage Centre. The Nikkei Heritage Centre serves as a reminder of the history of the Japanese people in Canada. It commemorates the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to our nation.

The Ontario government is proud to support the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. But government funding for the JCCC would mean nothing without the initiative of its organizers, like Bill Petrick, Sid Ikeda, Martin Kobayashi, Jim Ura, Russ Takashima, Gary Kowaguchi, Steve Oikawa and Connie Sugiyama, who have the drive to build a monument to their heritage. Thank you for your indispensable contribution to the Toronto and Scarborough community particularly and to the province of Ontario. I hope that Monday's announcement proves that your hard work has not gone unnoticed.

Minister Turnbull, Minister Tsubouchi, I and all of my colleagues respect the legacy of the generations of Japanese Canadians who have contributed and continue to contribute to Canadian life.

As a representative for Scarborough, I am proud to support the JCCC's initiatives. These initiatives make our neighbourhoods that much richer.

VISITORS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to take the opportunity to welcome some very special guests we have today from Schreiber, Ontario. If I may introduce Mayor Bob Krause of the township of Schreiber; Councillor Peter Doig; Neil Tremblay, township superintendent and chief building official; and Marshall Tannahill, economic development coordinator. Welcome. It's a great community in my riding. I'm very proud to have them here.

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

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm pleased to introduce to this Legislature some visitors from the city of Creazzo, Italy, in the province of Vicenza. We have with us Mr Alberto Tomasi, who is an oft-awarded and acknowledged chef in Italy; his wife, Giovana Tomasi; and their friend Vittorio Pretto. They're accompanied by their host here in Canada, Bianca Rossetto from Thorold, Ontario, in the riding of Niagara Centre.

The Speaker: We welcome our honoured guests.

While we're welcoming people, in the Speaker's gallery you will note that we have the new legislative interns for the year 2002-03. Please join me in welcoming our special guests as well.

1350

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SOLICITORS AMENDMENT ACT
(CONTINGENCY FEE AGREEMENTS), 2002LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES PROCUREURS
(ENTENTES SUR DES
HONORAIRES CONDITIONNELS)

Mr Bryant moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 178, An Act to amend the Solicitors Act to permit and to regulate contingency fee agreements / *Projet de loi 178, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les procureurs pour permettre et régler les ententes sur des honoraires conditionnels.*

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): The bill amends the Solicitors Act to legalize and regulate contingency fees in the province of Ontario. It amends an initial bill as a result of the findings of the Ontario Court of Appeal, which will not be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, as has been indicated by the Attorney General, and the latest recommendations from the working committee on point from the Law Society of Upper Canada. It reflects those changes herein and the regulations will be made in consultation with the law society.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR

L'EFFICIENCE DU GOUVERNEMENT

Mr Flaherty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 179, An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting one new Act / *Projet de loi 179, Loi visant à favoriser l'efficacité du gouvernement et à améliorer les services aux contribuables en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant une nouvelle loi.*

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The minister for a short statement?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): In ministers' statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): Since this government was elected in 1995, Ontario's economy has prospered. In the past seven years, the Ontario government has laid the foundations for this prosperity. We have cut taxes, eliminated the deficit and balanced the budget. We have raised educational standards. We have reduced barriers to business. We have welcomed investments and trade. The result is clear: there are now 955,400 new jobs in Ontario that did not exist in 1995.

It is the fundamental responsibility of the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation to ensure Ontario's continued economic growth. To achieve this goal, we must constantly ensure that our legislation reflects the changing needs of our society, takes advantage of technological developments, updates outmoded regulations and eliminates unnecessary legislation and regulations.

That is why I am pleased to introduce the Government Efficiency Act, 2002. If passed, this bill would clarify, streamline and update dozens of acts of 15 different ministries. The bill would repeal 15 outdated acts and amend nearly 90 others.

This government has already repealed more than 57 outdated acts, amended more than 200 acts and eliminated more than 1,900 unnecessary regulations since 1995. Much of this stems from the great work of the Red Tape Commission, co-chaired by my honourable colleague Steve Gilchrist, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy and MPP for Scarborough East, and by Mr Frank Sheehan, the former MPP for Lincoln.

The commission has been vigilant in ensuring that outdated, outmoded and unnecessary red tape is eliminated or replaced with thoughtful, needful smart tape. In fact, the commission has been instrumental in organizing the international Red Tape to Smart Tape conference that is taking place right now, this week, in Toronto, with people around the world looking at what Ontario has done in this area of red tape.

Some of the amendments in the bill before the House would ensure that the people of Ontario get better service from their government. Other amendments would enable ministries to streamline their operations for greater efficiency or modernize outdated regulations. Still others would enhance the safety of the people of Ontario. For example, the use of reconditioned air bags being sold or installed in vehicles has been linked with serious injuries. The government is using this bill to prohibit the sale and installation of rebuilt air bags in Ontario.

In many cases we are updating our regulatory framework, but we are also protecting our citizens. Take for example the amendments being made in this bill to various health statutes, including amendments to better deter fraud and go after those who abuse our public health system. The changes include significantly stiffer penalties and a clarification that courts can impose orders that require compensation and/or restitution.

The government is also using this bill to strengthen our commitment to addressing domestic violence, supporting victims and holding abusers accountable. In order to best protect victims, the Domestic Violence Protection Act would be amended to help ensure that this complex piece of legislation is implemented as quickly and effectively as possible.

The government is also using this bill to reflect modern technological advances. The Provincial Offences Act would be amended to allow bail hearings in certain circumstances to be held by means of audio or video technology and to allow search warrants to be issued by fax. Not only would these changes help modernize our justice system, but they would have the added benefit of bringing them in line with amendments made to the Criminal Code of Canada.

I encourage all of you to support this government efficiency legislation.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): This is indeed a long and interesting piece of legislation that was

just put in our hands, and we are going to be looking at it very carefully. It's difficult to respond to it in its entirety in five minutes, let alone not having read it, but let's talk about this government's history on red tape and on deregulation.

This government's idea in the past of deregulation has led to the tragedy in Walkerton, it has led to less protection of the public, it has led to the appointment of former cabinet ministers to the board of GO and it has been done in secret by a Red Tape Commission.

Members on this side of the House and indeed members on the government side of the House got to see how other Parliaments in the Commonwealth deal with regulation. It's done in an open session, it's done by elected members and it's done before there's any legislation introduced, where it can be properly studied and not just jammed through. It will be interesting to see if this government uses, yet again, time allocation to shut down debate on a bill that, by the minister's own acknowledgement, affects countless statutes, countless pieces of legislation that affect the governance not only of this province but of charities, of municipalities. We will be circulating this to those organizations to get their response about it.

1400

The government hailed the deregulation of hydro as something that was good for the consumers of this province. Members on both sides of this House know full well what the impact of their 40% hydro rate increases has been over this summer, and God forbid we should have a cold winter. That was supposed to be an example of how more efficient deregulated markets can serve consumers. We've seen it in water charges, we've seen it in hydro charges, we've seen it in Union Gas charges, a government that's abandoning working families and seniors on fixed incomes in favour of corporate profits for those who've made their leadership campaigns such a lucrative undertaking over the last few months. Long-term care, the deregulation: what effect do all of these things have on our way of life, on our quality of life, and on government's ability to regulate different aspects of it?

My colleague from Toronto Centre-Rosedale just yesterday spoke about the need for better regulation of the investment industry in Ontario. We've yet to hear from the government on that. Hopefully there is something in here that will protect average investors, who are working people, who have pension plans, who have been so burned over the last few years—many of us in this House, in fact.

And what about their deregulation on the number of baths that senior citizens can get in our long-term-care facilities? Was that an example of government efficiency? Was that their idea of saving money and providing for a stronger economy? We say, and my leader, Dalton McGuinty, says, that they have no vision of how government should work. They certainly have no idea of the compensation between efficiency of dollars and the need to protect the people of this province. They've abandoned it on so many other occasions that we

suspect—indeed, we believe—there will be parts of this bill that will be so offensive that we couldn't possibly support them. We'll see if they're prepared to go to committee and take amendments. We'll see if this new breed of Conservative doesn't want to use time allocation the way they have in the past.

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals will stand up for those seniors who have had their baths taken away in long-term-care facilities. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals say that your plans for deregulation of Hydro have hurt the most vulnerable people in our society. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals will protect consumers, protect average Ontarians, and put the interests of average people ahead of the big corporate interests that have so steadfastly supported the party opposite.

This is not about government efficiency; this is about saving money for their friends. We look forward to parsing this bill line by line by line. And we'll change the rules of this House to do what most other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth do; that is, public scrutiny, by elected members, of regulations before they're brought in. A shameful record on that government's part.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Again we have before us another of the government's tactic in this House over the last seven or eight years, which is to take everything that they want to dump or impose on the people of Ontario and wrap it up in an omnibus bill, deliver it here, allow us some very minimal and modest opportunity to speak to it, to look into it, to do research, to see what impact it would have on the people of this province, and then to bring a time allocation motion in, usually on a Wednesday afternoon, when the member for Nickel Belt and myself are here, ram it through by Thursday, and then it becomes the law of the land, only to discover a week or two later the real impact, the real effect of its damage on the everyday life, the public life of the people of this province.

The people who have to deliver education in this province are only too aware, remember only too well the imposition of the omnibus bill that imposed on them control from the centre that has made the delivery of education in this province nothing but chaos and a travesty: a school system that was built up over years by different stripes of government, in one fell swoop with an omnibus bill through this House imposed on all those good people who work in education, destroyed the system and set people against each other, and continues to do that to this day. Anybody who has children in the elementary or secondary school in this province knows this only too well.

The megacity omnibus bill: Mr Prue, the member who was elected from Toronto, who was the mayor of East York at the time, tells us that the impact of that omnibus bill on the municipality of Toronto and those municipalities that were amalgamated has been drastic, has been very, very difficult. We still don't know the result, the cost of all that, not only financially but to the lives of

individuals who live in those communities and to the institutions that try to deliver services.

We'll be asking for a prolonged and long debate on this bill. We'll want time to get into it in some detail to find out what the Trojan horse is holding this time and to give effective opposition and critique to it so that everybody out there, at the end of the day, when this government ultimately rams it through, as they will—because that's their approach to getting legislation through this place; that's their understanding of how democracy works now in Ontario. They'll come in here and ram it through. We'll have told them, by the way, that we will drag this out, ask for hearings, ask for full debate, ask for committees, ask to travel across the province, that the people of this province will understand what it means and whom it's affecting and who is imposing it on them.

We don't have to look very far to understand the effect of the agenda of this government on different parts of our province, whether it be groups of people, geographic areas or organizations.

Up in northern Ontario, those of us who are struggling with an economy that has gone into serious recession know that this government in one fell swoop, over a period of a year or so, got rid of those vehicles that governments of various stripes, Tory, Liberal and New Democrat, put in place to deal with the cyclical nature of the economy up there: NODC, the Northern Ontario Development Corp—gone; NOTC, the Northern Ontario Transportation Commission—on its last legs, soon to be gone; NOHFC—its terms of reference changed so badly that nobody can qualify to apply for it any more, never mind that the private sector, the engine that, so said by the government, will drive the recovery and the economy, has been changed so that the private sector cannot even apply. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has been hollowed out. The Ministry of Natural Resources has been shrunk to a point where they can't do their job any more. Just look at last week, when we discovered that Brascan, up in northern Ontario, drained a whole lake. The Ministry of Natural Resources didn't have the resources to go in and check that out. If you try to add an inch to the end of your dock, they'll be there tomorrow, but they don't have the resources and the government doesn't have the political will to send them in to check up on their friends at Brascan when they drain a whole lake.

This is the kind of damage that the agenda of this government is imposing upon this province, not to speak of Walkerton, where seven people died; not to speak of the fact that Dudley George was killed while trying to clear up this government's attempt to clear out a park; not to speak of the fact that Kimberly Rogers passed away in Sudbury a year ago, and that Joshua Fleuelling, trying to find a hospital to get into, passed away in the back of an ambulance. This is the kind of thing; this is the kind of result we can expect from this government.

We're concerned that this new omnibus bill will have that kind of effect on this province as well.

1410

ORAL QUESTIONS

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My question is for the Minister of Business and Consumer Services. September 11 last year was supposed to be a wake-up call. When Dalton McGuinty raised questions with serious concerns about loopholes in the process to get birth certificates, the government promised to fix it. In fact, just last year your predecessor assured members of this House and the people of Ontario that the system was more secure than ever and that all the holes had been plugged. But they haven't.

We've confirmed with police that blank birth certificates and an unknown amount of personal information were stolen from a Brampton land registry office in June. At least 500 blank certificates have been recovered through three police search warrants.

How did you allow this to happen, and, in light of this information, can you tell me how it was that we were assured last year that birth certificates are safe and secure when they surely are not?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I can say with confidence that we have increased the safety and security of the birth certificates within the system—my predecessor, Minister Sterling, followed by myself—including increasing the information required by the applicant, including shared secrets. We've launched a campaign to alert consumers about the risks of identity theft, to take care of their own birth certificates, requiring lost or stolen birth certificates to be reported to the government and limiting the amount of documents that can be used as proof of citizenship.

The member has been right. There was a story in the paper some time ago that we've been working with the Peel regional police with respect to some missing documents at the land registry office. We've worked very closely with the police. I think if you ask the Peel police, you'll be very satisfied with the response the ministry has had to clear up the issue.

Mr Crozier: We have, in fact, asked the police. For weeks, though, ministry staff were telling the public and members of this Legislature that the service problems were due to a computer glitch.

You've been covering up that truth. Now you've failed to give us any concrete evidence of how you're going to protect the security of birth certificates. There's been another breach of security. Clearly, this is a massive breach, and clearly, you are responsible. When approximately 300 birth certificates disappeared from an office in Toronto 10 years ago, Mike Harris asked the minister of the day to step down.

You've allowed false statements to be fed to the media, to MPPs and members of the general public. How do you defend these actions, and why should we trust you to fix this problem when you haven't acted so far?

Hon Mr Hudak: The government has acted in the past, we continue to act today and we'll continue to act in the future to ensure that essential documents like birth certificates and others are kept very secure. In fact, I think we have a great record to be proud of. We'll continue to be proud of that into the future.

As I mentioned, when alerted by police about that particular incident, we acted immediately. I think you'll find that the police are quite satisfied with the response of the ministry. We will continue to work to make sure that essential documents like birth certificates are kept high-security and that we won't have any incidents like that in the future.

Mr Crozier: Your high security isn't much, and you didn't act immediately. A fraudulent birth certificate, frankly, is a criminal's ticket for a free ride. With a birth certificate, you can get a driver's licence, you can get a health card, you can access welfare and the health system and, most importantly, it helps you get a passport. With blank certificates in hand, all that a criminal would need to forge one and in fact get a false identity is to have a typewriter.

You know all of this, and yet when the documents were stolen right from beneath your nose, you didn't do anything to begin reviewing your systems until an OPP officer called and said they had someone in custody.

Why did you wait two and a half months after the theft was reported to start an internal investigation on the security of these blank birth certificates?

Hon Mr Hudak: As I said, the ministry had co-operated fully with the police in terms of making sure that information was supplied and to make sure we notified—as is common; some of the new rules we brought in—if there are missing numbers out of there, we communicate those numbers to other areas so that those birth certificates cannot be used to assume a false identification.

Identity theft is something we take very seriously in the ministry. We act to shut that down, with the changes the previous minister brought in and that we continue to enforce. If there's a lost or stolen birth certificate, those numbers are shut down so they can't use those to get other pieces of ID and to assume identities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Minister of Education. I have a letter by a board official responding on behalf of your supervisor which shows that the most vulnerable school-children in the Hamilton public board are denied access to timely assessments. Specifically, the \$274,000 in one-time funding to support intensive assessments has not been allocated by your appointed supervisor. Why is your hand-picked supervisor denying the most vulnerable

students in the board immediate access to funds for these professional assessments?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): On the issues of special education and assessment, our government has moved forward in a way to ensure that all the children in the province who need special help can receive the additional support that is necessary. I am sure the supervisor will be moving forward in a way that is responding to the direction he is being given by the staff of the board.

Mrs Bountrogianni: This supervisor is the same person your government hired to cut the budget for Hamilton CCACs, which led to the loss of home care for hundreds of disabled and senior citizens. You can see why the community is anxious. There's urgency to this particular matter. The deadline for the provincially mandated review of files for 800 high-needs students is coming up in November. This cumbersome paperwork is of your making. The students will simply have to wait to get the help they need.

Minister, I ask you again: why is your provincially appointed supervisor refusing to allocate this \$274,000 immediately to support the neediest students in the community?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I can assure you that the comprehensive review of the intensive support amount has resulted in the identification of many children. Certainly, if the money has been allocated and provided, the money will flow to the students as directed.

Mrs Bountrogianni: We saw what you did to special education in Ottawa. We won't let you do this in Hamilton. First, you cut the board's budget so that they could not meet the students' needs. You then introduced massive paperwork to access these assessments. Finally, you've appointed a supervisor who refuses to allocate the ministry funds for timely assessments for the most disabled students.

I've worked in this field for 20 years and I know the importance of these assessments for the success of students. If we are judged by how we treat our most vulnerable, your government has failed miserably. On behalf of the most vulnerable and most disabled students in my community, I must demand that you direct your supervisor to allocate these funds immediately.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Perhaps I could correct the record on one of the points that was made regarding Ottawa. One of the accomplishments of the supervisor in Ottawa—and you raised the issue, I would say to the member—is that it was the supervisor in Ottawa who actually lifted the hiring freeze on teachers, and there were about 150 additional teachers hired in Ottawa. That includes special education teachers who also are part of that 150. So I think it's time to make sure we don't confuse fact with fiction.

I would also quote from a comment you made at one time about our funding formula. You identified the fact that our funding formula is good because it's the first time we've "mandated special services, psychologists, social workers and speech and language pathologists."

Then you went on to say, "I applaud the government for that."

I can assure you that we will continue to meet the needs of special education students in Ontario.

1420

HYDRO RATES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Earlier this week, the Premier said he was not concerned about sky-high electricity bills. He tried to say that the problem was merely a hot summer.

Well, today the Independent Market Operator says that it's the Premier who's full of hot air, that in fact the electricity shortages are going to continue into the fall and that consumers across Ontario—farmers, homeowners and businesses—will continue to pay through the nose for electricity.

Admit the obvious, Minister. The problem isn't a hot summer. The problem is your government's scheme to privatize and deregulate our hydro. On behalf of consumers of electricity, will you commit now to cancel your disastrous strategy of privatizing and deregulating our electricity?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I read the Independent Electricity Market Operator's report and their 18-month outlook, and it says, "The energy production capacity is generally expected to be well above energy demand levels in each month of the outlook period." About the reference resource scenario and the delayed resource scenario: "No additional energy is expected to be needed to meet the Ontario forecast energy demand." Maybe he should read the full report.

Mr Hampton: This is the summary of it: coverage in the Toronto Star, "Power Shortage to Continue"; coverage in the National Post, "Electricity Supply Trouble"; coverage in the Globe and Mail, "Ontario Power Prices Rival Rates Set in US."

Minister, it also says that if you continue down the road with hydro privatization, you are going to put Ontario consumers in a more and more vulnerable position, a position where people are vulnerable to the Enron-style rip-offs we saw in California.

Just a simple commitment from you: on behalf of the consumers of Ontario, will you commit not to sell off any more of our hydro generating stations?

Hon Mr Baird: My job as Minister of Energy is that I've actually got to read the report. I can't just read the Globe and Mail and the National Post and the Toronto Star. You actually have to read the report. I suggest to the member opposite that he do that.

One of the things we're tremendously committed to doing is to decontrol; that is to say, the Ontario Power Generation Corp shouldn't have the market power it now has to set prices. That's why we're following a process of decontrol. If he's suggesting that isn't a good idea, I suspect once again that he'd be alone.

Mr Hampton: Minister, just read the second paragraph of the Independent Market Operator's release. It's very clear that reserve levels—in other words, the levels to protect Ontario consumers from price rip-offs—are going to be below the Independent Market Operator's standard. What he's saying is that you're exposing more consumers across this province to hydro rip-offs.

Now, you may think that's a joke, but I'll tell you, industries, businesses, farmers and consumers don't think it's a funny joke when they're paying double the price for hydro. Seniors living on fixed incomes don't think it's a joke when the hydro bill doubles but the pension cheque doesn't.

You're looking after your Bay Street friends. You're looking after them tremendously. Will you do something for the consumers of Ontario besides just sticking it to them?

Hon Mr Baird: I think if you check the report, the word "rip-off" isn't a word that's used in the report. As minister, I take the concerns outlined in the Independent Electricity Market Operator's latest forecast about reserves quite seriously. It's something obviously we're working on with respect to building new generation facilities in the province of Ontario. We have seen a good number of new generation facilities come on-line. To date, we've seen another \$180 million in new investment in the waterpower industry, where nine waterpower projects are currently being built. We see new generation capacity being brought on-line in Sarnia. We see new generation power being brought on-line in Windsor.

If I read the report—he's read the newspaper and the press release; I suggest he read the report—it says, and I'll read it again for the member, "The energy production capacity is generally expected to be well above energy demand."

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Deputy Premier. I would say to the Deputy Premier, yesterday was a very shameful day in Ontario. It was a shameful day because in effect homeless people, some of the poorest, most vulnerable people in this province, essentially had the police sent out to round them up. Your government's way of dealing with a social problem is simply to send in the police and turn them out.

Minister, it's pretty clear that there is a big problem growing, that there is not enough affordable housing, not in this city, not in many other cities. We have put forward a plan that would allow us to build not only 8,000 units of affordable housing each year, but 2,800 units of supportive housing for people who need a hand up. What is your plan for affordable housing, or do you have a plan for affordable housing in this province? Or do you just send in the police?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I think yesterday's events are tragic in the sense that a lot of people need shelter, need all kinds of assistance. I know the city of Toronto is working on that with their agencies, and the province of Ontario, as you heard yesterday, is there to support with the homeless shelters.

In terms of the housing policy, there is good news. More than at any time in history, most people are into home ownership. There are more vacancies coming on-line; 40% of condos are rented. Clearly, you're talking about the affordable end.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'm just telling you the facts and the history. If you don't want to hear the good news, if you want to concentrate on the bad news—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The minister has the floor.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'm trying to point out that there is some good news happening in the housing industry itself. We have record numbers of people being able to buy their first home. That's good news. There's still a problem with affordable rents at the low end. Quite frankly, it's because of past policies, where we killed the market.

We're also planning to implement the federal program. For the first time in 10 years, the federal government has put forward dollars for an affordable housing program. We're going to participate in that and roll that out this fall. There's also assistance for rent-geared-to-income subsidies, which in August, if you have been following it—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Minister, quite frankly the policies of your government surrounding housing and a great many other things are quite shameful. Your first act as a government was to slash welfare. Your second act was to deregulate housing so that today in Toronto it costs about \$2,500 a year more to live in an apartment than it did when your government deregulated housing. It's been a windfall for the landlords.

You've refused to increase ODSP for some of our most vulnerable and disabled citizens. The streets are meaner. The streets are full of desperate people. We have tent cities not only in Toronto, but under literally every bridge and every overpass and in every ravine in every town in this province. You have watched and you have done nothing but let your friends grow richer.

We talked to you and we gave you a copy of our urban vision some months ago, and you commented that it was a good vision and that you appreciated the fact that we put it on paper. Having read it now, will you give money from the land transfer tax to the municipalities to build co-ops and non-profits? We're asking you right now, will you implement the provisions that we gave you some months ago?

Hon Mr Hodgson: Just for the record, you talked about things that have happened to drive up the cost of rent. Probably the most atrocious thing to happen was what you voted for on council, to raise the taxes paid—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I can read the resolution for you. That translates into about \$200 on average for every tenant in this city, when you wanted to raise the property taxes for multi-residential four and a half times higher than for residential condos. That had the biggest impact.

The second thing we're not going to do is go back to the failed policies of past governments. The auditor talked about a billion-dollar boondoggle. No government of any responsible partisan flavour wants to go back to that. The federal Liberals don't want to own the mortgages and have government doing that; the provinces don't want to do it. But we do want to assist in having more affordable housing built on the supply side, and that's what we're doing.

1430

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is to the Minister of Energy. It's not just residents, Minister, who are livid at receiving unaffordable electricity bills; it's also businesses that employ Ontarians and drive our economy, businesses like Dubreuil Forest Products, who wrote their great MPP, Mike Brown, to say that their hydro bill this summer went up not 40%, not 80%, but 110%. This general manager said, "We cannot afford this type of additional increase and expect to survive." This is 500 jobs in this community. This is the community employer. Thousands of jobs are imperilled across this province because of your evisceration of energy policy in Ontario. What do you say to these people who want answers from their government and want to know how you're going to fix it?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): We realize we can't run an Ontario Hydro system like we did back in the early part of the 20th century. We realize you've got to change with the times. We realize that the \$38-billion debt run up by the former Ontario Hydro, a debt every single individual in the province of Ontario is responsible for to the tune of \$3,000, every family to the tune of more than \$10,000, was unacceptable. Indeed, we could not continue along that route.

We did see this summer the hottest summer on record in 50 years, in half a century. That put a huge demand on the system. That's why we're working very hard to bring additional generation on-line. We've seen a good number of wind-power projects on-line around the province. We've seen new investments in construction in Sarnia, in Windsor and indeed in many other parts of the province of Ontario. We can do a lot, but we can't control the temperature of the environment.

Mr Bryant: So let me get this straight. Last spring you were blaming your appointment, Eleanor Clitheroe,

for energy problems. Earlier this week you were blaming your appointment, the former NDP finance minister, Floyd Laughren, for your problems. Now you're blaming Mother Nature for your problems. You know what? Mother Nature is not the Minister of Energy. Mother Nature wasn't elected to represent and answer to the people of Ontario about skyrocketing prices.

I say to you, it is the government's failure to get electricity supply on-line after seven long years in power. I say to you, it is your radioactive blunder in failing to get Pickering up and running on time. I say to you, it is your absolute shipwreck of electricity transmission which has left investors not wanting to come into Ontario. As a result, we have artificial inflation of hydro prices, which means that it's not Mother Nature, it's not Mother Teresa: you are to blame for electricity prices going up. Ontarians want to know, when are you going to stop blaming everybody from Mother Nature to Mother Teresa, account to the people of Ontario and tell them how you're going to fix the problem?

Hon Mr Baird: A rather colourful question from the member opposite. Let's look at two quotes from two respected individuals. I read in the Hamilton Spectator: "Tom Adams, head of the lobby and watchdog group Energy Probe, argues that the system is 'tired' and that once needed repairs are done and capacity is back on stream, prices should come down."

I read in the Globe and Mail today: "Jonathan Dickman-Wilkes, a consultant with Navigant"—a Toronto energy consulting firm—"cautioned that it is still too early to give an accurate prediction on the direction of Ontario's electricity rates and that a full year might be required to get an indication of the market price for power."

I don't know where the Liberals stand on this issue. When we brought in an open market, they voted for Bill 35 on second reading, which is reading in principle, but by third reading the Liberals under Dalton McGuinty had flip-flopped again and they changed their minds one more time.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, Ontario's colleges and universities are entering a period of growth. An important part of our government's plan for increased enrolment is expanding the number of spaces available for these new students to learn. Parents and students in my great riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale are very interested in the choices available to them in post-secondary education and the impact that this expansion will have on campuses across Ontario. Minister, can you give this House an update on the SuperBuild program in post-secondary education and the important work being done to prepare our colleges and universities for the new generation of students?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): Just to update my colleagues in the House, as well as my colleague who has just asked the question, everyone knows that the plan has been, of course, to expand the number of student spaces, also to expand the number of student aid and student assistance programs.

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Mr Speaker, I don't know whether I should carry on or not, but you're not standing up.

We have in fact increased our operating grants and we've provided funds, \$337.5 million, to renovate facilities that are already there. So I am pleased to inform this House that the size of the SuperBuild initiative since it first began—it is now larger by far since the House was last in session. We now have some 61 new buildings, \$2.1 billion, and the growth number is from 73,000 spaces to 79,000 spaces. We should take this opportunity, all of us who have been at our own SuperBuild announcements, to thank our colleges and universities for the excellent work they have done.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Minister. I do appreciate your sincerity and caring; 79,000 new student spaces is a large number and doesn't even take into account new spaces created by renovations. With 18 universities and 24 colleges in Ontario, many of my constituents and parents across Ontario want to know how this affects their children who are preparing to go to post-secondary institutions. Minister, could you provide the House with specific examples of the type of new post-secondary facilities that are opening across Ontario and tell us what this will mean for students and working families?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Mr Speaker, my colleague from St Catharines added, "How are you doing such a good job?" I will say to both of my colleagues that in fact we have huge leadership with our students, we have huge leadership in our colleges and our universities, and we work together. That's how you get things done.

Just in September this year—in some instances, a year ahead of time—on the 12th the Premier and I were at the University of Ottawa to help open a beautiful new facility. It's called SITE, the new School of Information Technology and Engineering. For the members from Ottawa, I should say from listening to the dean speak and from the number of graduate programs in engineering, they are second to none and are competitive in the world. We should be so very proud.

On the 6th we were at Brock University in St Catharines, creating new spaces for 1,700 new additional students, a great success story for the peninsula. Of course, my colleague from St Catharines was there. We always have a little discussion and introduce each other. That's how you get things done.

In closing, we were at Huron College at the University of Western Ontario. The story goes on. We are ready for the double cohort. We are ready for the number of

students, not only in buildings but operating grants as well.

1440

SLOT MACHINES

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I have a question for the Attorney General. Minister, I want to return to the matter of the government's relationship to Picov Downs, by far the smallest racetrack in Ontario. Despite their small size, they were very large donors to Jim Flaherty and also to Ernie Eves. As a matter of fact, Jim Flaherty's largest contributor was Picov Downs, with at least \$80,000 worth of contributions. Minister, despite the fact that Picov Downs only generates \$280,000 worth of tax betting, the cabinet gave them the initial go-ahead for slots that could generate \$146 million in revenues and \$14.6 million in annual profits for the operator. Why did such a small track receive initial approval for such a lucrative windfall from your cabinet?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I must confess, I'm rather disappointed and somewhat surprised that over the course of the summer the Liberals, who I thought were paying some attention to matters of import to the people of Ontario, had nothing better to do than to try, through a fanciful, imaginary process, to come up with some concerns that they wanted expressed in question period.

I said to you the other day and I say again to you today that there has been no decision made as to how many slots will be placed at that racetrack. What we are doing is following the exact same procedure that was followed with the other 16 tracks that have already received slot machines. Those are racetracks that are located in many of the ridings now represented by Liberal members. It is the exact same procedure.

Mr Kwinter: The reason I'm asking the question today is because of your answer yesterday and the answer you just gave now. You are totally either misinformed or you're not paying attention. The truth is that a very important decision was made. If no decision was made, we wouldn't be discussing this. Just so you'll know, Janet Ecker, the member for the region, told the Ajax News Advertiser that Picov Downs has been approved. The cabinet decision said that up to 800 slots could go to Picov Downs, and that information was conveyed to the operators. On March 5, 2002, Jane Holmes, executive director of the Ontario harness horse racing association, wrote to the government saying, "It seems incomprehensible that Picov Downs may be allocated 800 slot machines."

What is happening is this. Absolutely, the decision was taken; otherwise they wouldn't have conveyed it to the operator. I understand that you have asked for it to be reviewed. What I would like to know is, will you share your concerns and share the information with us as to how that decision—

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

Hon Mr Young: “Up to 800,” means up to 800. It may be one, it may be two, it may be 799. That is not a difficult concept, sir.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The Attorney General, continue. Sorry for the interruption.

Hon Mr Young: I can understand why the Liberal members might have difficulty with this concept. If I may read to you a quote: “I went to Bay Street. I went to Bay Street and took in \$1 million in one night from the business community. We established a national record in terms of the amount of money raised in one event by a provincial party.” That was said by Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal leader, on June 27, 2002. Yesterday we hear Dalton McGuinty say, “Anybody who receives that much money, you know, you’ve got to start asking some questions about whether or not they happen to be beholden to those people who made those contributions.” That’s the way of the Liberals, and that’s why you’ve come to that erroneous conclusion.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock for a moment. While we have a quick moment here, joining us in the members’ gallery east is the Honourable Doug Lewis, the former cabinet minister from the House of Commons. Please join us in welcoming our honoured guest.

URBAN STRATEGY

Mr Bob Wood (London West): My question is for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing responsible for urban affairs. The minister is, of course, in the midst of a seven-city tour across the province gathering direct local input in order to develop new ways to help strengthen our cities, and in particular the possibility of special municipal tax programs to attract investment and jobs. The minister is aware of my concern that any initiative build on strength and real opportunities. Does the minister see her mandate as looking for ways to subsidize areas of economic weakness or to find ways to enhance economic strength?

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I want to thank the member from London West for his question and tell him how delighted I was to include the city of London in my urban tour. As was stated, I am visiting seven urban centres across the province. I’ve already been to Windsor, London and Hamilton.

I see as my mandate creating an urban strategy that makes sense in all areas. Some areas, like London, are looking to build on the current strength and yet other areas, like Windsor or Hamilton, certainly have different views. I want to quote the mayor of Windsor, Michael Hurst, who said when asked about the tour, “The surest way of advancing everyone’s agenda with regard to urban affairs is to sit down at the table, exchange ideas

and put forward practical suggestions for improvement.” I couldn’t agree more with the mayor.

This government is developing different approaches as there are different municipalities across Ontario; one size doesn’t fit all. I’m looking forward to touring the other four cities in Ontario.

Mr Wood: I hope that the minister, in crafting solutions, will bear in mind that one solves problems by building on opportunity and strengths. What ideas has the minister heard to date that she sees as promising?

Hon Mrs Molinari: In developing a more comprehensive urban strategy, our government’s goal is to work with everyone, all the stakeholders in Ontario, and to find some common vision to build strong and vibrant communities and healthy environment.

I’m hearing that greater co-operation between all levels of government and a partnership with the private sector are important. I’m also hearing that we need to continue to work with the federal government and have them come on board. It’s pleasing to see that they have finally recognized that the issues of cities are not only a provincial concern but also a federal concern.

I’m pleased to say that today’s announcement of the Premier and the Prime Minister to commit a combined \$300 million to improve truck traffic approaching the Windsor-Detroit border is just an example of the beneficial co-operation that is happening now in working together to better the urban cities in the province.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the associate minister of health. Your cancellation of the minimum standards for bathing will make life worse for residents in long-term-care facilities.

The previous regulation, which you cancelled July 31, read, “The nursing staff shall ensure that residents who are confined to bed or who are incontinent shall have a complete bath daily, or more frequently where necessary to maintain cleanliness, and that ambulant residents have a complete bath at least once a week.” Your new regulation says, “The nursing staff shall ensure that proper and sufficient care of each resident’s body is provided daily to safeguard the residents’ health and to maintain personal hygiene.” There’s no mention of a bath daily or a bath weekly. In fact, there’s no mention of a bath at all in your new regulation.

Minister, why did you cancel the minimum standard for baths for residents in long-term-care facilities?

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): On June 26 this year we committed to review the bathing regulations in this province for each and every long-term-care facility to ensure that the best quality of care is consistently being provided to each and every one of the 61,000 people in long-term-care facilities in our province. In fact we did have that review of the regulations for all long-term-care facilities, and I was pleased to announce on July 31 this year that along with the largest infusion of money into nursing and

personal care, which is \$100 million, we had amended the bathing regulation because we wanted to ensure that our rules and regulations with respect to bathing were indeed clear and consistent, regardless of whether you lived in a nursing home, a charitable home or a municipal home for the aged.

The amended regulation ensures that each and every resident receives the care they need when they need it. Every resident in a long-term-care facility has a plan of care to reflect the individual needs of that patient. Some residents in long-term-care facilities may be mobile while others may be bedridden, but the needs of each resident are different. This regulation reflects that.

Ms Martel: The question was, why did you cancel the minimum standards for baths for seniors in long-term-care facilities? The new regulation doesn't even mention the word "bath" at all. I would have thought your government would have learned, after you cancelled the minimum standards of nursing and personal care, that you need better standards, not less.

1450

PricewaterhouseCoopers reported in January 2001 that in comparison to other jurisdictions, seniors in long-term-care facilities in Ontario ranked last—dead last—in terms of nursing care, rehabilitation and care of those who present with behavioural problems. You should have learned from that report, and you should be moving to improve standards, not cancel them. Your most recent move was to cancel even the most minimum of standards for bathing for seniors in long-term-care facilities.

I ask you again: why have you cancelled the minimum standard for bathing for long-term-care residents in long-term-care facilities?

Hon Mr Newman: The new regulation is outcome-based. There is a daily requirement to ensure that the proper and sufficient care of each and every resident's body is provided to safeguard the residents' health and to maintain their personal hygiene. That's what the regulation states.

This change indeed reflects our government's commitment to ensure the best quality of care for each and every one of the 61,000 residents in Ontario's long-term-care facilities. We have increased the amount of time for nursing and personal care through that record investment of \$100 million.

But I tell you this: this government will not take a lecture from the NDP when it comes to the provision of long-term-care services in our province. The NDP did nothing—nothing—to add additional beds to the system.

This government has moved ahead to build 20,000 new long-term-care beds across our province, and we've also made that major investment of \$100 million. That's going to ensure that another 2,400 nurses and personal care workers are added to the system, improving the quality of care in all of those long-term-care facilities.

SLOT MACHINES

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I'd like to go back to the Attorney General. Minister, you keep saying that due process is being followed and everything is being done according to the book. There's no doubt, because it's in the record, that Janet Ecker said when she spoke with the Ajax News Advertiser that Picov Downs has been approved. There is no doubt that a letter was sent to the operators of Picov Downs saying that in fact they had been approved for up to 800 slot machines.

What is happening is that if the procedure was being followed properly, this particular track would have gotten one and a half slot machines. If you compare it to the Windsor Raceway, if you compare it to some of the others, it is outrageous the numbers that they're getting.

Could you tell me why you keep insisting that no decision has been made when your colleague is saying that the decision has been made and when that information has been conveyed to the operator?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I'm going to repeat what I said yesterday because I think it's going through the minds of many in this legislative chamber. I am sincerely disappointed that a member with your reputation has stooped to this level. I tell you, sir, that you know well that this government has been consistent in saying that we are prepared to consider slots at Picov Downs after they meet the Ontario Racing Commission licensing requirements, after they develop a business plan supporting a racetrack with slot machines, after they negotiate a revenue-sharing agreement with the province and after they enter into a site-holder agreement with the OLG.

As to the number of slots—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Come to order. The member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order, please. Sorry, Attorney General; continue.

Hon Mr Young: As to the number of slot machines that will ultimately be placed there, no decision has been made to date.

Mr Kwinter: You keep telling me that story, but you don't give me the answer that I'm trying to get. Number one, why did your colleague in cabinet publicly declare that the decision has been approved? Answer that question: why was the operator informed that they would be getting up to 800 slot machines?

It's very, very simple. You either have made the decision or you haven't made the decision. If you haven't made the decision, then why don't you publicly say, "There is no commitment whatsoever to Picov Downs and when we decide that we're going to do it, we will put it out for open competition, we will hear proposals and we will make a decision"? If you're going to say, "We're following procedures," then give them one and a half slot machines.

Hon Mr Young: There are 18 racetracks in this province; 15 of them already have slot machines. Each of

those racetracks followed the exact same procedure I have just described.

There is one racetrack, Elora, that has gone through this procedure and is in the midst of construction but has been awarded slots, as long as they fulfill certain requirements. There are two racetracks that don't have slots today. One of them is the Quinte establishment and the other is Picov. Sir, I say to you that the remaining two racetracks will go through the same procedure that the other 16 racetracks have gone through.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education. With the new school year underway, approximately two million students are back to learning the skills they will need to achieve their goals, both in the classroom and in life. Some of these kids are excelling while other children need extra help. I have spoken with many parents in my community who are anxious to learn about what initiatives this government is undertaking to ensure their children succeed. Can you elaborate on what this government is doing to ensure that children are prepared to succeed in this world?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Yes, certainly. We have made a considerable amount of investment in recent years into education, into supporting our children in order to ensure that they get the best education possible. I'd like to speak in particular to \$30 million that has been made available for early literacy and math.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry. I assure the Deputy Premier I was listening. Sorry for the interruption. You may continue.

Hon Mrs Witmer: That's OK. If you were listening and you could hear it, then—

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I was talking about the investment that we've made in our children, particularly in the early years. Our government did invest \$30 million into an early literacy and an early math program.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for York Centre, come to order. It's not helpful shouting across. You've had your time now.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Come to order, both of you, please. I'm afraid the Deputy Premier's time is up.

Mr Dunlop: Thank you very much, Minister. I'm sure that children in my community and across the province will gain a solid foundation as they learn the basics of education: reading and math. Without the proper foundation, success in the classroom is often difficult and limited later in life. We need to work together as parents and as teachers to ensure that today's children leave school with the tools they need to become successful and productive members of our society.

Since this is the first year that all grades from K to 12 are learning the new curriculum, can you enlighten us as to the tools and support teachers and school boards are receiving to carry out this very important initiative?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'll try again, because this is a very important issue. As the member has indicated, we are into a totally new curriculum. It has been important for our government not only to invest in new textbooks and learning materials, but we have also invested money into making sure that we can provide resources and training for our teachers in order that they can teach the new reading and math strategies from grade 1 to 6 that I talked about. So we have given them additional support.

I think when we talk about education we need to keep in mind there are partners: parents, families are very important partners with students and teachers and the government. So we now have a guide for parents entitled Helping Your Child Learn to Read, and we're also making one available, Helping Your Child Learn Math.

1500

RURAL EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of Education. In my riding there are many small rural schools in remote locations. They provide quality programs for small numbers of children and they are an integral part of the infrastructure of rural Ontario. Your funding formula does not provide the dollars necessary to adequately support many of these schools. In my riding, closing small rural schools is not an option because it means four-year-olds would be on a bus for upwards of three hours a day. The problem is compounded by the fact that the funding formula creates further burdens for boards with declining enrolment.

Rural boards must not close schools and they cannot afford to fix the older ones. The Ministry of Education has indicated to the Hastings and Prince Edward school board that \$17.5 million in deferred maintenance is required, but your funding formula only allows them \$2.5 million. Minister, students in rural Ontario are suffering because of your funding formula. Will you act immediately to assign the dollars your ministry says this board needs? It says it needs \$17.5 million; you're only giving it—

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

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm not sure if the member opposite is aware of the fact that we have actually given additional money to respond to the needs of small schools in Ontario. We have remote and rural funding that is intended to meet the unique needs of remote and rural school boards. We have listened and we are providing—in fact, I would just say to the member that remote and rural allocation funding has almost tripled from \$40 million in 1997—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry again to the Minister of Education. Come to order, please. There are conversations going back and forth. If you want a question, get on the order paper. Minister, sorry for the interruption again.

Hon Mrs Witmer: This is an important issue, and I just want to stress that small school allocation funding has more than tripled from \$40 million in 1997 to a projected \$117 million in 2002 and 2003, an increase of 192%.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The needs in the schools are immediate; in fact, they are yesterday. The rural and remote grants are not based on actual needs; in fact, they are a mathematical formula. Your funding formula is so inadequate, so skewed, so punitive, that the Hastings and Prince Edward board is forced to consider the unthinkable: closing schools in remote locations or closing the only primary school in the town of Bancroft.

Boards today receive less per student than when your government came to power and created this crisis in education. Our children cannot wait. The needs in our schools are immediate. They are now. They are yesterday. While you are waiting for a report, I am asking you to act to provide school boards with the money they need so that schools don't close and children don't ride buses for three hours.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member obviously doesn't have any recollection of the additional money the government provided in the budget this year to respond to the unique needs of remote and rural communities. I would just say as well that small school allocation funding has more than doubled, from \$26.7 million in 1997 to \$70 million in 2002-03, an increase of 162%. Furthermore, we have asked Dr Rozanski to take a look at the issue of making sure that rural and urban schools have equal access to the same resources for students.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship. I noticed with interest the announcement to proclaim in the Ontario Gazette additional sections of the landmark Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I just wanted you to know, Minister, that there are many individuals in my riding of Scarborough Centre who are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Take your seat. The member for Windsor West and the minister, please. Sorry for the interruption. We've got another conversation going back and forth. I apologize to the member for Scarborough Centre. You may continue.

Ms Mushinski: To repeat, I know there are many disabled individuals in my riding of Scarborough Centre who will be affected by this new legislation, Minister. I wonder if you could inform this House what this particular proclamation means for those individuals, as well as for the additional 1.9 million Ontarians who are living with disabilities.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I appreciate the member's question as it gives me an opportunity to address a very important piece of legislation, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Last December, our government led the way by passing the ODA. This is the first and most comprehensive piece of legislation in Canada that puts persons with disabilities at the forefront of change.

We worked with AMO and other stakeholders on this issue during the summer to prepare the municipalities for the proclamation of the sections. In just about a week, on September 30, most of the sections of the ODA will be proclaimed, and our own government's ministry Internet sites will have accessibility requirements by December 31, 2002.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you, Minister, for that response. As you mentioned, this proclamation will indeed bring into law obligations on the part of municipalities and other affected organizations. I wonder if you could further clarify those steps that the government will be taking to ensure that municipalities and the broader public organizations have information and support in implementing these particular changes.

Hon Mr DeFaria: I would like to inform the member and the House that municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more will be required to have a municipal accessibility advisory committee in place on September 30 this year, just a week from today.

Additionally, all municipalities and other organizations that are affected will be required to develop an accessibility plan on an annual basis. That also takes place in a week's time. They will have to have those plans in place within a year.

The guidelines the municipalities are required to follow have been developed by our ministry in partnership with the municipalities. I was at the AMO conference and I was very pleased with AMO's reception of our guidelines that they received from us during that conference. Those guidelines will provide all the assistance they need to advise the municipalities.

DIAMOND MINE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Deputy Premier. My question simply put is this: what does your government want to do or what is it prepared to do to assist the community of Attawapiskat with regard to the De Beers situation?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm sorry, I didn't—

Mr Bisson: I repeat the question: what are you prepared to do as a government to assist the community of Attawapiskat in order to advance the De Beers project?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I will certainly take the question under advisement. We will respond very specifically and, I know, in great detail to the question you've asked, because I can understand that this is an issue that is of obviously grave and personal interest to yourself.

Mr Bisson: You see, Madam Minister, the problem is exactly that: the province has been nowhere as the lead on this particular project.

Let me explain what it is: west of Attawapiskat by 70 kilometres, you've got De Beers Canada working at developing a diamond mine, the very first diamond mine ever to be developed here in the province of Ontario. There has been some difficulty with regard to the negotiation of an agreement between the Attawapiskat First Nation and De Beers for the work that would take place this winter.

The community is very clear. At a meeting I attended last Friday with De Beers and the community, the community said, "We're prepared to allow that project to go forward this winter, but it is important that we negotiate an agreement that makes sure the community interests are respected by De Beers Canada."

They are looking to your government to assist them to get De Beers back to the table by this Friday so they can start the process of negotiations to get that project on track. They expect the negotiations to be fruitful, no more than about three weeks, but they need the province to play their role.

My question for you is simple: will the province play their role?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I said before, I know this issue is of personal interest to yourself, and obviously it's of deep interest to people in the community.

We were pleased that De Beers had been attracted to this province. We certainly know that the tax rates in this province were part of what attracted them. I will take this under advisement. I know that Mr Wilson, the minister, is going to be working with all the parties to ensure that there can be a resolution of this issue. We thank you for bringing it to our attention today.

1510

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'd like to begin the introduction with a 20,000-name petition I have regarding Highway 69. I'd like to start with the 4,205 names which were gathered by Henry and Colette LeBouthillier of Sudbury. This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

"Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

"Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

"Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Eves government has failed to do so;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease."

I want to thank Henry and Colette. I affix my signature and give it to Paula to bring to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government abandoned the minimum requirement for 2.25 hours per day of nursing care for seniors in nursing homes; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's own study in January 2001 showed Ontario's long-term-care residents receive less nursing, bathing and general care than elderly people in comparable jurisdictions in Canada, the United States and Europe; and

"Whereas poor management of residents leads to excessive acute care hospital stays and added strain on staffing levels in long-term-care facilities; and

"Whereas Ontario long-term-care residents now receive an average of only 2.04 hours of care per day, well below the level of care of 4.2 hours even the state of Mississippi provides; and

"Whereas US studies have indicated that total nursing care hours for long-term-care residents should be in the range of 4.55 total hours of care per resident per day;

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

"We call on the government of Ontario to regulate a minimum requirement of at least 3.5 hours of nursing care per resident per day."

I agree with the petitioners and I've affixed my name to this.

RENT REGULATION

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition entitled "Fair Rent Increases Now."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the number of tenants receiving above-guideline" rent "increases is growing exponentially; and

"Whereas many of these increases are for increases in utility costs, many of which have gone down since; and

"Whereas tenants should not have to pay for improvements forever, even when the costs have been realized by these rent increases; and

"Whereas the Tenant Protection Act does not give a tenant relief due to the costs being realized or a drop in utility costs; and

"Whereas tenants should not be receiving rent increases where there are work orders issued for the building;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to immediately pass MPP David Caplan's Bill 134 entitled the Fair Rent Increases Act at the earliest possible opportunity so that tenants can get relief from above-guideline" rent "increases once the bills have been paid."

I appreciate all the residents who have signed this petition. I support it and I affix my signature to it.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Internal Solutions Group has submitted its reports to the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission respecting the divestiture of the ONTC services; and

"Whereas council for the corporation for the city of North Bay is supportive of having all the ISG avenues fully explored to determine what the new organization can provide on improved services and enhanced economic activity in northeastern Ontario;

"Be it therefore resolved that the corporation of the city of North Bay does hereby petition the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to review the plan submitted by the Ontario Northland Internal Solutions Group and give their plan full consideration; and

"Further, that a moratorium be placed on the RFP process of divestiture of ONTel from ONTC services being provided to northern Ontario; and

"Further, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the minister, to the Premier, and to the member," being myself.

I must say, Mr Speaker, I have a whole box of these, about 10,000 of them—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): No, you must not say. Further petitions?

KIDNEY-PANCREAS TRANSPLANTS

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

"Whereas many seriously ill diabetics are in need of kidney-pancreas transplantation in southwestern Ontario; and

"Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre currently has on staff physicians and surgeons who specialize in kidney-pancreas transplantation and possess both the expertise and willingness to perform kidney-pancreas transplantation; and

"Whereas the referral to Toronto for kidney-pancreas transplantation would only serve to further compound the

problem of the already lengthy waiting period that exists in Toronto; and

"Whereas travel to Toronto by western Ontario dialysis patients for the prerequisite assessment process causes undue hardship and potential health risks;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned" 4,500 people, citizens of southwestern Ontario, "strongly petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Ministry of Health provide the necessary funding to establish a kidney-pancreas transplantation program at the London Health Sciences Centre in London, Ontario."

I'm in full agreement, and I thank Sheryl Sardo for her efforts. I have signed this petition in full support.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition whose signatures were gathered this summer by Chris Charlton and a number of volunteers on Hamilton Mountain. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government increased fees paid by Ontario seniors and other vulnerable people living in long-term-care facilities by 15% ... instead of providing adequate government funding for long-term care; and

"Whereas the Conservative government has therefore shifted the cost of long-term care on to the backs of the frail elderly and their families; and

"Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas in 1996 Ontario abandoned its minimum requirement of 2.25 hours of nursing care per nursing home resident; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

"Whereas, according to the government's own study, government cutbacks have resulted in Ontario seniors receiving just 14 minutes a day of care from a registered nurse ... ; and

"Whereas the report also found that Ontario residents receive the least nursing, bathing and general care of nine other comparable locations;

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

"We demand the Conservative government eliminate the 15% fee increase for residents in long-term-care facilities, increase the number of nursing care hours for each resident to a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, and provide stable, increased funding to ensure quality care is there for Ontario residents in long-term-care facilities."

I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to it.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Mr Speaker, as you well know, I have received thousands of petitions from people in the Ottawa area concerned about the government of Ontario shutting down the heart surgery at the Children's Hospital.

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto will force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time" in their lives; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care" close to where they live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's intent to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality, accessible health care remains accessible to every child in eastern Ontario."

1520

SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Cette pétition est encore signée par les amis de M^{me} Chris Charlton et d'autres personnes sur la montagne de Hamilton. Ça se lit:

« Attendu que le gouvernement conservateur a augmenté de 15 %, ou de 213 \$ par mois, les frais que paient les aînés de l'Ontario et les autres personnes vulnérables qui habitent les établissements de soins de longue durée, au lieu de financer adéquatement les soins de longue durée; et

« Attendu que le gouvernement conservateur fait maintenant porter aux aînés fragiles et leur famille le poids du financement des soins de longue durée; et

« Attendu que cette augmentation dépasse de 11,1 % l'augmentation que stipulent les lignes directrices sur l'augmentation de loyer pour les locataires de la province de l'Ontario; et

« Attendu qu'en 1996, l'Ontario a laissé tomber l'exigence minimale de 2,25 heures de soins infirmiers par pensionnaire d'une maison de soins infirmiers; et

« Attendu que cette année, le gouvernement verse moins de 2 \$ par jour par pensionnaire pour augmenter le niveau de service en matière de soins de longue durée;

« Attendu que, selon une étude gouvernementale, en raison des compressions du gouvernement, les aînés de l'Ontario n'obtiennent que 14 minutes par jour de soins d'une infirmière autorisée (moins que la demi-heure consacrée aux résidents de la Saskatchewan); et

« Attendu que, selon ce rapport, les pensionnaires ontariens obtiennent le plus faible niveau de soins in-

firmiers, de soins balnéaires et de soins généraux comparativement aux pensionnaires de neuf autres endroits comparables;

« Par conséquent nous, les soussignés, présentons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition qui se lit comme suit:

« Joignez-vous au Parti néo-démocratique pour demander au gouvernement conservateur d'annuler l'augmentation de 15 % des frais imposés pour pensionnaires des établissements de soins de longue durée, d'augmenter le nombre d'heures de soins infirmiers pour chacun des pensionnaires à au moins 3,5 heures par jour et d'accorder un financement stable et accru pour assurer les soins de qualité aux pensionnaires ontariens qui habitent les établissements de soins de longue durée. »

Je signe cette pétition aussi.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): This is a petition I received today signed by people in Toronto, Guelph and Mississauga. It deals with the long-term-care situation. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors, the most vulnerable living in long-term-care homes, by 15% over three years, or \$3.02 per diem in the first year and \$2 in the second year and \$2 in the third year, effective September 1, 2002;

"Whereas this increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month and after three years;

"Whereas this increase is above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario for the year 2002;

"Whereas, according to the government's own funded study, Ontario still ranks last among comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

"Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need;

"Whereas the government needs to increase long-term-care operating funds by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario's long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

"Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

"Demand that Premier Eves reduce the 15% increase over three years in accommodation costs to no more than the cost-of-living increase annually and that the provincial government provide adequate funding for nursing and personal care to a level that is at least at the average standard for nursing and personal care in those 10 jurisdictions included in the government's own study."

I agree with the petition and I've signed it accordingly and I'm passing it on to you, Speaker.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that was sent to me from the residents of Sarnia and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Health has been travelling the province announcing capital funds for bricks and mortar and equipment expenditures; and

"Whereas health science professionals, including X-ray and medical laboratory technologists, respiratory therapists, radiation and ultrasound technologists and physiotherapists and occupational therapists, once paid on par with or higher than nurses, have fallen further and further behind over the past 10 years; and

"Whereas hospitals are able to fund double-digit raises to many CEOs and administrative personnel, and the number of administrators in the \$100,000 club is growing steadily each year; and

"Whereas the shortage of health care professionals in Ontario threatens patient care and services in many hospitals, causes delays in results, delays in therapy and longer hospital stays and poor working conditions across the province; and

"Whereas physicians across the province need the services provided by these professionals to diagnose and treat patients; and

"Whereas a competitive central contract is needed to keep these professionals working here in Ontario;

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

"To act now and give a renewed commitment to the people of Ontario by adequately funding the services provided by our hospital professionals so that our hospitals remain fully staffed and able to provide all essential services."

I agree with the petitioner and I've signed my name to this.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): The petitions do keep coming in related to the increase in long-term-care residency.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% over three years or \$3.02 per diem in the first year and \$2 in the second year and \$2 in the third year effective September 1, 2002; and

"Whereas this increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month after three years; and

"Whereas this increase is above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario for 2002; and

"Whereas, according to the government's own funded study, Ontario will still rank last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

"Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

"Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario's long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

"Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

"Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% increase over three years in accommodation costs to no more than the cost-of-living increase annually and that the provincial government provide adequate funding for nursing and personal care to a level that is at least at the average standard for nursing and personal care in those 10 jurisdictions included in the government's own study."

I'm very grateful to those who sent petitions in to me. I'm most happy to sign them.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TORONTO WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION CORPORATION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DE REVITALISATION DU SECTEUR RIVERAIN DE TORONTO

Mrs Ecker moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 151, An Act respecting the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation / Projet de loi 151, Loi concernant la Société de revitalisation du secteur riverain de Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The NDP whip is in agreement with the House leaders in order to allow us to stand down our lead today because Mr Prue has to be in estimates committee. It was agreed to—just to make sure it's on the record.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think we should wait until the leadoff to see if that is true. I haven't checked that with the other parties.

Mr Bisson: I thought you had.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, I haven't, so I think we should wait for unanimous consent on that one.

The Acting Speaker: That is a point of order that will be resolved at some time in the future, perhaps.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: To be perfectly honest with you, the government House leader hadn't talked to us, but certainly if there was an agreement between the two, we have no problem with it.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order but it's certainly a matter of interest.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I give consent to defer the leadoff speech for NDP until a future time.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Stockwell, the government House leader and the Minister of the Environment, has asked for consent. Is there consent? It is agreed.

The Chair now recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'll be sharing my time today with my colleagues the member for Scarborough Centre and the member for London West.

As finance minister, I'm very pleased today to rise to begin the second reading debate of Bill 151, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act. This bill was first introduced last December. As members will recall, the proposed legislation, if passed by this House, would create a permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp. The permanent corporation would replace the interim corporation that is currently in existence today. When the new body is in place, the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront can proceed in earnest. That will mark the beginning of an important new phase in Toronto's development.

1530

I don't think it's news to this House to say that Toronto has experienced tremendous growth over the past several years. It actually wasn't that long ago when the Royal York Hotel was considered the dominant building on the skyline. As I think all visitors to Toronto will recognize, there are many other new and interesting structures that dominate that skyline.

Over the next 20 years, when we look into the future, some three million more people are expected to come to central Ontario. Many of them will move into Toronto. They'll be attracted here by good jobs, by a good cultural life, by strong neighbourhoods, all of those important characteristics that we know Toronto has. But this growth is going to represent a significant challenge for not only the city but also the province. It is a challenge that, if handled well, represents a tremendous opportunity for all of us to create an even stronger, healthier downtown core than we have today.

To do that is going to require new infrastructure, new jobs, new housing, new entertainment venues, new restaurants, new parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities. Toronto's waterfront can play a key role in that. I think it's a logical next step in starting to meet those future needs that are coming at us.

Waterfront revitalization will be an opportunity to put into practice the principles of the province's Smart Growth initiative, which is very ably led by my colleague

the Honourable Chris Hodgson, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The principles that he's established in co-operation with municipalities will help build strong communities with competitive economies and a strong, healthy environment. Smart Growth is designed to manage Ontario's growing population and economy in ways that avoid urban sprawl and the destruction of valuable farmland and recreational land. For example, I am very pleased to have seen that with the initiatives under Smart Growth started by this government, with my colleague Minister Hodgson, we are preserving agriculture lands in my community—Pickering, Ajax, Uxbridge, just east of Toronto—a growing community but one that recognizes the importance of protecting key features in the community. Smart Growth has helped us to do that.

The waterfront revitalization project here in Toronto will be an excellent opportunity to make full use of the province's brownfields redevelopment initiative as well. Our goal here is to transform derelict and contaminated land into more productive uses.

Our government understands very clearly how important a thriving Toronto is to Ontario's economic well-being and indeed to the country's economic well-being. That's why the renewal of the waterfront is such an important step. The importance of this step I think is also underlined by the fact that the federal government of Canada and the city of Toronto are partners with us in this important endeavour.

As members may recall, the three levels of government have agreed to invest \$500 million each, for a total of \$1.5 billion, in an incredible new investment in the city's waterfront. This money is going to be used to make investments that will kick-start revitalization and transformation of the waterfront. It will help strengthen the city's international competitiveness, a very important goal. Because of that it will create thousands of new jobs, new neighbourhoods and new facilities for living and working in the city's downtown core.

In this way, waterfront revitalization can serve as a model for other Smart Growth initiatives throughout the greater Toronto area. The legislation fulfills Ontario's commitment to take the lead by creating a permanent waterfront revitalization corporation. If it becomes law through this bill, we will be very much closer to unlocking the waterfront's potential.

The proposed Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp would be responsible for developing business strategies and implementing those projects along the city's waterfront. It would also act as a champion for innovative approaches in how those projects are planned, are financed, are delivered. The proposed legislation would provide the waterfront corporation with the framework to leverage the initial investment provided by the three governments and to find private sector partners to attract their investment as well. The goal here is for the corporation to achieve financial self-sufficiency. With support from the government's private sector initiatives, we think

this goal is very achievable and the board is certainly committed to that.

To ensure that the corporation is accountable, the bill stipulates that the approval of all three governments would be required for the corporation to borrow funds, to mortgage its assets or to generate revenues. The proposed legislation would mandate the new corporation to create an accessible, active waterfront where people can live, can work, can play. While the corporation would have a mandate to encourage private sector involvement, as I mentioned, in various waterfront projects, it would also be obliged to ensure that the public has an opportunity to participate and to provide input to its plans. I think that's very important. So it is in the legislation to make sure the public understands that they, too, have a role in this very, very important project.

The proposed Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act provides a broad outline of the corporation's purpose, powers and mandate. It also provides a framework for the corporation's future decisions in key areas such as business planning, financial accountability and annual reporting requirements. The draft legislation sets out the structure of the corporation by providing for a publicly appointed board of directors of up to 13 people. Each of the three partner governments would be empowered to appoint up to four members to the board. On passage of the bill, Robert Fung, who currently serves as chair of the interim corporation—and I think many people will be familiar with Mr Fung's name because of the visionary work he has done in terms of what can happen on Toronto's waterfront—will become the chair of the permanent corporation.

The draft legislation is designed to ensure a smooth transition from the interim corporation that exists today to a permanent structure, a permanent governing body. Moreover, the bill also provides a process for conducting a sunset review, which I think is very important, and a cooperative wind-down plan when the corporation completes its mandate.

Since the first reading of the bill, the province has consulted with the federal government, the city government and the corporation on some proposed amendments that we will be bringing forward in this process. As a result of these consultations, we will be tabling amendments that we think would clarify certain sections of the legislation and would respond to suggestions from the federal government, the city and the corporation to improve the bill. The proposed amendments—and I'll just briefly go through them for you—include a requirement for the corporation to conduct a review of the act and report back to the three governments within 12 months of its enactment on any suggested amendments to the act. You can quite appreciate that, as a new initiative going forward, as projects come forward and get pursued, there may well be needed some additional changes to the legislation. We wanted to make it very clear that the corporation could bring those forward to the government.

The second amendment is a requirement that the corporation's business plan include a public consultation

plan—I think that's very important—and that every fifth year there be a five-year revitalization plan. So we want to make sure we are constantly checking our progress, constantly checking to make sure that this is indeed working in the way all the three governments of the community would like to see.

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The third amendment deals with a requirement that the province consult with the federal government and the city prior to making any regulations under the act. I think one of the things that's very important here is, of course, that the city has zoning authority and the province has other regulatory authority, and I think all three levels of government here need to have some comfort that they can work as partners. I think we've had a good track record to date and I think we can continue that. We felt that this amendment might well give some comfort to our two partners that the three of us will continue to work in partnership on this.

I think all the partners in this initiative recognize that it's going to take time to plan and to deliver the new infrastructure and remediation of the contaminated lands on Toronto's waterfront. That's why, when the interim corporation was first created, it received a mandate to start working immediately on long-term business and development plans.

To get the process started, last year Canada, Ontario and Toronto announced the first four capital projects that will be undertaken under this initiative. So we are not waiting around for all that work to be done. We've gotten off to a good start with four projects that are worth approximately \$300 million, and include expanding Front Street to the west, from Bathurst to Dufferin Street, and building a new interchange for the Gardiner Expressway near the grounds of the CNE. The second project is to build a second subway platform at Union Station and expand passenger access between the subway station and the GO Transit concourse in Union Station. The third project is to begin the site preparation and the remediation work in the port lands and the west Don lands. Finally, the fourth project is to undertake environmental assessment work to re-naturalize and implement flood protection solutions near the mouth of the Don River. The costs of these projects will be shared equally by all three levels of government.

In June of this year, I had the pleasure of participating in a ceremony to kick off the Front Street extension—that's one of the projects that is going forward—with my colleagues Chris Hodgson, the Minister of Municipal Affairs; Tina Molinari, the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs; and several federal ministers and members as well. That was the kick-off in June, and I understand that planning and design work for the Front Street extension is progressing well.

Next week, the corporation is expected to present a development plan and a business strategy for the Toronto waterfront central area to the three levels of government, and we look forward to receiving that. This business plan is going to form the basis for waterfront investment

priorities and decisions over the next five years. So we're quite looking forward to it, as I said. In this regard, I think it's worth pointing out that there has been outstanding co-operation between the three governments on the waterfront initiative. I want to assure the Legislature that Ontario intends to continue working with the federal government and the city of Toronto in the best interests of the people and businesses of Toronto.

We know we're not always going to see eye to eye on every issue; governments never do. But when it comes to the waterfront, we have not only been able to make great progress by creating this corporation to begin with, by pledging the money and the commitment to work ahead and by starting on these four projects, but I'm pleased to say that, as regards the waterfront, we are on the same page—the federal government, the provincial government and the city. That is not always the case, as readers and watchers of the media will know.

For our part, the government of Ontario has identified five criteria that we believe will be very helpful in this project and other projects in other cities—five criteria to achieve healthy and competitive cities. These include strategic, long-term investments in infrastructure, which we have been doing in partnership with the federal and provincial government through SuperBuild. For example, today I had the privilege, with my colleague Norm Sterling, the Minister of Transportation, my caucus colleague Marcel Beaubien and the Premier—we were there in Windsor to announce a project with the federal government and the Ontario government to invest \$300 million from both levels of government in improving Windsor border access. It is an extremely important project that this government, through transportation and through the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation—my colleague Jim Flaherty has also been working on this. We have demonstrated that it is possible for the provincial and federal governments to work together to come to the conclusion of successful projects. We have indeed been doing that with long-term investments in infrastructure. There are many other examples, but today I felt I had to mention Windsor since it was a very successful event for all of us.

Besides the strategic long-term investments in infrastructure, providing the right conditions to ensure competitiveness is very important. We as a government, in terms of our economic policies and tax policies, see ensuring competitiveness as a very, very important goal of that.

Pursuing opportunity and innovation—another important goal, as are shared intergovernmental priorities and partnerships, strong urban leadership and a high quality of life.

Those are some of the factors that will be guiding us in our participation in this unique partnership.

We are committed to working with municipalities, the federal government and other stakeholders to ensure that these criteria are met and to realize what I believe is our shared vision of a revitalized Toronto waterfront.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite the members of the opposition who frequently have expressed interest in Toronto from time to time—I think this is an example where they can demonstrate that commitment, demonstrate that interest by joining with us to support passage of Bill 151, to move it through the Legislature very quickly. I would certainly ask for their support on this motion today. Thank you very much for this opportunity to address this.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I am particularly pleased today to rise in the Legislature to support the second reading of Bill 151, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act, because the proposed legislation, if passed, would establish a permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp, or TWRC. That permanent corporation is intended to replace the interim corporation that was created last year. With the new corporation up and running, the redevelopment and revitalization of Toronto's waterfront, I believe, will really start to take off. That's because the proposed legislation would give the TWRC a very clear direction and clear principles to guide it in carrying out its business.

The fact is, the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront will mark an important new phase for this great city. In the past, the lands along the central waterfront played an important role in the city's economic development. It is interesting. I happened to be in England a little earlier this year; unfortunately, there was a death in the family and I had to go to England. I was visiting with a good friend of my sister who happened to be a Cockney grocer, and on his library bookshelf he had a book called *My East End* which told the history of the east end of London. It was an extremely good depiction of how economic development and settlement create such an important aspect of city life.

It is important that we indeed put into context the history of Toronto's waterfront, because revitalizing these lands will truly ensure that the history will play an equally vital part in determining the city's future, I believe.

The waterfront area has been the location of numerous factories, warehouses and other retail, commercial and industrial sites, just as the east end of London was in the 1800s. These enterprises were, we all know, among the cornerstones of Toronto's prosperity. Indeed, the first settlers who came to Toronto arrived here by water and the city's earliest beginnings are linked to the shore of the lake.

1550

Back in 1750, it was French fur traders who established a post at the foot of Dufferin Street on grounds that today house the CNE. Almost 40 years later, in 1787, Britain negotiated the Toronto purchase. Through this purchase, they acquired a huge parcel of land, measuring some 14 miles along the lakeshore and 30 miles to the north. In 1793, Governor John Graves Simcoe established Fort York, and not long after that, Simcoe's soldiers began building Yonge Street, starting from the

shore of Lake Ontario. As many of my honourable colleagues know, downtown Toronto, which has a very interesting history, is built upon really low-lying ground. As a result, residents and visitors in the early 19th century often referred to downtown Toronto as Muddy York.

Toronto was incorporated as a city in 1834. That means by historical standards it's still a comparatively young city. However, in just 168 years, Toronto's reputation has spread. It has spread across Canada, it has actually spread throughout North America, and we know it has spread around the world. It's known as one of the world's most successful and livable cities.

During the 20th century, our provincial capital experienced tremendous growth, and that growth, we know, is expected to continue well into 21st century. In fact, over the next couple of decades it's been predicted that three million new residents will come to live in central Ontario, and we know that many of them will be coming to live right here in Toronto. They'll come here for many reasons. They'll come to find jobs and to experience the many rich cultural attractions this city has to offer and actually, I would say, has become famous for. They'll come for the restaurants, they'll come for the parks, they'll come for the schools and they'll come for the health care facilities. They'll come so that their children can grow up in safe and friendly neighbourhoods.

If the Legislature passes this bill, people will soon have many more reasons to come to Toronto. That's because the passage of this proposed legislation represents another step closer to a revitalized and redeveloped waterfront, something I think we all aspire to achieve in this chamber.

I think it's important to recognize that as Toronto and Ontario continue to grow, we are going to face many challenges. To meet those challenges, we need to invest in more roads and more transit, more housing, schools and health care facilities, more parks and recreational facilities and other vital public services.

Certainly growth will bring some challenges, but it will also bring many important opportunities. Perhaps the most important of these is the opportunity to build a stronger, healthier city by practising the principles of Smart Growth. As the honourable members know, Smart Growth is our government's vision of promoting and managing growth throughout this province. Smart Growth can help us to manage the challenges of rapid growth in our urban centres.

Toronto, as we know, is one of the best examples of this. The revitalization of the Toronto waterfront I believe represents an outstanding opportunity for us to use those Smart Growth principles and to build an even stronger community, an even more prosperous and competitive economy and a safer and healthier environment, something we all aspire to achieve.

Through Smart Growth, I believe we can manage the challenges of Ontario's growing population and economy more effectively, and we can do it in ways that avoid urban sprawl, something that everybody wants to avoid

these days, and the destruction of valuable farmland and recreational land.

Waterfront revitalization in Toronto will also provide opportunities to take advantage of the province's brownfields initiative. In this regard, our goal is to take derelict or contaminated land and rehabilitate it for more productive uses. There are many brownfield sites on the waterfront. Some of these sites can be remediated for new infrastructure and facilities that Toronto will need for the millions of people who are expected to come here in the future to live, work and play.

To accommodate that future growth, Toronto will need new jobs, new housing, new entertainment facilities, new restaurants and public spaces. With the passage of Bill 151 and the creation of a permanent waterfront development corporation, we would start to see these new facilities being built on the shore of Lake Ontario, right in the heart of the city.

As my honourable colleague the Minister of Finance, Mrs Ecker, said earlier, our government believes that Toronto has the potential to join the world's greatest cities and to become one of the world's premier urban centres. To achieve that vision, however, we have got to get going on waterfront redevelopment and we need to do it as soon as possible. Bill 151 is designed to take us closer to realizing that goal.

By way of background, the honourable members should know that the province has formed a partnership in the waterfront revitalization initiative with two other levels of government, and this is very important: the government of Canada and the city of Toronto. Together, the three partners have pledged to invest a total of \$1.5 billion to renew Toronto's waterfront. We know that this is a great deal of money, but we also know that it is entirely appropriate, considering the massive scale of undertaking that we all envision. The corporation would have a mandate to oversee an estimated \$12 billion worth of redevelopment projects on the Toronto waterfront.

We believe that this is quite possibly the single largest project of its kind in Canadian history and something that I think we can compare, for example, to Canary Wharf in London, which was intended, of course, to revitalize the Thames waterfront.

We're talking about redevelopment on a truly massive scale. As Mr Robert Fung, the chair of the interim waterfront corporation, has pointed out and as the Minister of Finance has mentioned, we could be looking at 10 million square feet of new commercial and industrial space, which is an amount equal to the floor space of five SkyDomes. We could be looking at a total of 74 hectares, or 183 acres, of new parkland. We could be looking at up to 35,000 new permanent jobs and an estimated 165,000 person-years of employment during construction. We could be looking at new homes for 68,000 people. We could be looking at \$100 million in new annual property tax revenue, based on current tax rates. We could be looking at attractions that would bring an estimated two million additional visitors to Toronto each year, which would represent an increase of 10%. Last but not least,

we could also be looking at \$800 million in transit improvements, and an additional 100,000 TTC trips per day, which would represent an 8% increase in overall TTC ridership.

To coordinate the public's investment as well as the billions of dollars in private sector capital requirement we hope to attract to the waterfront, we need a permanent revitalization corporation, and that, as I have pointed out, is the purpose of Bill 151.

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This proposed legislation fulfills Ontario's pledge to show leadership on waterfront redevelopment issues, starting with the creation of a permanent waterfront revitalization corporation. The government, we believe, attaches a huge priority to this corporation, and we would like to see this bill approved by the Legislature before the end of this fall session.

I want now to take just a few minutes to outline some of the highlights of Bill 151. First and foremost, the proposed legislation provides for the creation of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp. The corporation would assume responsibility for the development of business plans, development strategies and implementing projects along the city's waterfront. It would also encourage the adoption of innovative principles in the way that those projects are carried out. Under the proposed legislation, the corporation would be empowered to leverage the initial investment provided by the three governments, with the goals of becoming financially self-sustaining and attracting private sector investment to the waterfront.

The proposed bill would also ensure the new corporation's accountability, something that we think is very important in these days, by requiring it to obtain the approval of all three governments before borrowing funds, mortgaging assets or generating revenues. While the legislation would give the corporation a mandate to encourage private sector involvement in waterfront projects, it would also ensure that the corporation involves the public in developing its plans—another important aspect, I would submit.

The proposed act outlines the purpose, the powers and the mandate of the permanent corporation and it gives the corporation a framework to guide it in business planning, financial accountability and annual reporting.

Bill 151 provides for a board of directors of up to 13 people, with up to four members to be appointed by each of the three governments. If the legislation is passed, Robert Fung, whose task force report was instrumental in helping to shape our future vision of the waterfront, would assume the chairmanship of the permanent corporation.

The draft legislation is designed to ensure a smooth transition from the interim entity to a permanent corporation. The bill also includes a proposed process for a sunset review and a wind-down plan once the corporation has completed its mandate.

Since first reading of the bill, the province has been involved in ongoing consultations with the federal gov-

ernment, with the city of Toronto and with the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp. As a result of these consultations, the government is prepared to propose several amendments to the bill, which include a requirement for the corporation to conduct a review of the act and report back to the three governments, within 12 months from its enactment, on any suggested amendments to the act. It would also include a requirement that the corporation's business plan include a public consultation plan, and every fifth year a five-year revitalization plan, along with a requirement that the province consult with the federal government and the city of Toronto before making any regulations under the proposed act.

These proposed amendments would actually clarify certain sections of the legislation and respond to suggestions from the federal government, the city of Toronto and the TWRC, and I would submit they are very reasonable amendments.

This proposed legislation aims to balance corporate independence with the need for public accountability, something that we all aspire to in this House. It is also consistent with the major tenet of the governance model that is described in the Fung task force, which is for an arm's-length development corporation that has clear accountability links back to the three government partners.

Bill 151 thus envisions a publicly accountable corporation, one that ultimately has the mandate and the powers necessary to manage and oversee the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront over the next 25 years.

I would also like to note that the current bill does not make reference to the city of Toronto's official plan. However, the province is proposing an amendment that would provide for the corporation's development activities to be guided by the city's official plan.

The importance of a revitalized Toronto waterfront to the local, provincial and national economies is reflected by a \$1.5-billion investment commitment from all three governments. With such a significant amount of public funds being invested through this corporation, I believe it is clear that there needs to be an adequate government oversight.

As I have mentioned, the proposed legislation includes a provision for a 12-month review period, after which the corporation can come back to all three government partners with suggestions for additional financial powers and for other new responsibilities.

The province intends to continue working in partnership with the other levels of government and the TWRC to resolve any outstanding governance issues by agreement. This will ensure that waterfront projects are implemented efficiently and effectively.

We all recognize that it will take time to plan for the revitalization of the waterfront—in fact, I just mentioned 25 years—and to build new facilities on these lands. With this in mind, the interim corporation was given the green light last year to begin working immediately on its long-term business and development plan.

Last year, as members will recall, the governments of Canada, Ontario and Toronto announced the first four capital projects to be undertaken under the waterfront redevelopment initiative. These four projects will cost an estimated \$300 million, and they include: an expansion of Front Street to the west, from Bathurst to Dufferin Street, which includes building a new interchange with the Gardiner Expressway near the CNE grounds; it also includes a second subway platform at Union Station, with expanded passenger access between the subway stations and the GO Transit concourse in the station; it includes site preparation and remediation work in the port lands and west Don lands; and environmental assessment work near the mouth of the Don River, as already mentioned by the Minister of Finance.

The costs of these projects will be shared equally by all three levels of government, with the provincial contribution coming from SuperBuild.

In terms of where these projects stand today, I think it is worth noting that the first phase of each project includes environmental studies and design work. The timelines for completing the full projects, however, are somewhat different.

Two of the projects, the Front Street extension and the preparation of the port lands for development, are expected to take until 2006 to complete. The second subway platform at Union Station will be completed by 2007. The first project for the Don River consists entirely of environmental studies, and we hope that those would be completed by next year.

I'd also like to advise the honourable members that the three governments are anticipating the TWRC to provide a development plan and business strategy for the Toronto waterfront central area sometime in early October. The plan and strategy will address the design, financing and implementation of waterfront redevelopment. Once it is complete, the development concept and business strategy will identify what kind of development will go where, how much it will cost, how much revenue it may generate and when it will be implemented.

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The strategy will be made up of three interrelated parts: first, a development plan which will be guided by the city of Toronto's central waterfront part II plan; second, a financial model; and third, an implementation plan.

There has been an unprecedented degree of co-operation between the three governments on the waterfront revitalization initiative. Ontario is absolutely committed to continuing to work in a spirit of true partnership with the federal government and the city to realize our shared vision of Toronto's waterfront. Of the 20 years I have been in public life, I was on Scarborough council for 12, and back then we were talking about this shared vision. I'm just delighted to finally see it come to fruition.

The vision is one of a stronger, more vibrant city. It's one of a city that can take its place with the great urban centres of the world.

By revitalizing Toronto's waterfront, we will create new jobs and new sources of prosperity, and new neighbourhoods and communities for tens of thousands of people. Doing that will enhance the economic competitiveness of our provincial capital and contribute not only to a stronger Ontario but to a stronger Canada, because Toronto, after all, is the economic engine of this country.

All of the partners in this great enterprise are anxious to see this proposed legislation proclaimed so that we can start implementing the projects that will give us a revitalized Toronto waterfront.

I will close by urging that all members of the Legislature join me today by giving their support to Bill 151.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I rise today to support this bill. In outlining my reasons for support, it's important to look at the context in which this bill has been developed. This is an innovative bill. It's not building on an existing act. It's creating what is basically a new approach and a new idea.

It's new for the waterfront in the city of Toronto, but the idea of urban revitalization is of course a very old one. In considering the context, we might take a look at some of the cities that have achieved success, and we can think of many of them. We might take a look at some cities that have not had the success they might have liked to have had. I'm not going to mention any of those, but there have been cities that have not had a good plan, have not implemented a good plan and really have seen and have lived with the results for many generations.

We can think of cities like Chicago: Grant Park, the Loop and North Michigan Avenue. We can think of cities like Rome and Paris and many others that have worked out well. That has happened because certain things have happened to achieve those quite spectacular results.

I'd like to focus for a few minutes on one particular city and how its revitalization happened, because that's going to give us some important indications of what works and what doesn't. If we take a look at what worked in the revitalization of the city of Paris, it really happened during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III when what the city of Paris is today was basically prepared and created. Pretty much what has happened since then to make that city so noted throughout the world springs from what was done during the reign of Napoleon III and done under the direction of Baron Haussmann. I'd like to remind the House of exactly what happened in that period, because I think we can then use some of that experience to evaluate the merits of this bill.

The first thing that experience was based on, I think, was a partnership between the national government in the person of Napoleon III and the local government in the person of Baron Haussmann who, I believe, at the time was the senior local official—I think the prefect of the Seine.

Another thing that happened during the revitalization of Paris during that period was they considered carefully what their existing strengths were. They didn't start from scratch because, of course, the city had theoretically an 1,800-year history; in actual fact, effectively a 1,600-year

history because it really, at that point, had no buildings that were built prior to the 1200s. I think it's important to note that the revitalization did not start from scratch but built on existing strengths.

I think it's also worthy of note that what they tried to do was enhance their existing strengths to provide a basis for future development. Much of what happened after the reign of Napoleon III enhanced the city of Paris that we see today flowed directly from the decisions that were made to provide that sort of opportunity for growth.

I think also, if you look at how they went about doing it, you'll notice a few qualities they brought to the task: they brought imagination, vision and practicality. The result, of course, speaks for itself: one of the most noted cities in the world. We all know the Champs-Élysées, the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre. Many of us have had the opportunity to look at the view between the Louvre and the Étoile a few kilometres away. Many of us have had the opportunity to take a look at the view between the National Assembly and the Place de la Madeleine, and the many other attractions that are there in that city.

I think if we take a look at that experience, it helps us in analyzing the merits or deficiencies of this bill. Obviously, one thing that has to be available, based on that experience, is a partnership between our senior levels of government and the local government. We have that. The investment has been announced of some \$1.5 billion. That, of course, is spread among the three partners. I think that is a very sound basis on which to proceed. Not only do the three levels of government talk co-operation and talk partnership; they've actually put on the table serious resources in order to achieve the partnership and co-operation that they're talking about. The corporation, of course, is tasked with developing business strategies, implementing the projects and championing the innovation to achieve the three governments' goal of revitalizing the waterfront in a financially self-sustaining and environmentally responsible manner.

The objectives of the corporation, of which I would remind the House, include creating an accessible and active waterfront for living, working and recreation; promoting and encouraging private sector involvement in the waterfront redevelopment; and encouraging public input in the development of the waterfront. Those objectives, I think, fit very well with the experience in the city of Paris during the reign of Napoleon III. They, in effect, took similar criteria and applied them to their city in their time.

The legislation, of course, allows the city of Toronto to participate in the corporation and any subsidiary corporations that may be established. The structure and accountability requirements of the corporation—which, as the House will be aware of, include a board of directors consisting of up to 13 members including the chair, with each level of government responsible for appointing four members—again are another firm indication of the seriousness of the three partners. In actual fact, not only are the three contributing financially in equal proportions; they're also going to have equal say in the actual

governance of the corporation. It provides for a smooth transition from the interim to the permanent corporation, it provides for business planning, financial accountability and annual reporting requirements, and a process for sunset review, and a co-operative wind-down plan once the corporation has achieved its mandate. Many of those ideas, of course, stem from our more recent experiences as to how to go about executing a partnership of this nature and how to make sure that structures that are no longer needed are in fact dealt with and do not remain past the period of their usefulness.

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As we know, there have been more recent urban revitalizations in the cities of London, England; New York; and Barcelona, Spain. We've tried to borrow from them in introducing some of these more contemporary ideas to the plan that's before the House today.

The legislation also provides the corporation with a framework to leverage the three governments' initial investment in order to become financially self-sufficient and attract private sector investment to the waterfront area.

I think it is important, particularly in this century, with public expectations being what they are, that we make certain we do have financially viable projects, which are a part and really the underpinning of this whole plan. To expect the government—any government, be it municipal, provincial or federal—to continuously underwrite a project is to invite serious problems in the future. I think the underlying concept of this being self-sufficient is a very, very wise move. We have seen both kinds of projects in the past, and generally those which are self-sustaining and are supported by the public do very well; those that aren't generally have continuous problems.

I would like to note as well that accountability requires that the corporation has to get the approval of the three governments to borrow funds, mortgage its assets or generate revenues, because of course borrowing is an easy way to postpone problems. I would hope that all three levels of government will act vigorously in making sure that we don't take the easy way out, because that's merely a way of postponing problems that have to be dealt with later.

Since the first reading of the bill, as members I think know, the province has consulted with the federal and city governments on proposed amendments. As a result of these consultations, there are going to be several amendments to the bill. They will clarify certain sections of the legislation and respond to our discussions with the federal government and the city of Toronto.

The amendments include a requirement for the corporation to conduct a review of the act and report back to the three governments within 12 months on any suggested amendments. I think that's a very sound piece of this legislation. We think we have a good plan, but it is new. It's not something that we're duplicating from somewhere else. It's a new plan and there are going to be some things that we think will work well that will, and there may be some that we think will work well that

won't. But we have built into this legislation an assessment of what is working, an assessment of what is not working so well, and the opportunity to do something about it.

It also requires that the corporation's business plan include a public consultation plan and, every fifth year, a five-year revitalization plan.

Public consultation is something that all politicians talk about, and we know that. But we also have found that if you embark on a project of this nature, and virtually any project, where you lack public support, you just have a lot of problems, and those problems aren't solved until you change the plan so it does get public support. I think the experience of all three levels of government is going to ensure that the consultation is taken seriously and is worked into the plan.

The idea of a five-year revitalization plan I think is good, because circumstances change. Experience teaches us much. I think that every five years to renew the plan, to make sure that what we're going to be doing over the following five years reflects our experience of the preceding five years, is quite important. We don't want to get into a situation where a plan is developed now that becomes difficult to change later. These amendments are going to avoid that particular problem.

We also have a requirement that the province consult with the federal government and the city of Toronto prior to making any regulations under the act. I think that shows that the province is serious about a full partnership with the other two levels of government and a desire to get their input. The province of course is going to continue to work co-operatively with the other two levels of government and the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp in the months ahead.

I would like to note that Mr Robert Fung, who is of course the former chair of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, has been appointed by all three levels of government as chair of the interim corporation. I think that's a positive indication for two reasons. One reason is that all three levels of government agree on the individual to help move this project forward. I think it shows that all three are committed to a partnership and all three want to make sure that the direction is a consistent one.

I think it also shows that we are looking for someone of vision and commitment. If you look at the work Mr Fung has done over the past number of years, you will see that he's an individual who understands the problems, who is practical and who can translate vision and new ideas into a practical plan to actually get things done. I might note that if the legislation is approved, Mr Fung is going to continue as chair of the permanent corporation. All three governments have announced their appointments to the board of directors, so I think the corporation is basically up and ready to do its work.

I'd also like to talk a little bit about where we might invite the corporation to look for ideas. I've already talked about looking at the success stories that have happened in other countries. I think that's very important.

We know that many great ideas have been identified by cities, regions and countries throughout the world. I think it's very important that we do that because, as the House knows, the world is becoming more and more one world. It's not a world of countries or even continents. So I think that's very important.

However, there is another area that I hope the corporation is going to look to for ideas. Without being parochial in any way, I would like to invite our friends in Toronto to take a look at other areas of the province. There have been many examples of very successful revitalizations right here in this province. Some are in larger communities such as my own. They might go out to look, for example, at how the city of London has revitalized the forks region of the Thames River, which is at the centre of the city of London. We have put a lot of time, money and thought into how that builds on one of the strengths of our community and the surrounding communities. I think if you take a look at our experience there, that may give you some useful suggestions as to how you might go about doing revitalization in Toronto.

However, you also could look at some of the smaller communities. One that comes to mind, for example, is Kenora. Kenora has revitalized its waterfront. They had some positive experiences in part of what they did and they had a few problems. I don't think there's any fundamental difference in revitalization between a small community like Kenora, a mid-sized one like London or a large one like Toronto. I think there are certain things that work and certain things that don't. I would like to urge the corporation: there are a lot of good, made-in-Ontario ideas that are out there for the taking. I invite them to go out and find them and use them.

1630

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): You can tell by the tone of the Legislature today that this is not a contentious bill. It seems to me all sides of the House are in support of this, in principle. I heard a couple of members on the government side mention that they in fact will be bringing forward some amendments, and I think that's in good order.

I hope that there would be a couple of days of hearings, and I say this for the people of Toronto, really. By the way, it's a delight to hear the very strong sense of contentment on behalf of the government to work closely with the federal government and with the municipalities, especially with Toronto in this instance, when Mr Lastman, the mayor, is saying that the province is killing them because of the downloading on a whole variety of areas.

So this idea of a revitalized waterfront is needed. I think everyone recognizes that. It has also been around for many, many years. The member from London West cited a few examples: Paris—it must be the Seine—and Rome. I don't know about the waterfront in Rome. I can't recall what it is.

Interjection.

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): It's magnificent, absolutely magnificent.

Mr Patten: My friend Mr Sorbara suggests it's magnificent.

We have many other cities in Canada. I'm thinking of Saint John, New Brunswick, Halifax and parts of Montreal that have done very well.

Interjection.

Mr Patten: Sudbury, another fantastic place.

So there are examples where it works. It provides a shot in the arm.

There are other ways in which this government needs to be supportive of Toronto, by the way, especially on mass transit and things of that nature, because in and of itself it will not do the whole job of making it a potentially fabulous international city. Right now, it's suffering and needs this kind of support.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to say that this indeed is an important piece of work. It's befuddling why it has taken so long. We have some really serious questions about just how it's going to roll out.

If the events of yesterday, where the municipality of Toronto, supported by their police, acquiesced to by the provincial government, moved in and evicted several of our most vulnerable and at-risk citizens, without considering for a second the impact that would have on their lives and where they might go and what else might be done to accommodate them—the knee-jerk reaction—if that is the way this government is going to move to make sure that in this package there is affordable housing, that people in need of subsidized housing are being considered and looked after, then I think we're in big trouble.

I don't think there's anybody who has a moral conscience or who has watched the evolution of homelessness in this province over the last five to seven years who isn't concerned with the rise in the numbers, and the way that yesterday a senior level of government with lots of power and force moved in to summarily simply evict, without sitting down, and perhaps even using that situation as an example of what they refer to in this bill as a coming together of the three senior levels of government with the private sector to do something more creative and more helpful with the opportunity at hand. It's unfortunate, and I hope it isn't what we are to expect as we move forward, where affordable and subsidized housing is concerned.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): It's a pleasure for me to speak on the bill being debated here this afternoon. I had the pleasure of attending the presentation and the unveiling with Robert Fung; the Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker; and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Chris Hodgson.

I have to say that this is another example of where there are people working together toward a common goal. The federal government has contributed to this, and we've contributed to it to the tune of \$500 million. So

with all of that contribution, we can really revitalize the waterfront.

In my portfolio as urban affairs minister, I have been touring the province and talking to people about things that are important to them in the municipalities. The constant theme is that we need to work together, all levels of government. This is one way of doing that. The revitalization of the waterfront and making Toronto a better city and a wonderful city for people to come and visit is what we all need to be looking at doing. Toronto is at the centre of Ontario; it is a city we are all proud of. Projects like this will only enhance and improve the city.

So, I'm certainly looking forward to seeing this bill passed and seeing it implemented, for the people of Toronto and for all of Ontario, because it's important that people feel they can come to a city that has a wonderful waterfront, a city that has entertainment, a city that flourishes and a city that everyone in Ontario can be proud of.

Certainly various municipalities across the province have individual needs, and they all see Toronto, the city it is, and they enjoy visiting Toronto.

I'm pleased that we're putting this forward and that the Minister of Finance has put this forward. I'm looking forward to all members of this House supporting this bill, because it's a crucial and important bill.

Mr Sorbara: I paid very careful attention to my colleagues on the government side. Of course we do support this bill. The revitalization of the waterfront is extremely important.

The great irony in this debate is that the bill is entitled An Act respecting the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, creating a corporation. We're debating that the day after the poorest and the frailest and the most unfortunate who live in the city of Toronto are evicted from tent city in downtown Toronto on Home Depot land. That is so ironic, that here in this magnificent House we're talking about revitalizing the waterfront and at the same time what's actually happening out on the street is that the homeless of Toronto, 100 or 200 people who have actually established some semblance of a life, are summarily thrown out.

If you listen to the debates in this House, periodically we hear the government members refer back to, my God, the Bob Rae days and the Peterson days. I'm surprised that they don't go back to Mitch Hepburn. It should be noted for the record—

Interjections.

Mr Sorbara: I hear cackling. It should be noted for the record, sir, that tent city was a phenomenon, the poverty and the homeless phenomenon that developed exclusively and entirely during the reign of this government. The shame of this government is that while they debate proposed bills on revitalization of Toronto's waterfront, they do nothing for those who are most vulnerable, including the homeless of this province.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I have listened to the comments of my colleagues, both on this side of the House and across the way, on this very, very important piece of legislation. I am pleased—I think I did hear the Liberals say they actually were prepared to support this legislation, although, among some of the other comments, it was a little hard to kind of pull that out. But we will see if they can continue to do what they said they would do on this to support this legislation. That would be helpful. I'll leave it to the House leaders to work out the process as to how best that can occur in this Legislature.

I think it's important to note that the opposition—on the one hand, they love to stand up in this place and say this government doesn't care about Toronto, this government hasn't done things for Toronto and on and on and on and on. Yet when we come forward with something that is actually going to result in an investment, just in the first four projects alone, of some \$300 million for the city of Toronto waterfront, I think that is an extremely important commitment to this city and what it represents for this province.

Not only that, the investments we are making in the cultural institutions here in this city—in the Royal Ontario Museum, in the ballet school, in the opera—phenomenal. Their government never invested anything like this in the infrastructure and the culture of the city. I've got to tell you, I represent a 905 riding and I hear from my constituents sometimes that they're not necessarily sure that's the right thing to do. But we as a government recognize that that investment here in Toronto is going to have incredible payoffs, not only for regions in the 905 but for the entire province in terms of economic growth and jobs. I would encourage the Liberal government in Ottawa to continue to partner with us and I would encourage the Liberal opposition and the NDP to support this important bill.

1640

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'll be sharing my time with the members from Eglinton-Lawrence, Windsor-St Clair, York South-Weston and St Catharines. I'm happy to continue the debate on this bill. I'll just say for the public that the Minister of Finance is saying that we've got to get this thing through. You should recognize it was 10 months ago that this bill was tabled and the government hasn't dealt with it at all. It was December 11, a year ago. So, on the urgent need to get on with this, I would have said to the government, "Let's get your business ordered. Let's get on with this." This is the first time we've been able to debate this bill. It was introduced in December of last year and the government has finally brought it forward.

The second thing, and I think the public should understand, is that it was in the 2000 budget that we first heard about this SuperBuild millennium fund, and the government then allocated \$200 million. This was going to be used for the waterfront. Well, what happened? None of it was spent. Then in the next budget, 2001, this urgent waterfront project that we must move forward

with quickly: again put in the budget; nothing spent. Finally, we see in this year's budget the same thing again.

So I say to the public that indeed we are supporting the bill. We said that when it was introduced 10 months ago. But I would just say to the people of Ontario to recognize that it's the first time we are debating this bill, which the government is now urging rapid passage of. It has now acknowledged it has to send it to committee for amendment, and it's a sign again, in my opinion, of the constant incompetence of the government: urgent bill, introduced last December, and the first time we've had an opportunity to debate it is now.

I want to get to our concerns about this piece of legislation, and there are several. One is protection on conflict of interest. I'll use an example of the 407 corporation and GO Transit. I've raised this publicly before. I think we need clearer guidelines about conflict of interest for directors that are here to represent the public. I raised this publicly with Mr Eves and I asked him to consider this: someone called Mr Al Leach is on the board of directors of the Highway 407 Corp and SNC Lavalin—a competent individual, no question of that, someone with good credentials. But he sits on these two boards that have an enormous financial interest: in SNC Lavalin's case they are one of the consortiums redeveloping Union Station; the 407 corporation has an enormous interest in congestion and traffic in Toronto. But the government has chosen to also appoint Mr Leach as the vice-chair of GO Transit. In my opinion, that's a direct conflict. You cannot be representing the public interest on the GO Transit board and still be sitting on the board of directors of the 407 corporation and SNC Lavalin. It has nothing to do with Mr Leach's competence or basic honesty; you just can't do it.

I raised the question with Mr Leach when he was being appointed. He said, "I don't see any problem. There's enough business to go around for everybody. Don't worry about it." So I raised it with the Premier, and the Premier just recently, in late July, sent me a letter saying he does not have a problem with it. Well, I do have a problem with it and Dalton McGuinty has a problem with it and the Liberal caucus has a problem with it. We demand that the people appointed to protect and represent the taxpayers should not also, at the same time, have a financial interest in a policy contrary to the public. The reason I raise that is that this bill does nothing to protect against the appointees of the Ontario Legislature also running a similar risk of conflict.

I will use an example. I gather from media reports that Ontario Power Generation—OPG, as they call it—is looking to build some generating capacity on the waterfront. Mr Farlinger is the chair of OPG, but I gather that he is also a government representative on the board that we are going to make permanent here. We want people there representing the taxpayers of Ontario, the people of Ontario, who are not wearing another hat and who do not have a conflict. It is something that we certainly will raise when this bill gets to committee.

There's the example of Mr Leach—and by the way, I would just say that with the 407 corporation, a private company, the initial equity investment three years ago in the 407 was \$750 million. The highway sold the day the provincial election was called. I'll never forget it. On May 5, 1999, the 407 sold and the equity investment was \$750 million. That is now worth \$3 billion. Those people who bought that highway now have an asset that is worth four times what they paid for it. It's regarded as the most lucrative—

Hon Mrs Ecker: That's because they built it, Gerry.

Mr Phillips: There's the Minister of Finance, who will not stand up for the people of Ontario, and Mr Leach is there as a chair, and now he's also the vice-chair of GO Transit, and the minister says, "That's why they bought it."

Let me say this to you, Minister: you, as a government, promised that you had control over the tolls. When you put out the public release on the 407, you said you had a tolling agreement that would prevent increases. Let me tell you, you don't. And let me tell you that the reason it's now worth four times more is that it's the only private toll road in the world where there are no toll restrictions. That's why these companies are just drooling over it. And you, Minister of Finance, and Mr Eves, who was responsible for the deal, let down the 407 users terribly; you, Minister, of all people.

The 407 will ultimately come to your area and people are going to be paying two and three times what they should. But you don't really seem to care. It's all right. It's capitalism. It's the free enterprise system. Furthermore, "We will allow one of the directors of the 407 corporation to also sit as vice-chair of GO Transit." You may find that acceptable, Minister, and the public should recognize that the Minister of Finance is defending that decision, saying it's great.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: I am saying that no one should be in that conflict-of-interest situation. I find it unacceptable.

Hon Mrs Ecker: What conflict?

Mr Phillips: The Minister of Finance says, "What conflict?" If you don't understand, the vice-chair of GO Transit also sitting on the board of directors—every single decision that GO Transit makes will have a financial impact on the 407. For the public, nothing could demonstrate more clearly the frustration we feel than the Minister of Finance saying, "That is completely all right with me." It's just wide-open free enterprise. I say the public has a right to independent boards of directors that are going to look after the public interest.

Minister of Finance, I'm listening carefully to you. You think it's completely all right. We have a different standard. In my opinion this is nothing—

Hon Mrs Ecker: Yes, that's why there's no highway out there.

1650

Mr Phillips: There we go again. The Minister of Finance is saying that it's completely acceptable. I think it's not.

Hon Mrs Ecker: That's not what we said.

Mr Phillips: I think you did say that, Minister, and if you didn't say that, then you should say it's unacceptable for Mr Leach to be the vice-chair of the board. The reason I raise it here is that if these are—

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: "Smearing his reputation" is what the Minister of Finance says. I am simply saying it is unacceptable. The reason I raise it here—

The Acting Speaker: Order. You've asked me to enforce the rules of the House. I'm quite prepared to do it. I just wanted to tell you that it may make a little difference in your department over the next hour and 10 minutes.

Mr Phillips: The reason I raise it is because I don't know whether the three people that are currently on the board of the waterfront corporation will be the three people that continue. I think we need to, as a Legislature, understand what the standards are. Is it acceptable for people who have a conflict of interest to be serving on two boards at once? I simply say that needs to be defined. We in the Liberal Party have a fundamental disagreement with the government. We don't think that's acceptable.

The Minister of Finance in her remarks talked about how one of the key goals of this waterfront corporation will be to dramatically increase the involvement in the private sector of the investments there. As a matter of principle, I have no problem with that. I will just say that the one example the government uses constantly of private sector involvement is the 407 corporation. And I guarantee you, the 407 users have been ripped off. Why have they been ripped off? Because the government decided it was going to find a way to get the maximum price it could for the 407 regardless of the consequences to the users of the 407. It took us, by the way, two years fighting through something called freedom of information just to get the request for proposal.

The 407 user is never once mentioned in the criteria of selecting who and how they're going to choose who is going to own the 407. It was all about who will give the government the biggest cash bonus, and by the way, the cheque was delivered the day the election was called. The 407 users were completely, totally abandoned. I repeat, when the government sold the 407 they said, "We've got a unique tolling mechanism of controlling increases, and after 15 years tolls might go up by three cents a kilometre." Let me tell you, in many cases it's gone from four cents a kilometre to 11 cents a kilometre—seven cents—in under three years. Not four cents, not three cents after 15 years, but seven cents after three years.

I looked at what's called the prospectus when the 407 corporation was raising its money. It said that to completely understand what you're investing in, you should read the tolling agreement. I was very interested in that because the prospectus by the 407 owners said they can take tolls up without limit. The government told us something completely different. So I said to the 407 corporation that I'd like to read the tolling agreement; they

refused. Although any investor has access to it, I and the public can't read it. The reason it's so important is because the 407 users, and we get dozens of calls on it, have been ripped off. The government sold it, not for the 30 years they promised, they sold it for 99 years. The government said—

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was sitting here today, and I might be new and I'm very proud to be from northern Ontario, but I thought we were here to debate Bill 151. I don't really know what 407 has to do with Bill 151.

The Acting Speaker: I think the point of order that you're wanting to emphasize is that the speeches are to be on the bill that's being debated. I'm listening very carefully to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt and he's crafting his speech in a very presentable manner, and it is Bill 151. I would ask the member for Scarborough-Agincourt to continue.

Mr Phillips: If the member from Nipissing had been listening to the Minister of Finance, she talked about the involvement of private sector partnerships in the waterfront. I am saying to him—he may not have been listening carefully—and to the public that the example the government uses for private-public sector partnerships is the 407 corporation. That is their jewel. I am pointing out to the public that if an integral part of the waterfront bill is going to be public-private sector partnerships, we have need of the protection of the public. That, Mr Speaker, is the reason I have talked about the 407 corporation, and the fact that still, after two years of trying to find out the details of the agreement that the government reached with the 407 corporation, we still don't get it. We still do not have access to it. We are, through the freedom of information office, in court fighting to get that.

Which leads me to the third point of our concerns about the bill—which, again, we will be supporting. That is the transparency, the public transparency here. I heard that the government may be proposing some amendments to increase the public transparency in this corporation, and we will await the government tabling those amendments to ensure that the public's business is done in public.

We have had a considerable amount of unfortunate experience with the public's business moving more and more out of public scrutiny. I use the 407 corporation as a classic example, where the investors, the people whose investment has gone from \$750 million to \$3 billion, or where anybody who wanted to invest had access to the information but we in the public have not.

The final point I'd make before I turn it over to my colleagues is the point I started with. Ontario SuperBuild has said that they are investing \$500 million in the waterfront. They said they are going to start that in 2000; none of it was spent in 2000. They said they were going to do it in 2001; none of it there. It's again in this budget.

Frankly, I must tell you that we in our party have some significant concerns about SuperBuild. My colleague Mr Cordiano is our critic for it. He and I met recently with

some of their representatives, but in my opinion, we are not getting a transparent view of what's happening at SuperBuild. In my opinion, it's because we do not have the same public access we would have if it were not a separate corporation. That's one of the reasons I have raised my concerns about the public-private sector partnership area, the need to, first and foremost, make certain that the public's interest is looked after. The worst example of the public's interest not being looked after is the 407 corporation.

We met recently with the SuperBuild. They said two years ago, "We are going to have \$10 billion of private-public sector partnership money spent in the province of Ontario over the next five years." We said in our meeting, "Can you give us the examples of that? Where are we in that \$10-billion list?" We are unable to get it. We are still awaiting it. If in fact this is a tool the government started working on several years ago—they said we would get \$10 billion over the next five years two years ago, and to date we are unable to get out of the government a list of those major private-public sector partnership projects.

1700

The waterfront is crucial to Toronto's future. I'm one who has not been particularly happy with the waterfront development that took place over the last 20 years. I think that development on Toronto's waterfront could have been better. I'm hopeful that with the three levels of government co-operating we can do a better job of what remains to be developed on the waterfront. Although there's some indication that while the waterfront corporation is kind of perhaps fiddling, an awful lot of other projects are going on under their nose that may limit Toronto's access to the waterfront. We have those concerns.

I repeat what I said about Mr Leach. I think it's inappropriate to be representing the 407 corporation on its board and to be the vice-chair of GO. It has nothing to do with his competence or his honesty. It's just not right. But the Minister of Finance today said no, it's quite all right. That's where we part company. That's where we disagree with Ernie Eves and the Minister of Finance. If that's all right, if that conflict's all right, then we've got a real problem, because then they can appoint board members here, presumably, with the potential for similar conflicts and feel it's all right.

We don't think so. We think the public wants our representatives there to be speaking solely on their behalf and not be wearing other hats. The transparency is extremely important, and a much better idea of how these private-public sector partnerships are going to work in the public's interest and will be transparent enough that we understand completely what arrangements are made.

We'll be supporting the bill and looking forward to the amendments, whenever the government will kindly give them to us, and look forward to further debate at committee.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): It's always a pleasure to follow my esteemed colleague from

Scarborough-Agincourt, who, as you know, has been a long-time defender of the city of Toronto and the city and the people of Scarborough and the east end of the megalopolis to get things done.

I noticed that he does support the thrust of this bill, as we do. Like him, we're frustrated that there's been a lot of talk about the Toronto waterfront, yet nothing done. This has been sitting on the minister's or ministers' table for over a year. They promised money; not a cent has been spent. Something has to be done, because as this government fiddles, all kinds of opportunities are being taken away from future waterfront development by the inaction of this government. Daily, there are approvals for generating plants. Film studios and parking lots are all going up and down the waterfront. There's no authority in place to basically plan the Toronto waterfront, because the waterfront corporation has not been put in place.

Mr Fung and the Fungsters, as they call them, are really just sitting there in limbo waiting for some power. The one question is, will they have, for instance, the power to expropriate? As time passes, they're losing all kinds of valuable pieces of property on the waterfront. This act certainly doesn't give them that power.

This is like everything else this government does. When it comes to cities like Toronto, they have this one-size-fits-all approach. Whether it's Ingersoll, Toronto or Cornwall, we all operate under the same rules. One size doesn't fit all, because Toronto, by its very size, has to compete with Munich, London and Paris on a daily basis for jobs and investment, and it doesn't have the tools these other competitive cities have. They're basically without any power to raise revenues, to determine their own future. They had to wait a year to get this thing before us in the Legislature. A city like Toronto, to create jobs and prosperity, needs certain tools.

What this government has done is basically made Toronto unable to deal with its problems. We saw the housing problem. Toronto has been trying desperately to do something about housing. This government has basically given them nothing in terms of help to deal with the housing problem. It's so ludicrous that a city the size of Toronto can't, for instance, even write out a property tax bill without permission from this government. This Minister of Finance has to approve the wording on a property tax bill. That's ludicrous. If you want to change the name of a municipal ward in Toronto or the boundaries of the ward, you have to get provincial approval. If you want to get red-light cameras, which I fought for, installed in a city like Toronto, you have to get approval from the provincial government.

The provincial government wants to download all these responsibilities on cities like Toronto, wants them to take on more responsibilities, yet it gives them none of the tools that they require, as I said, to fix up the waterfront. Toronto wants to do something about the waterfront, yet this provincial government hampers them at every move. This act is a small first step but a very slow step in doing what they should have done a year

ago, because time is wasting and we're losing these opportunities for revitalization of our waterfront, which is a job generator and which is going to reclaim all that land.

A provincial government really exists here in this case to hamper a city that is pouring millions into the coffers of the provincial government on a daily basis. Look at the land transfer tax that goes from the city of Toronto every day into the provincial treasury, the gas tax and the PST: hundreds of millions. We even give the provincial government \$1.6 billion in property tax for education. Then the provincial government takes it out of Toronto and does whatever they want with it.

So we've got a city that's got challenges like the waterfront and we've got a provincial government that basically treats all the cities, really, under its jurisdiction as children with no powers. If you look at Royson James this Saturday in the Toronto Star, I think he put it very succinctly when he said, "Under Tory rule, the province has stripped away municipal powers and downloaded costs. And Ontario continues to treat its provincial capital like a child, forcing local politicians to plead and agitate and petition for the simplest policy change." Even the Provincial Auditor said that this provincial government downloaded \$154 million in extra costs on to the property taxpayer of the city of Toronto. So not only doesn't it allow it to get the tools to be competitive and create jobs, but it refuses to even let Toronto keep its own money to deal with the problems of public transit, the homeless and infrastructure.

In Toronto we rely totally on the property tax. No other city in North America or Europe depends totally on the property tax. Cities in Ontario have to depend totally on the property tax. It's unheard of. Even in Canada we've got a government in British Columbia that gives a portion of their gas revenue to cities. Quebec does it. Manitoba is about to give charter status to cities like Winnipeg so they'll have the powers to be more competitive and the tools to get things done in their city, yet in Ontario we are still in the Dark Ages. We've revamped the Municipal Act and all we did was basically continue to centralize power at Queen's Park at the expense of citizens and cities. Over 85% of our citizens in Canada live in cities. In Ontario it must be in the 75% range. Yet if you live in a city, you're unable to really have a say over your own city. It's always determined by Big Brother at Queen's Park.

These acts like the waterfront corporation should have been done quickly by the city of Toronto. Instead, they've had to wait for months, if not years, for this province to act so that Toronto can get to the point where they can clean up the waterfront and build a waterfront that's green, that's sustainable, that's part of the waterfront bioregion. Instead, again, we've got a provincial government that always puts cities last and does nothing but download costs on cities, and then takes money out of cities. I know that in the GTA they take out \$1.5 billion a year in gas tax alone. Yet the GTA cities, whether it be Mississauga, Toronto or Pickering, can't do anything

about gridlock. They can't do anything to build the infrastructure needed for GO to be expanded. They can't do anything but beg the provincial government.

1710

So the question is, if the provincial government isn't going to give the tools to cities to solve their problems, maybe the provincial government should get out of the business of telling cities what to do and let cities go on their own. Many people are saying, "What good is the provincial government to me as a citizen of Toronto? All I do is pay gas taxes, provincial taxes, and all I get is cuts to my local schools and my hospitals aren't run properly. What good is having a provincial government when all I get is aggravation?" Especially in the city of Toronto, when we pay the highest property taxes probably in Canada, if not North America, and we pay it continually, yet we get no appreciation of our challenges and needs.

The city of Toronto is not saying they want more. The city of Toronto is saying they want to keep their own darn money. That's all people are saying: keep the money that we pay in gas taxes, that we pay in provincial land transfer taxes and PST, and in our own provincial income tax, where we pay billions into the provincial coffers—keep some of the money in Toronto so we can regenerate our waterfront, we can fix our decaying roads, so we could maybe house some of the homeless. Instead, we hear this big sucking sound from Queen's Park, sucking money out of all the homeowners, businesses—big and small—in Toronto, and then we get nothing but lectures and we get nothing but aggravation from a provincial government that's just good at downloading and basically cutting services that they used to provide and asks us to provide, and then they don't give us the means to fund these services. When we're competing with Buffalo, New York, or competing with Montreal or competing, as I've said, with London, England, we can't compete because the provincial government has sucked all our power and money away.

This bill should have been passed a year ago. I don't know what it's been doing for a year. It's about darn time that you give Mr Fung and company the tools to do something down there, because, as I've said, we are losing the waterfront because of the delay and the stalling by this government.

We've got provincial lands sitting there—the Ataratri lands are sitting there doing nothing, the port lands are sitting there. Meanwhile, this government is building 8,000 homes on the moraine in Richmond Hill and is about to give away 30,000 lots of provincial land to their friendly developers out there in Pickering without any public process. Why are they building homes on the moraine when they can be building them down on the port lands on that land that's a brownfield site? So it's about darn time that they started to respect the taxpayers of the city of Toronto, the citizens, and give them a say over their own money.

I'll pass it on to my colleague from York South-Weston.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I'm pleased to join this debate. Obviously we support this bill; however, the question that needs to be asked is, why has this bill been delayed for such a long time? My colleagues who've spoken before me have all made that point.

I think those of us who are from the city of Toronto and who love the city of Toronto—and that should include everyone in this assembly and everyone across the province, because the city of Toronto and the GTA in general are an economic engine for growth, not only of this province but the entire country—need to do everything within our powers to ensure that its viability is sustained in the future. It is the engine of economic growth.

As my colleague pointed out earlier, Toronto is on a world scale. It is a city state. It needs to be viewed that way because the city states around the world are what drive the economies of the world. We need to begin to realize that the powers that haven't been given to Toronto to do what it needs to do to ensure a viable economy for the future must be put in place.

This is one of those things that Toronto desperately needs in order to revitalize the waterfront. The waterfront is absolutely critical and vital to Toronto's future. It will spawn tremendous new growth. What this agency will do is offer some feasibility in terms of coordination, oversight, and ensuring that the public interest is put first.

Again, my colleague spoke about transparency and accountability. SuperBuild was brought up prior to this. SuperBuild is an important initiative, the government says. Well, let's talk about SuperBuild for a moment. Because if we are to understand how we move forward, and this government says that it wants private sector involvement, then obviously public-private partnerships, if they are to succeed, need to have a model in place that allows for transparency, that allows for accountability and that ensures value for money for the public. That needs to be put in place. This government has not done that. And if its recent history with respect to the sale of the 407 is an example of how we are to move forward, then all of us need to be very concerned. The sale of the 407 was nothing but a taxpayer rip-off. It wasn't value for money.

The 407 was sold for the grand total of \$3.1 billion. Sounds like a lot of money. But guess what? All of the experts that we have spoken to, anyone who is an informed observer of that sale, will tell you that the government should have had at least \$10 billion for the sale of the 407. All you need to do is look at the toll increases that have been imposed on users of the 407 to understand the tremendous power and revenue growth that the 407 represents in the future. The substantial bonanza that has been handed over to the private sector is beyond belief. It's in the billions of dollars in the future.

If that's an example of how this government intends to work with the private sector, to ensure that value for money is maintained for the public, then we are going to

have some serious questions in the future, and citizens need to be concerned.

With respect to the waterfront, it represents for the city of Toronto tremendous opportunity for the future, tremendous opportunity for growth. Looking at revitalization, looking at a spawning of a renaissance for the city of Toronto, that's what the waterfront represents. This agency will enable the waterfront projects to proceed. SuperBuild says that it's going to spend \$500 million. In fact, it made that announcement two years ago. It has failed to spend any of that money thus far. Nothing's gotten off the ground. Obviously this bill is delayed by two years. There doesn't seem to be the impetus and the real desire on the part of this government to ensure that Toronto moves forward. We should be moving forward with lightning speed to ensure that the economy of Toronto is vibrant in the future, to ensure that this area, which represents a huge land mass for the city of Toronto, has the kind of planning elements associated with it that I'm sure this agency will bring forward in terms of the discipline that it will bring to the planning process and the kind of work that it will do with the private sector.

Again, this needs to be accountable, it needs to be transparent, and at the end of the day we have to be able to ensure that there's value for money for taxpayers. I'm concerned because—and I've raised this question with the minister in the House—where's the accountability for SuperBuild? We have yet to see a financial audited statement. We've asked numerous times. We've asked for an accounting for SuperBuild and this government has failed to produce any sort of accounting. There are no statements for SuperBuild. There is no accounting for some of the money that has been allocated. SuperBuild intends to spend \$10 billion. That is what SuperBuild said it would spend over the next five years. They also plan for an additional \$10 billion from the private sector to match those funds.

To date, the government claims that it is spending \$13.1 billion. There's no breakdown. I've asked for this and my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt has requested this as well; we've asked for a breakdown between what is private sector monies and public sector monies for SuperBuild. The public should have a right to know where those monies are being allocated, what are private dollars and what are public dollars. I don't think that's too much to ask for, and yet, since SuperBuild made its announcement two years ago, we have yet to see a financial document that accounts for the expenditures of SuperBuild.

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I think it would be prudent on the part of this government to make available that kind of document which discloses the breakdown of what's private and what's public in terms of dollars spent. That would pave the way for future agreements, future 3Ps so-called: partnerships between the public sector and the private sector. Because we are believers in co-operation between the private sector and the public sector, we need to ensure that we

put in place a model that is transparent, that ensures there's value for money for the taxpayers, so that we don't have any more 407s in the future, where the taxpayers are clearly on the losing side and where in the end they're getting it in the neck too because they've seen toll increases that are unbelievable. We need to make sure that whatever is done in the future, particularly with the Toronto waterfront, there is this model in place.

Again I would say to the government, we're happy to see that you're moving forward with this bill, but why has it taken so long? It's fair to say at this point that Toronto has been given short shrift in terms of being at the top of the list for priority initiatives by this government. The waterfront report that was brought forward by Mr Fung received great support, was well received by the citizens of Toronto, and there was a great momentum to move forward. I am hopeful that with the passage of Bill 151, with the agency to be put in place, we will move forward more quickly and that in fact there will be a great initiative put forward by the private sector to involve themselves in these projects.

The Ataritari lands need to be developed. We need greater intensification in the city of Toronto to accommodate the growth that's foreseen in the future, the population expansion. Those lands are an integral part of this. The waterfront lands right along the lake need to be a part of this.

We have a homeless problem in Toronto that can be addressed by this. We have a shortage of affordable housing which affects the economy. One of the things I want to point out is a great report that came down from one of the banks. The Toronto-Dominion Bank put forward its economic report. In fairness, it pointed out that there are weaknesses with respect to infrastructure in Toronto, but it points the finger at both the provincial government and, I dare say, the federal government. What it says about the provincial government that should be undertaken is with respect to infrastructure.

Post-secondary institutions need to be shored up. As a result of lagging behind in terms of building the infrastructure that's necessary, we are now 13th out of 16 jurisdictions in North America in terms of our competitiveness. We are falling behind. I say to this government, we need to move forward with infrastructure spending with lightning speed. It's not happening and we're disappointed on this side, but we do support this bill.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 151. I want to begin by indicating my support for the bill. I intend to vote in favour of the bill. The Toronto waterfront and Toronto itself are important gems in the provincial crown. It is important and imperative that this development—redevelopment, if you will—of the Toronto waterfront go ahead.

Having looked at the bill and reviewed it, I think the issues contained within it have been adequately and properly addressed by the government within the context of the bill itself. What Bill 151 attempts to do is set out, or begin to set out, if you will, the legal and regulatory structure that will govern the redevelopment of the

Toronto waterfront lands or the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp.

The broader context of it in Toronto and what's happened in this municipality is quite a different matter. The Toronto waterfront, in my view, historically has developed over time in a way that I think all of us would agree was inappropriate. I think all of us would agree again that there has not been the kind of vision or oversight that was needed. So this step and the funding that's been committed to by the federal and provincial governments and the city of Toronto are important steps in redeveloping that waterfront.

I regret that this government hasn't shown the same understanding of the other issues confronting this city as they have on this one. My colleagues talked about the fire sale of the 407, the disposition of the 407 at fire-sale prices, with guarantees of higher tolls for commuters on the 407 going into the future. That was regrettable.

The nature and the way the government has treated large urban centres, not only Toronto but Windsor, Ottawa, Hamilton, Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, has betrayed those cities and in my view is leading us down a path that we will all regret some day. We are beginning to see the problems already: municipalities that can't afford the burden that's been placed on them with respect to the provision of ongoing services, let alone fund the kind of infrastructure that is contemplated here.

I would call the Toronto waterfront redevelopment not only a healthy development in terms of the residents of Toronto but it's very much a part of tourism infrastructure and what is needed to sustain the tourism infrastructure here in Toronto. We've seen the reports of how it's down, how Toronto is not remaining competitive with centres such as Montreal and others. So it is important that this waterfront revitalization go on, but what's more important is that we view not only this form of infrastructure but all forms of infrastructure as important to the continued health and vitality of this great centre, which is not only the capital of our province, it is our country's financial capital, it is the entertainment capital of this country and it is very much a world-class city.

Waterfront redevelopment is happening not only in Toronto. Indeed, in my community, waterfront redevelopment has been an ongoing project now for close to 40 years. Our community has now gained control of all the land stretching from the Ambassador Bridge to Hiram Walker. It was the vision of the late Mayor Bert Weeks and still very much a going concern for Roy Battagello, seeing that effort come to fruition.

We now have all the lands in the city's possession. The old buildings and structures that have been there have been removed. The western parts of the waterfront lands have been well developed. They are now very mature parklands. The eastern portions that are in my riding were acquired due to the good work of the David Peterson government, which arranged for the city to acquire that land. Parkland development has only begun. There has been a seeding over of grass, and trees. So that

is only in its infancy. But what I want to say in terms of waterfront revitalization is that that has provided the kind of boost to our economy that I'm sure the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp and what comes out of it will do.

I also intend to press this government to pay the kind of attention to the Windsor waterfront lands that they are paying to the Toronto waterfront lands. Indeed, there has been no provincial money involved in the parkland development. The NDP government provided a certain amount of funding for seawalls, as did the Liberal government. I anticipate an announcement from this government on some of that. But in terms of the parkland development, we look forward to the same kind of commitment from the Eves government on the waterfront redevelopment in Windsor as we see here in Toronto.

Waterfront revitalization is important. All communities in this province—I know St Catharines has a waterfront. We have, for instance, the Niagara Parkway Commission, the St Lawrence Parkway Commission, the St Clair Parkway Commission, and I hope this government will consider my proposal that we create the Detroit River Parkway Commission. That river was declared a heritage river by the federal government. Our community and the community of Detroit, Michigan, are drawing together to begin the cleanup of that river. In order to allow our parkland and our economic infrastructure to develop, it's our hope this government will treat the Windsor waterfront in a manner similar to the way they're treating the waterfront redevelopment and revitalization here in Toronto.

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I should also say it's incumbent on the federal government to do that as well. I look forward to working with them as we move forward on that particular issue.

Overall, this bill is certainly supportable on a stand-alone basis. I regret that the context we debate it in is one of neglect of this city and of all of Ontario's large urban centres: a systemic neglect of those inner cities; a neglect that all of us will regret very soon.

I yield the floor to my colleague from St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): As is the case with the member for Windsor-St Clair, I represent a community which has a considerable waterfront. In fact, the entire north part of St Catharines is waterfront; it's Lake Ontario.

In the Niagara region we have, of course, the Niagara River between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. I recall a political leader who actually came to Niagara Falls and was saying the water was running a different way than it was, but we know it runs down from Lake Erie, as you would know—you know that area better, the Lake Erie area—down to Lake Ontario, and we have the Welland Canal.

We have a wonderful waterfront as well. In order to ensure it is kept as it should be, it requires some considerable assistance. That's why we would like to see a waterfront revitalization corporation comparable to the

one in Toronto that we're talking about this afternoon in the Niagara Peninsula. I think that would be very helpful.

Unfortunately, this government has allowed all kinds of development to take place on the waterfront which is excluding the general public from the utilization of that waterfront. That's most unfortunate. Then, I must say, this government is allowing an awful lot of what we would call the paving of the farmlands in the Niagara Peninsula. I hope that can be stopped by the designation of the Niagara region as an agricultural preserve with, of course, all of the assistance we can provide to the farmers who would be part of that, and a significant part of it.

I too am worried, as is my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt, Mr Phillips, about conflicts of interest when you set up such a board. You always want to be assured those conflicts of interest are not there because we worry, as I think he said justifiably, about the conflict of interest that apparently exists with Highway 407's board. We all know how unpopular, at least in terms of the cost of using Highway 407, that corporation can be. That is a boondoggle to beat all boondoggles. It may now be less of a boondoggle than the one we just saw with the racetrack just east of Toronto and the number of slot machines going into it. Nevertheless, this is very significant when you see the gouging that takes place of people who use Highway 407.

Mr Speaker, you and I have both from time to time crossed the border and travelled in the United States, and you know that on many of their main roads they have toll highways. I can't ever recall paying anywhere near—say, if you're going from Buffalo to Cleveland or something like that, or from Niagara Falls to Boston, you wouldn't pay near what you pay to travel simply across the length of Highway 407.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Oh, really?

Mr Bradley: That's correct. It's an outrageous amount of money that is charged to go from one point to the furthest point on Highway 407. All kinds of people phone my office regarding that, and the fact that you use your hammer; that is, you will not renew their licence if they haven't paid their tolls. It's a good deal for this consortium that runs that.

Hon Mr Stockwell: We don't do that any more.

Mr Bradley: For so long you did that. I hope the pressure of those of us in the opposition has prevented that.

It was a great deal for the private sector. It was sold just before the election in 1999 so you could give the appearance of a balanced budget on that occasion. It's yet another fire sale. I hope that doesn't happen with the Toronto waterfront.

The member who is now Minister of the Environment surely has some concerns about the visual environment as well as the other parts of the environment. As a senior member of what we call regional council—you would have called it Metro council in those days; and who knows whether he'll ever return to that level of government?—he would know that there was a time when people thought, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a vista

looking into Toronto that wasn't parking garages almost right up to the lake?" There are so many tall buildings right close to the lake now which certainly do not have a nice view, for people coming in from the lake, of Toronto.

Yet for many years, back when he was on council in fact, Toronto was quite progressive under the leadership of people such as David Crombie, in those days—

Hon Mr Stockwell: Paul Godfrey.

Mr Bradley: Paul Godfrey, the Minister of the Environment would say; a good friend of his.

I think we need a corporation of this kind and I think we need a board of this kind. It needs to be revitalized.

As we look at many cities and examine those that have been successful and those that have not, it's amazing what some cities have done with their waterfront, even cities about which people would laugh if you had said, a generation ago, were a nice place to visit, today they would not. One that comes to mind that I've read an awful lot about is the city of Baltimore, which has a nice waterfront now. There are other cities; Boston is yet another one. There are cities in Canada that are working now on a nice waterfront. It makes a big difference. It's a genuine asset to a community.

I hope that what we're going to see for all of the people of Ontario is a waterfront that is completely revitalized in Toronto. There has to be a significant investment. A good portion of that is going to be private investment; we expect that. Part of it is going to be public investment.

Where the public has a role is to ensure that it is the kind of development and redevelopment which is going to be positive for the entire population and not just for the developers, many of whose names appear on the list of donations to leadership candidates.

I found it most interesting to look at the list. The Minister of the Environment is here today. His list was modest, compared to many. His expenditure was modest, compared to many, whatever that means; it was certainly modest.

I'm concerned that not only those who are in the development industry benefit from the revitalization of the Toronto waterfront, but rather that the entire population, people from Stratford, St Catharines or Windsor, can come here and enjoy that waterfront as well. So conflict of interest on that board is going to be important. Whenever you're making these appointments, you have to ensure that the people who are on these boards don't have a conflict; in other words, that a decision they would make would benefit themselves or benefit some of their friends.

Hon Mr Stockwell: We get it. It's not that complicated.

Mr Bradley: The Minister of the Environment says, "We get it." I sometimes wonder if we get it, because, as I say, we've had a few situations that have arisen in this House where people are asking legitimate questions about someone getting a considerable benefit, sometimes

worth millions of dollars, and another person getting a donation. It's just the visual of that—

Hon Mrs Ecker: Based on what evidence?

Mr Bradley: If you want to get to the racetrack—you're obviously making some reference to that—we see up to 800 slot machines allocated to a very small and modest racetrack, promised to it, and then we see donations made to leadership campaigns that are quite substantial donations. So one can draw a conclusion that perhaps one was related to the other. I'm impartial on this. I simply say the questions are being asked about this, I think legitimately.

I'm going to go back to the point that one of the problems with our whole political system throughout North America and many places in the world is the corrosive effect of money on the elections and the system. I mean, these are substantial donations.

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So that's why we want to ensure, I say one more time for the Minister of the Environment, that when the board is appointed, the people do not have the conflicts of interest that have caused such a great problem with Highway 407, where the customers in this province, the drivers, the motorists, the vehicle drivers in this province, are being gouged by a corporation that had a great, great deal, a very favourable deal, given to them by the Conservative government, with Mr Eves as the Treasurer of the day.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Normally my colleague Michael Prue from Beaches-East York would be here listening to this debate because he is the critic for municipal affairs. He's down in the education estimates this afternoon. But I know that what he said when this bill was introduced on December 11 relates to what my colleagues in the opposition said earlier. So let me just read into the record some of the concerns he related, because they have been expressed here a little bit this afternoon.

The first concern was that the lands really remain public and for the benefit of the greatest public good, and I agree with that. This is land that belongs to the city of Toronto, belongs to the province in some cases. It is something we have a trust over, and we really do need to make sure we benefit the greatest number of people.

He said very clearly, "We do not need to repeat the mistakes of the city of Toronto and the province and the federal government around the harbour front, where all of the prime public lands are now owned by condo owners. We do not want to see, and I think nobody in this House wants to see, those lands sold off to the highest bidder and have condos right to the sky, blocking out the views of people who want to come down and use those public lands." I agree with that. These are important assets. This government has to guarantee that they are not sold off to the highest bidder for the use of the rich and famous, to the exclusion of the rest of the public, especially in this city, if you want to make it livable.

Secondly, he raised a concern about Toronto's official plans and where the reference was to that in the bill. I don't think there is a reference to that in the bill, either to say that they have to be followed or not. I would suggest to the government that the bill should be amended to make it clear that whatever goes on down at the harbour front must relate to the city of Toronto's official plans, and to make that clear in the bill.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That goes without saying.

Ms Martel: No. I say to the minister who is here that it's not dealt with one way or the other in the bill as it currently stands. I think it would make some sense to have an amendment moved to clarify that point.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I'd like to thank the honourable colleague from the third party for her suggestion on that amendment. We'll take that back and take a look at it.

The Liberal Party here likes to cast aspersions on people. They like to say, "Oh, gee, maybe there's some terrible thing here. Somebody gave somebody money." Well, it's interesting. When somebody gives the Tories money, that must be a big plot, but when Bay Street gives Dalton McGuinty a million dollars in one night from the business community and he stands up and brags about it in print—\$1 million: "I set a world record," he says, "for raising money from Bay Street in one night"—somehow that's not a conflict. Somehow there aren't any questions about Dalton getting money from Bay Street; it's only when someone chooses to give their money to the Conservative government, suddenly that's a plot. Well, this hypocritical approach is not appropriate.

Also, just to make a couple of comments, of course there are going to be conflict-of-interest guidelines, competitive guidelines, procurement guidelines to make sure there is no conflict on this board. That has been stated. All three levels of government want this.

They've complained that it took too long to do this. Well, the reason it took so long is because the federal government was not at the table with this. We put our commitment on the table. I didn't hear them. I didn't hear the Liberals stand up and say, "Ottawa, please help Ontario to move forward on the waterfront thing." They didn't do that. Ottawa, thank you, has come forward. We've got a good partnership. We are now moving forward. I'm pleased they're going to support this because it is an important investment in the Toronto waterfront. It will make a big difference to this city.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): The Minister of Finance makes a very strange comparison between the Liberals getting money and the money right now that is befuddled when it comes down to the racetrack. So let's get this clear. I want to talk about that more in detail, but this is not the time to do it, obviously. This is the time to talk about the bill that's before you.

Do you remember when the first Huang and Danczkay buildings went up downtown and covered up the waterfront? What did we say when we were councilors at that time? We said, "Never is this going to happen again." That was the lesson. That was the beginning.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's what I said. That's not what you said.

Mr Ruprecht: Yes, that's what you said. We're not here to argue about this, Chris. We're not here to argue about what you said or what I said, what the previous council said, what Norm Gardner said.

Anyway, to make a long story short, we don't want to see this repeated on a continuous basis. We're trying to ensure that this is not continuous. These lands must remain in public hands. If they remain in public hands, obviously there's going to be at least an opening, so when you drive by the Gardiner you might be able to see the water again.

It's obvious. This bill before us is not a bad bill, but at the same time there should be some caution, and the caution must be reiterated; that is (1) we don't want to see any money changing hands, (2) it must be an open and easy process to understand and (3) above all else there has got to be a fit, there has got to be a sync between the Toronto planning act and what's happening here in the Legislature. That has to be done in unison.

Mr Martin: I have to say, as I listened this afternoon and considered this bill, I'm disappointed that the government has once again missed an opportunity to indicate that it really cares about all the people of the province of Ontario. Here they are talking about developing the waterfront when yesterday they sat back and watched a group of our most vulnerable, at-risk people just simply evicted, kicked off a property that they moved on to because they had no place else to live—yes, to squat, to call home for a moment. They didn't take that opportunity to pull together their corporate friends, Home Depot, sit down with the municipality and work out a deal that would send a signal that would send up—

Hon Mrs Ecker: They did try.

Mr Martin: No, they didn't try. The only effort they made was to call the cops, bring them in and kick the people out. There was no effort to send a signal, to pull those people together, to sit down and say, "OK, what can we do with this property? How can we work with Home Depot, how can we work with the folks that are there, with the municipality, the provincial government and federal government to set up a project that would indicate to the province what it is that you intend to do under the aegis of this particular bill."

You had an opportunity, but like so many other opportunities during the last seven years, you missed it because you didn't understand that when you govern, you govern for everybody, that the benefits that accrue from government and decisions that we make have to accrue to everybody. Most fundamental to all of that is the responsibility that you have to make sure that you look after, that you provide decent, affordable housing—subsidized housing—for those amongst us who are most at risk and most vulnerable.

Our caucus is going to be watching this bill very closely and monitoring it to make sure that what happened yesterday on the waterfront to the tent city people doesn't happen again under this bill to the so

many people who, as each day goes by, find themselves in this rich province without a place to live.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: I welcome the opportunity to respond to the responses.

First of all, one of the things I'd like to know, because I saw the Conservatives pull out—they have a staff which is so extensive, they can pull anything out of anywhere, I'm sure of that. A highly paid staff as well; much more highly paid than those of us in the opposition have.

I want to note one thing that was said to differentiate the Liberals and the Conservatives. At the last fundraising dinner that the Liberals had, the leader of the Liberal Party, Dalton McGuinty, specifically said to an audience, which had some people from Bay Street there, that he would not proceed with the \$2.2-billion tax cut—right to those folks. The difference is, when they gather for the Conservative fundraiser, there's nothing but presents for those who are there. That's the difference. I wanted to point that out.

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Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Quid pro quo.

Mr Bradley: Exactly.

I want to say as well that no one on the government side noted, as I read in the newspaper, that Ernie Eves, our Premier, has now come around to our point of view that Kyoto will not cost jobs for the province of Ontario. I read it in the paper and it had to be true. I don't know whether he'll come to Stratford or other parts of Perth county, but I know that his good friend Ralph Klein, that wonderful environmentalist from the west whose views on the environment may be similar to our present environment minister—I'm not certain of that, but they may be somewhat similar—is going to visit Ontario to do the dirty work for this government that wants to be seen to be environmentally sensitive but can bring in Brother Ralphie to tell the people why the Kyoto accord and all the environmental action we want to see taken has been taken.

Other than that, I'm happy to hear all these comments from members of the opposition and the government.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Martel: We said earlier, at the start of the debate, that my colleague Michael Prue will do the leadoff for us when next this bill is debated, but we have a few minutes to deal with this and I want to put some of the concerns on the record. I know the Minister of the Environment and the Deputy Premier are thrilled to hear that, but I actually offer this up in a serious manner, so I hope you'll accept it as I try and give these.

The first three concerns really have to do with transparency and accountability. We have a major corporation here that will be responsible for some very significant decisions and some very significant expenditure of public money. I think what you really want to do is ensure that that corporation, to the fullest extent possible, has operations that are transparent, that the working that it does is available to the public and that there is clearly a

sense of accountability of the decisions being made and the money that's being spent. So there are three concerns that I have with respect to the bill that is before us.

First of all, the corporation is deemed not to be a crown agency within the meaning of the Crown Agency Act. Therefore, it doesn't fall within the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, nor does it fall within the municipal counterpart to that same act. I've got to tell you, I don't see a reason for that. I don't understand why you want to go there and I think it will just lend to a perception that you don't want to have, that a major corporation is making big decisions with big money behind closed doors. I think it makes a whole lot of sense for this government to find a way to have that corporation come under the provisions of either the provincial act or the Municipal Act. I don't see the reason—and perhaps the government will explain this as we continue to deal with this bill—for this corporation not to be included. I just think it sends all the wrong signals and is not a good way to continue to deal with the operation of what will be some very significant changes down at Toronto's waterfront.

Secondly, with respect to the preparation of the business plans that come under section 8, there are a number of bits of information that have to be included in the business plans, and those are listed: a description of the major activities and objectives of the corporation for one year and the next number of following years; a description of the policies and strategies of the corporation; a description of the budget for the corporation to achieve those objectives etc.

I note that there is nothing that's clear in this bill to say that providing that business plan to the public is a requirement of the corporation. I don't see it listed. Perhaps I'm to assume that that will just automatically be done, but I don't see a requirement under section 8 where it talks about business planning and the contents, that that actually be given to the public. It says that a copy of the plan would be given to the Minister of Transport Canada, the Minister of Finance and the mayor of the city of Toronto, but as far as I can see, it doesn't go further than that. I would think that you'd want to make those public documents. Again, I repeat, if you want to make it transparent, if you want this an accountable corporation, those details, that kind of information should be broadly available to the public, not just to ministers of the crown, who may share them or who may not, or not just to the mayor, who may decide to share those contents or not.

Thirdly, this has to do with public meetings. There isn't a requirement in the bill for the corporation to hold open meetings, as other city agencies are required to do. I understand this is not exclusively a city agency, but certainly there are going to be municipal representatives on it. The city will have the choice to do that. I think that, to the greatest extent possible, meetings of the corporation, their deliberations, should be open, public meetings. The public should have a chance to come down and hear what's being said, to see what the deliberation is on

the budget, to see what the deliberation is with respect to the initiatives the corporation wants to undertake.

I think it should very clearly be detailed in the act that, to the best extent possible, the meetings of the corporation that will be dealing with very important public issues and frankly very important public assets should be meetings where the people in this city have a chance to go and hear what is said and see who says what with respect to the decisions that are being made about policy objectives, with respect to decisions that are being made about this budget.

Those are some of the changes I would encourage the government to make if they really want to have a corporation and a process around the development of the waterfront that is very much transparent and is accountable back to the public this corporation is supposed to serve.

Secondly, I have a very major concern with respect to affordable housing. I look on page 2, under section 3(1), with respect to the objects of the corporation, and there are a number of them that are listed. What I don't see is any mandate or object on the part of the corporation to actually build affordable housing. Section 3(2) talks about residential and recreational communities. It doesn't say those residential communities are going to be ones that the majority of the people in this community can actually afford to live in.

I'm not interested in seeing a lot of development of condominiums for the rich and famous down on the waterfront, or that we develop this part of the waterfront as an enclave for the rich and famous. I really think this government has to assure all of the public through this bill that the assets that are down there, any sale of the same and anything that is created down there is going to be to the benefit of the greatest number of us. I think that means the development of affordable housing. We have a serious affordable housing shortage in this city, and passage of this bill, and these lands, present an opportunity for the government to do something about that.

In that respect I would encourage the government then to take a look at some of the provisions of the private member's bill that was put forward by our leader, Howard Hampton, in December 1999. That bill was called the Toronto Waterfront Fair Housing Act. If I might, Mr Speaker, just read into the record some of the provisions—I know it is getting late—there are two specific provisions that I think could apply to this bill and frankly should be incorporated in the bill if the government is actually serious about ensuring that affordable housing is built on the waterfront.

They include: "The bill requires at least 25% of the housing built on the Toronto waterfront, after the bill comes into force, to be affordable housing."

Secondly, "The bill"—that is, the private member's bill—"requires the Minister of Finance to consider funding the construction of non-profit housing near the Toronto waterfront, in an amount equal to the price of any crown land on the waterfront sold to a person who is not a public authority."

I think if the government would look seriously at these provisions, it could find a mechanism whereby much of the public land on the waterfront would be used to build affordable housing. Then we could guarantee that it wouldn't just be an enclave or condominiums for the rich and famous but that the greatest number of people in this city could benefit. The lands on the waterfront are an

important public asset. They should be used to benefit the greatest number of people. Significant building of affordable housing would take us a long way there.

On that note, I would complete my remarks.

The Acting Speaker: It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1759.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
31	1512	1	19	would generate \$146 million.

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